

policies and programmes which lead to sustainable development. The pursuit of a sustainable future in an environment of quality will require the design of appropriate policies and programmes which address directly the related problems of unsustainable growth and environmental degradation. Part of this total agenda for sustainable development is the pursuit of non-polluting, energy efficient urban forms of quality. This book explores ways in which urban design method can be adapted to achieve this end and also examines the techniques available for measuring and evaluating large-scale urban projects in terms of the contribution made to sustainable development.

A generally accepted definition of sustainable development is: '... development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'.¹² This definition has three key ideas: development, needs and future generations. Development should not be confused with growth.¹³ Growth is a physical or quantitative expansion of the economic system while development is a qualitative concept: it is concerned with improvement or progress including cultural, social and economic dimensions. The term 'needs' introduces the idea of resource distribution: 'meeting the basic needs of all and extending to all the opportunity to satisfy their aspirations of a better life'.¹⁴ These are fine sentiments but in reality the poor of the Third World are unable to achieve their basic needs of life while the more affluent effectively pursue their aspirations; many luxuries being defined by the wealthy as needs. There will naturally be environmental costs if the standards of the wealthy in the developed world are maintained while at the same time the aspirations of people in underdeveloped and developing countries are fulfilled. A choice may be inevitable: meeting needs and aspirations is a political, moral and ethical issue. Sustainable development means a movement towards greater social equity both for moral and practical reasons. Techniques for assessing the distribution of costs and benefits within and

between groups are basic tools for assessing the effects of development and form the basis for evaluating the degree to which development can be described as sustainable.

The definition of sustainable development extends the concept of equity to future generations, it introduces the idea of inter-generational equity: 'We have a moral duty to look after our planet and hand it on in good order to future generations'.¹⁵ This idea of stewardship was fostered by the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in 1972.¹⁶ Stewardship implies that mankind's role on this planet is one of caring for the earth and steering a path which as far as possible benefits the human and natural systems of the world. Mankind is viewed as the custodian of the earth for future generations. The aim therefore of development policy is not simply to maintain the *status quo* but for each generation to hand on a better environment particularly where it is degraded or socially deprived: it requires of any particular generation the wisdom to: avoid irreversible damage; restrict the degrading of environmental assets; protect important habitats, high quality landscapes, forests and non-renewable resources.

The application of this principle which places great premium on environmental protection means that all development proposals should include the real environmental costs. The true cost of all activities, whether they take place in the market or not, should be paid by the particular development through regulation and/or market-based incentives. Conserving the environment for future generations introduces the notion of maintaining a minimum of environmental capital, including the major environmental support systems of the planet such as the great river estuaries, together with the more conventional renewable resources such as the tropical rain forests. While it is difficult to identify the minimum environmental stock necessary to fulfil this requirement it is clear that 'current rates of environmental degradation and resource depletion are likely to carry us beyond that level'.¹⁷ Sustainability