

Grade 9 Social Sciences Worksheet

Agenda 21

In 1992, the leaders of most of the world's nations met in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in one of the most important meetings in history. The purpose of the meeting was no less than to set the rules to save Planet Earth from destruction by humankind. This conference produced a document known as Agenda 21. (See summary below.)

Agenda 21 is a very detailed document describing what actions and principles need to be followed to protect the environment for future generations.

The Rio conference was followed 10 years later by the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa.

A lot has been achieved, but very much more HAS to be achieved if environmental disasters such as global warming are not to destroy the basis for the global economy.

1. Why is it stated in the introduction above that the global economy is dependent on a healthy environment? [4]

Class research

Each member of the class is allocated one of the principles of Agenda 21. For each principle, answer the following questions and report back to the class with your answers:

2. Rewrite each principle in plain, simple language, making clear the meaning of the words in **bold**. [4]
3. With the aid of at least one example of how the principle can be applied, explain why the principle is important to sustainable development. [4]
4. Do you think it is possible to achieve the goals of the principle in your home region? Explain your answer. [6]

Class discussion

5. Have a class discussion and vote on the following statements, voting them to be either true or false.
 - 5.1 There are too many humans for sustainable development to be possible.
 - 5.2 Wealthy nations do more damage to the environment than the poor nations, therefore it is up to them to fix the environment.
 - 5.3 The best way to survive environmental disaster is to earn as much money as you can so that you can buy whatever you need to escape the effects of environmental damage.

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- 5.4 I am only one human being, so it does not really matter what I do when it comes to the environment.
- 5.5 The South African government is making a mistake when it says that we can't afford to meet environmental targets as we have to address the needs of the people first.
6. Ghandi said: "There is enough for everybody's need, but not for everybody's greed." Write a paragraph explaining why this statement highlights the difficulty of achieving global sustainability. [5]

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Summary of Agenda 21

Principle 1

Human beings are at the centre of concerns for **sustainable** development. They are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature.

Principle 2

States have the right to **exploit** their own resources for their own environmental and developmental policies, and the responsibility to ensure that these do not cause damage to the environment of other States.

Principle 3

The right to development must be fulfilled so as to **equitably** meet developmental and environmental needs of present and future generations.

Principle 4

In order to achieve sustainable development, environmental protection shall constitute an **integral** part of the development process and cannot be considered in isolation from it.

Principle 5

All States and all people shall cooperate in the essential task of eradicating poverty as an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, in order to decrease the **disparities** in standards of living and better meet the needs of the majority of the people of the world.

Principle 6

The special situation and needs of developing countries, particularly the least developed and those most environmentally **vulnerable**, shall be given special priority.

Principle 7

States shall cooperate in a spirit of global partnership to **conserve**, protect and restore the health and integrity of the Earth's ecosystem. The developed countries acknowledge the responsibility that they have in the international pursuit of sustainable development in view of the pressures their societies place on the global environment and of the technologies and financial resources they command.

Principle 8

To achieve sustainable development and a higher quality of life for all people, States should reduce and eliminate unsustainable patterns of production and consumption and promote appropriate **demographic policies**.

Principle 9

States should cooperate to strengthen endogenous capacity-building for sustainable development by improving scientific understanding through exchanges of scientific and

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technological knowledge, and by enhancing the development, adaptation, diffusion and transfer of technologies, including new and innovative technologies.

Principle 10

Environmental issues are best handled with the participation of all concerned citizens, at the relevant level. At the national level, each individual shall have appropriate **access to information** concerning the environment including information on hazardous materials and activities in their communities, and the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes. States shall facilitate and encourage public awareness and participation by making information widely available.

Principle 11

States shall **enact effective environmental legislation**. Environmental standards, management objectives and priorities should reflect the environmental and developmental context to which they apply.

Principle 12

States should cooperate to promote a supportive and **open international economic system** that would lead to economic growth and sustainable development in all countries, to better address the problems of environmental degradation.

Principle 13

States shall develop national law regarding **liability and compensation** for the victims of pollution and other environmental damage. States shall also cooperate in an expeditious and more determined manner to develop further international law regarding liability and compensation for adverse effects of environmental damage caused by activities within their jurisdiction or control to areas beyond their jurisdiction.

Principle 14

States should effectively cooperate to discourage or prevent the relocation and transfer to other States of any activities and substances that cause severe **environmental degradation** or are found to be harmful to human health.

Principle 15

In order to protect the environment, the **precautionary approach** shall be widely applied by States. Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full **scientific certainty** shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation.

Principle 16

National authorities should endeavour to promote the **internalisation of environmental costs** taking into account the approach that the polluter should bear the cost of pollution, with due regard to the public interest.

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Principle 17

Environmental impact assessment shall be undertaken for proposed activities that are likely to have a significant adverse impact on the environment.

Principle 18

States shall immediately notify other States of any natural disasters or other emergencies that are likely to produce sudden harmful effects on the environment of those States. Every effort shall be made by the international community to help States so afflicted.

Principle 19

States shall provide prior and timely notification and relevant information to potentially affected States on activities that may have a significant adverse **transboundary** environmental effect and shall consult with those States at an early stage and in good faith.

Principle 20

Women have a vital role in environmental management and development. Their full participation is therefore essential to achieve sustainable development.

Principle 21

The creativity, ideals and courage of the youth of the world should be mobilised to forge a global partnership in order to achieve sustainable development and ensure a better future for all.

Principle 22

Indigenous people and their communities and other local communities have a vital role in environmental management and development because of their knowledge and traditional practices. States should recognize and duly support their identity, culture and interests and enable their effective participation in the achievement of sustainable development.

Principle 23

The environment and natural resources of people under oppression, domination and occupation shall be protected.

Principle 24

Warfare is **inherently destructive** of sustainable development. States shall therefore respect international law providing protection for the environment in times of armed conflict.

Principle 25

Peace, development and environmental protection are interdependent and indivisible.

Principle 26

States shall resolve all their environmental disputes peacefully and by appropriate means in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

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Principle 27

States and people shall cooperate in good faith and in a spirit of partnership in the fulfilment of the principles embodied in this Declaration and in the further development of international law in the field of sustainable development.

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Suggested Solutions

1. Ultimately, the global economy is dependent on the Earth's resources, especially for water, food, energy and industrial raw materials. All of these have to be sustainably managed if the economy is to survive.

Class research

2. The educator should go through the whole list, explaining the meaning of the words in bold, before the learners rewrite them.
3. Any reasonable explanation [2] plus any reasonable example. [2]
4. Any reasonable arguments for OR against are acceptable. This is one of those questions that does not have an absolutely correct answer.

Class discussion

5. All of these questions have some element of truth and falsity in them. However, to promote a better understanding of the concept of sustainability, the following answers are preferred.
 - 5.1 F, but it will take all humans to co-operate.
 - 5.2 The first part is true, but developing nations must also take responsibility.
 - 5.3 F – We are all interconnected. Wealth may buy short-term survival only.
 - 5.4 F – We are all only one human being and if we don't take action the combined effect of everybody not taking action will be disastrous.
 - 5.5 T – It is a very grave mistake to believe that it is possible to attend to the needs of the people without attending to the needs of the environment, as the needs of the people are dependent on the environment. In fact, if the needs of the environment are placed first, then the needs of the people will look after themselves.
6. There is enough food and other resources for everybody to have a fair standard of living, but the **excessive consumption** created by a **consumer society** cannot be sustained.