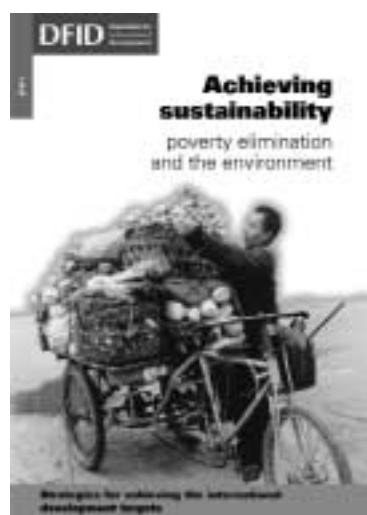


Summary

Achieving sustainability: poverty elimination and the environment

The Strategy Paper's key messages:



- There are three pillars to sustainable development – social, economic and environmental – and the environment is often neglected totally or given inadequate attention. In consequence, most environmental trends are negative.
- There should be agreement on the strategic principles for sustainable development – including greater public participation, country ownership, high-level political commitment and effective governance. Such principles need to be integrated into existing and new policies to ensure that gains in poverty reduction are not ephemeral.
- There needs to be convergence between country-level plans such as sustainable development strategies, poverty reduction strategies and the principles underlying the Comprehensive Development Framework. These strategies should not be seen as separate, free-standing initiatives.
- Considerations of environmental impact should be integrated into macro-economic policies so as to improve the quality and equity of growth.
- Market failures should be corrected so that consumers face prices which take environmental implications into account.
- There are significant links between poverty and the environment. Poverty reduction and effective environmental management are not mutually exclusive. In fact, environmental problems are a significant cause of poverty, and generally hit the poor hardest – therefore better environmental management is **essential** to secure lasting poverty reduction.
- Too often we deal with the consequences of poverty rather than the underlying **causes**. The latter may often be environmental in nature. For example, indoor air pollution is one of the four main risk factors for ill-health globally and should be dealt with directly rather than by, say, building health clinics to deliver curative services.
- There should be more systematic accounting of the economic costs of environmental degradation and analysis of its long-term implications, the impacts on the poor, and opportunities for tackling these problems.
- There should be greater reliance on market-based instruments and greater public awareness to combat pollution rather than the more traditional approaches of regulation and enforcement, since the latter often imposes too heavy a burden on relatively weak environment ministries or agencies.
- Environment is not a sector and mainstreaming is **not** primarily about allocating funds to it – it is about developing appropriate linkages with other poverty reduction initiatives.
- Dealing with environmental issues requires a longer-term perspective to make a difference. However, this should not be used as an excuse to postpone action since environmental degradation causes immediate problems, such as conflict, natural disasters and poor health.
- National actions taken for other reasons can have beneficial impacts on the global environment. We should attempt to maximise these positive synergies.
- More attention needs to be given to monitoring environmental changes. Some indicators have been agreed internationally. But developing specific indicators at the national or sub-national level should be an integral part of any country's strategy for sustainable development.

Strategies for achieving the international
development targets