

# Comparing Islamic Credo on Sustainable Development with Modern World Doctrines

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## Abstract

The objective of sustainable development - to provide a better life for humans - has been stressed in Islam, where the concept of hayat tayebah, which means good life, revolves around the foundation of sustainability. Despite the many principles, codes and guidelines by which Islam addresses sustainable development issues, the lack of awareness of these principles, even among the Muslim world, has already resulted in tremendous harm to the planet, including global warming. The objectives and goals proposed in Agenda 21, at the earth summit meetings and in the World Charter are not new. Rather, they were discussed and proposed by Islamic leaders 1400 years ago. This paper compares and contrasts the Islamic principles, models and keywords used to define sustainable development with the work of contemporary world scholars and theorists.

**Keywords:** Sustainable development, sustainability, Islam and sustainability, ayahs on sustainability, sustainability management, sustainable development model

## 1. Introduction

### Introduction

The aim of this paper is to analyze sustainable development from the early perspective of Islam. Accordingly, the paper focuses on Islamic ways, principles, theories and models with respect to sustainable development. The three widely used bases of sustainable development - ecological, social, and economic - are analyzed from the Islamic perspective. In this way, Islam is studied not only as a religion but also as a guide for each and every aspect of human life. Sustainable development aims improve life on this planet without depriving or negatively impacting future generations. Humans, as monetary operators, must be provided the right training and education so they can understand how to support sustainable development. Such training and such support encompasses both the material and non-material facets of life. Islam has a definite code of conduct for sustainable development that can be applied toward all aspects of human life.

### Defining sustainable development

The World Commission on Environment and Development states, "Sustainable development meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.". The goal of sustainable development is to maximize economic growth by minimizing the harm to the environment. The embodiment of this manifestation of advancement is a stable relationship between human exercises and the environment that does not reduce the prospects for future generations to enjoy life in the same way we do in the present. Many theorists argue that it is essential that efforts toward sustainable development be free of any personal stake if supportable advancement is to be achieved (Mintzer, 1992). Sustainable development means enhancing the wealth and welfare of a nation for the long run while administering to all the environmental, human and monetary wealth of the present (Repetto, 1986). Sustainable development is a guide for the consumption of resources. As such, its focus is on fulfilling human desires today while still saving the natural resources in such a way that human needs in the present are quenched and human needs in the future will also be met. The Brundtland Commission (Brundtland et al., 1987) established that sustainable development "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

### History of Sustainable Development

1713 This is the first time the concept of sustainable development has been considered. Carlowitz book on forest sciences was edited. In this book, Carlowitz emphasized the importance of timber, comparing it with bread. More importantly, he warned that timber should not be wasted. "For this reason, we should organise our economy in a way that we won't suffer scarcity [of timber], and where it is lumbered we should strive for young growth at its place" (Carlowitz, 1713; repeated by Kasthofer in 1818). 1969 The NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) was proposed. The main objective of this act was to ensure that both man and environment can

subsist side-by-side with each other and that mankind could still accomplish its goals, while keeping in mind the needs of future generations. 1970 The EPA was proposed by the president of the USA. The goal of the EPA was to formulate a body whose aim was to protect the natural resources. The spectrum of the body was not only local but international. This body was put into operation 1970. A meeting in Sweden, known as the Stockholm meeting brought many countries to one table in December 1970. The main topic of discussion was the environment or, more specifically, a concern as to how best to protect the environment. It was concluded that development in all areas of life must be conducted without compromising the earth's capacity to maintain life. As a result of this meeting, the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) was created to permit the idea of natural, sound progress. UNEP then initiated two programs - the World Environmental Academic Programme (IEEP) in 1975 and the World Conservation Technique in 1980. 1983 The WCED (World Commission on Environment and Development) was chaired by the prime minister of Norway. His goal was to review the key natural and other global development problems and propose recommendations to solve them. Moreover, the commission aimed to increase awareness and dedication to feasible growth and expansion on the part of people, organizations, governmental bodies, etc. The commission's aim was to increase awareness and devotion to workable progress, and therefore, it adopted a philosophy of "development that fulfils the requirements of the present without risking the capability of generations to come to meet their own needs." 1992 The earth summit was held.. This was a huge event not only in terms of the number of states that attended but also with respect to the number of areas it addressed. Representatives from 170 nations attended the summit. At the conference, the nations were asked to sign the "Declaration of Environment and Development," a proposal that focused on addressing global warming and biodiversity. Agenda 21, "...a program of action for a tolerable future for the human family and an initial step toward making sure the world will change into a more just, secure and wealthy habitat for all humanity" was also presented and signed by the world leaders in attendance.

1993 The PCTD (President's Council on Tolerable Development) was formed under President Clinton's regime. The council focuses on three main components of development - industrial, job opportunities and environmental protection. While addressing the nation, President Clinton said, "Every country faces a challenge to spot and implement policies that may meet the requirements of the present without sacrificing the future. America will face that test with the assistance of this Council and the concepts and experience that its members bring to this crucial task." A partnership was formed among the participants - 25 individuals from industry, management, etc. - and they accepted the task to come up with a vision wherein they can assimilate policies for both businesses and the environment. 1996 A report titled "Sustainable America: A New Understanding for Wealth, Opportunity, and A Good Environment for the Future" was published. This was followed by the publication in 1997 of another report, "Building on Understanding: A Progress Report on Supportable America." 2001 A world meeting was held whose agenda included issues related to globalization and Agenda 21. 2002 The WSSD World Conference on Tolerable Development was held. This conference focused on five major areas - water, energy, health, farming and biodiversity. U.S. At the this conference, the aim and plan outlined stated that America will work with all private and non-public sectors and the NGO to attain manageable and practical initiatives to minimize the number of people having unclean water to drink, to eradicate hunger, to elevate rural performance, to make education accessible to all, to find a cure for of AIDs, to eradicate or minimize tuberculosis and malaria and to conserve the forest and the seas.

The same is presented in the Table 1.

Tables1: History of Sustainable Development

YEAR	NAME
1713	Carlowitz book on forest sciences
1969	NEPA- National Environmental Policy Act
1970	STOCKHOLM CONFERENCE
1975	IEEP -World Environmental Academic Programme ( IEEP )
1980	WCED- World Commission on Environment and Development
1992	EARTH SUMMIT-AGENDA 21
1993	PCTD- President's Council on Tolerable Development
1996	SUSTAINABLE AMERICA –REPORT
1997	BUILDING ON UNDERSTANDING REPORT
2001	WORLD MEETING ON AGENDA 21
2002	WSSD- World Conference on Tolerable Development

### Sustainable Development in Islam

Shaharir (2012) argues that sustainability is wustu (mid-way) – a way of meeting the physical, social, political, efficient, scientific and religio-profound needs of the present man without sacrificing all the necessary resources and all the creatures of God so that future generations will have the ability to appreciate, at the same level of joy

as man today, this world as it is now. Sustainable development may be characterized, from an Islamic viewpoint, as a multi-faceted mechanism aimed to create harmony in the midst of financial and social advancements on one side and nature on the other. As such, it encourages man to utilize assets as a part of the paramount conceivable route by representing nature's turf whereupon those assets depend. In the Quran, the word development refers to architecture and construction, saying, "It is He who hath produced you from the earth and settled you therein" (Surah HUD, verse 61). This verse references the imperative need to build the land. Moreover, the Prophet (Peace be upon him) says, "If the final day comes upon you while you were planting a seed, then continue planting it." Accordingly, we have defined development as perceived in Islam.

The domes of sustainable developments are

Admiring Mankind

"We have honoured the sons of Adam; provided them with transport on land and sea; given them for sustenance things good and pure; and conferred on them special favours, above a great part of our creation" (Surat Al Isra, Verse 70). God has made mankind the most powerful, and thus, by making resources accessible to him, he has also placed on man the burden of managing these resources. Allah says in the Quran, "Do ye not see that Allah has subjected to your (use) all things in the heavens and on earth and has made his bounties flow to you in exceeding measure, (both) seen and unseen?" (Surat Luqman, verse 20). The management of the resources entails sustaining the overall equilibrium of nature by not wasting resources.

### **Nature's totality**

Nature comprises many parts that are inter-related, one with the other, and therefore, it can be termed a system that cannot work if any one of its parts is not working. These parts of nature's system work as a unit and are thus interdependent. Similarly, many scientists have also found that the various components of nature and the environment work as a system. This same concept of totality, or nature's system, is defined as well in the Quran, "In the creation of the heavens and the earth; in the alternation of the night and the day; in the sailing of the ships through the ocean for the profit of mankind; in the rain which Allah sends down from the skies, and the life which He gives therewith to an earth that is dead; in the beasts of all kinds that He scatters through the earth; in the change of the winds, and the clouds which they trail like their slaves between the sky and the earth - (Here) indeed are signs for a people that are wise" (Surat Al Baqara).

### **The System's Balance**

**Humans must make sure to** maintain the balance of the system, as any disturbance in any of the components can affect nature's entire system. Mankind has already misused and abused many of nature's resources, such as the water, air, forests, trees, seas, rivers, and more. Whatever we are suffering due to the imbalance of nature's resources is due to our own misdeeds. As the Quran says, "Mischief has appeared on land and sea because of (the meed) that the hands of men have earned." Man has disturbed the balance of nature by not taking care of that balance, and as people have implemented real improvements to the environment, they have also given rise to across the board issues affecting the seas, the landmasses, and various levels of the environment. Because of man's childish disposition towards nature, the equalization, coordination and congruity of the universe have all been contrarily influenced.

### **Resource Scarcity**

Individuals must handle assets wisely, and regardless of how enormous and affluent these resources appear to be, they are, in any case, restricted and must be conserved. The Holy Quran has, time and again and in many places, cautioned mankind about the scarcity of the earth's resources. Allah says, "And there is not a thing but its (sources and) treasures (inexhaustible) are with us; but we only send down thereof in due and ascertainable measures" (Surat Al Hijr, 'The Stoneland', verse 21) "He set on the (earth), mountains standing firm, high above it, and bestowed blessings on the earth, and measure therein all things to give them nourishment in due proportion, in four days, in accordance with (the needs of) those who seek (sustenance)." (Surat Fusselat 'Signs Spelled Out', verse 10)

### **Conserving nature's sheath**

Resources are scarce and mankind has left no stone unturned in his destruction of these resources. Nonetheless, it is never too late to begin to preserve what is left. Humans must not waste a single fraction of a second devising strategies to conserve the environment, as the foundations have already been laid. Unfortunately, most of these foundations have been buried in the agendas and minutes of meetings. We can see that Islam, in places throughout the Quran, instructed mankind on how to maintain the balance of nature. Allah says, "And Allah loveth not those who do mischief" (Surat Al Ma'eda 'The Table', verse 64). "However, waste not by excess: for Allah loveth not the wasters" (Surat Al An'am, 'The Cattle', verse 141). "...and do no mischief on the earth after it has been set in order: that will be best for you, if ye have Faith" (Surat Al A'raf, 'The Heights', verse 85). All

Muslims have been summoned to follow two principles – do not waste and do no harm. The essence behind these two principles is to preserve nature’s sheath - the mountains, rivers, forests, seas, etc.

### Islamic Paradigms of Sustainable Development

All major principles promoted in Islam were based on the six paradigms of sustainable development. In Islam, people are regarded as the stewards of the planet, and their duty of stewardship is not only to use wisely the resources but to ensure that mizan (the balance of all resources) is maintained.

The paradigms of sustainable development in Islam include the following

**Mizan** - the balance, and the maintenance of that balance, of all the planet’s available resources.

**Maslaha** - a unanimity or accord as to what is in the best interest of the majority.

**Ahram** - consideration of the people’s welfare while mapping policies and making decisions (also referred to as people’s capital and integration).

**Ijtihad** – a focus on human capital investment while devising solutions that apply state of the art knowledge to solve issues. Moreover, the same notion states that man must invent and revolutionize new ways to create a shift in sustainable development.

**Adl** - caring for the rights of mankind and promoting justice for all.

**Amanah** (honesty and custodianship) - the principle that man is entrusted (amanah) with earth, a consecrated convention with God. Therefore, it is man’s responsibility to protect the planet.

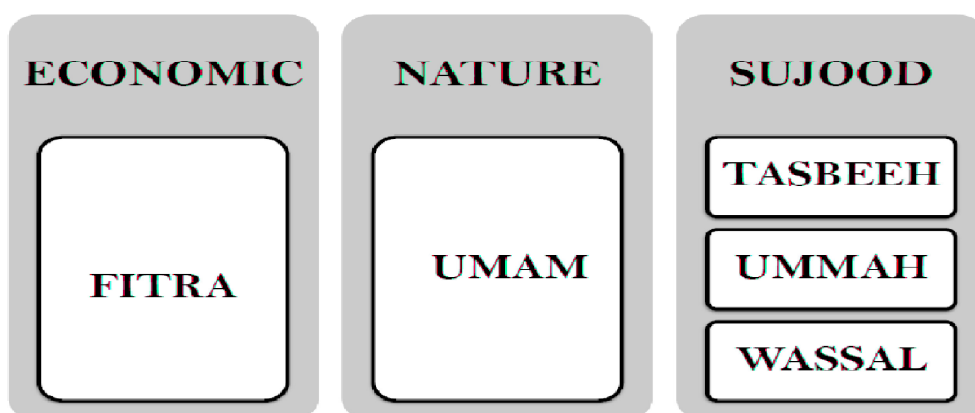
Comparison of Islamic Principles of Sustainable Development

Table 2 presents a comparison of the sustainable development model and the concepts of Islam.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES	SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES OF ISLAM
<p>Holmberg proposed the following principles in 1992</p> <p>Principle No. 1-Economic                      A financially feasible framework must have the capacity to deliver goods and services on a continuing basis, to maintain sensible levels of government and outside obligations and to evade compelling uneven characters that harm the agrarian or modern generations.</p> <p>Principle No. 2-Nature/Environment                      A naturally maintainable framework must sustain a stable asset base by avoiding over-misuse of renewable asset frameworks or natural sink capacities and by the draining of non-renewable assets only to the degree that venture is made in sufficient substitutes. This incorporates the upkeep of biodiversity, air dependability, and other environmental works not normally categorized as financial assets.</p> <p>Principle No. 3-Social                      A communally sustainable framework must attain distributional value and the sufficient endowment of social administrations including well-being, instruction, gender impartiality, and political answerability and involvement.</p>	<p>Adapted from the work of Ben-Eli (2005)</p> <p>First Principle- “FITRA”-Natural state                      It has many plans and functioning insinuations that struggle for maximum productivity of resources. Increasing productivity with every utilization-Commissioning ‘income and not the capital-continuous recycling of the entities that cannot be regenerated, thus influencing an uninterrupted, closed circle stream of substance and vitality in a planetary profitable framework. Controlling spillages and maintaining a strategic distance from inertia, lost fixations and arbitrary dispersions of compound components amid cycles of utilization, and securing an administrative 'execution renting' introduction for administering and overseeing resilient merchandise.</p> <p>Second Principle-“Uman”                      Ensure that the important varieties of all types of life on the planet are sustained. For example, we must harvest those species that have the capacity to reproduce and increase biological diversity. Human are the stewards and they must take care of the planet.</p> <p>Third Principle: Ummah wattat                      Amplify the degrees of opportunity and potential affirmation toward oneself of all people without any individual or group unfavorably influencing others.</p> <p>Fourth Principle: (Tasbeeh and sujood)                      Perceive the consistent, dynamic continuum of insight, affection, and vitality that connects the external ranges of the universe with our earth's planetary group, and our planet and its biosphere, including all people, with our inward metabolic frameworks.</p>

Figure 1 depicts that the models people are using now to explain sustainable development were actually developed some 1400 years ago by the Prophet (SAW). Thus, the concept of sustainable development as known today may date back only as far as 1969, but it was actually being preached in Islam 14 centuries ago

Figure 1



### Management of Sustainable Development

Islam has not only been preaching the principles and model of sustainable development, but it has also provided the world with ways to manage sustainable development.

### Management of Economic Sustainability

**Determinants of good governance are essential** elements of sustainable development, e.g., consultation, empowerment and popular participation. Good governance includes policy development and decision-making procedures that lead to institutional change. There are many important elements of good governance, such as participation, accountability, effectiveness, coherence, lack of corruption, lack of state capture by interest groups and avoidance of the subsidiary principle. Factors of good administration are components of sustainable development as well. Such factors include dialogue, enablement and participation. Institutional change is the result of policy development and decision making methods that align with the four principles of good governance. Those principles, as defined by the European Union are contribution, answerability, efficiency and consistency (Platje, 2010). Good governance must be a part of sustainable development and for good governance to occur, dialogue and participation are essential components necessary to manage sustainable development. Even in the Quran, the Prophet (SAW) was ordered to listen to and take the advice of his supporters and admirers while solving the affairs of state and politics (Al-Buraey, 1985). Allah says, "So pardon them and ask forgiveness for them and consult with them upon the conduct of affairs. And when thou art resolved, then put thy trust in Allah. Allah loveth those who put their trust (in Him)" (al-Quran, 111: 159).

### Management of Environment Sustainability

Many nations may cross lines in profaning economic doctrines by committing acts of environmental debasement and resource exhaustion. Salih (2003) argued that to sustain the eminence and value of the nature of these nations the environmental quality absolutely must be maintained. He further stated that unmanaged deterioration and adverse changes in environmental resources are not desirable or well received as they infringe on the basic principles of the economy. As the Prophet (SAW) said, "There is none amongst the believers who plants a tree, or sows a seed, and then a bird, or a person, or an animal eats thereof, but it is regarded as having given a charitable gift for which there is great recompense" [Sahih Al-Bukhari, 3: 513]. Thus, the Prophet (SAW), 1400 years ago, was an influential and strong supporter of the sustainable utilization and development of land and the proper treatment of wildlife, trees, and other equal human rights.

### Management of Socio-political Sustainability

Ideal economic development can never be attained if there exists no socio-political viability. For example, it is a difficult feat to attain socio-political manageable quality and perfect financial advancement. As a case in point, monetary improvement that does not include solving salary disparities and providing equivalent financial opportunities will cause disappointment and outrage that, in turn, leads to socio-political upheaval. One of the Islamic monetary improvement standards is to ensure each associate in the Islamic culture a sum adequate for sustaining a good life, thus creating social equity and maintaining financial harmony among all parts of the society. The Quran and Sunnah further prohibit lavishness and wastefulness, while Islam promotes principles of brotherhood between people and principles for the equal distribution of wealth. In other words, Islam prohibits

the possession of wealth in the hands of the few. (Al-Buraey, 1985).

### Conclusion

The entire concept of sustainable development has one objective - to provide humans with a better life. The same has been stressed in Islam, where the concept of hayat tayebah, which means good life, revolves around the foundation of sustainability. Although stewards, known as khalifas in Islam, have the right to use all resources, it is their responsibility to ensure mizan, that is, balance among all resources. Islam is not just a religion but a complete code of life, and in every walk of life, we find guidance. Despite the many ways promoted by Islam to address sustainable development that date back 14 centuries, it is the lack of awareness of these principles that has caused enormous damage to the planet. These codes and guidelines for sustainable development have been with us for 1400 years, but unfortunately, the lack of awareness, even in the Muslim world, has caused major harm to the earth, including global warming. Whatever has been written on sustainable development with respect to the principles of Islam in the current paper is consistent with Agenda 21 and the World Charter. However, the main issue of spreading awareness and educating the masses about how to achieve sustainable development remains. People as stewards, or khalifahs, need to act more responsibly towards sustainable development and raise awareness. Even in lectures that are based solely on religion, people can promote the concept and awareness of sustainable development in their sermons and encourage their followers to adopt the principles of sustainable development. Thus, together we can save the planet, increase awareness about being humane and follow the principles of brotherhood. We must bring people together onto one single platform wherein people do no harm not only to the planet at large but also to other beings while clinging to their faith.

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