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## **GLOBAL TRENDS IN SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT: CRISIS IMPLICATIONS**

The global community has made great strides in addressing poverty, but a mere continuation of current development strategies will not suffice to achieve sustainable development. Economic and social progress remains uneven, the global financial crisis has revealed the fragility of progress, and accelerating environmental degradation inflicts increasing costs on societies. There are a number of economic, social, technological, demographic and environmental megatrends underlying these challenges - a deeper globalization, persistent inequalities, demographic diversity and environmental degradation - to which a sustainable development agenda will have to respond.

These trends influence and reinforce each other in myriad ways and pose enormous challenges. Urbanization is proceeding rapidly in developing countries, globalization and financialization are perpetuating inequalities, while exposing countries to greater risks of contagion from crises, and food and nutrition as well as energy security is threatened by competing demands on land and water, as well as environmental degradation. Most important, environmental degradation has reached critical levels. Business as usual is therefore not an option, and sustainable development will require transformative change at the local, national and global levels.

Significant progress has been made in the new millennium in achieving global development goals. Poverty was decreasing in all regions of the world, at least until the onset of the global financial crisis, underpinned by strong economic growth in developing countries and emerging economies. As a result, the first target of the Millennium Development Goals - halving the proportion of people living in extreme poverty globally - has already been met. Improvements in school enrolment rates and health outcomes demonstrate similar progress in the dimension of social development.

These challenges to sustainable development are driven by broad underlying economic, social, technological, demographic and environmental megatrends. Megatrends are understood in this context as major shifts in economic, social and environmental conditions which change societies and substantially impact people at all levels. Both the progress in development that has been achieved in recent decades and its uneven nature are tied intrinsically to changes in the global economy and globalization.

Many countries have benefited from access to global markets and the spread of knowledge and technology, but others remain marginalized. Tighter trade, investment and financial links have also increased interdependence between countries and led, particularly in combination with financialization, to greater risks of contagion in times of crisis. At the same time, economic growth has been accompanied by rising income inequalities in many countries. With countries at different stages of the demographic transition, further population growth, urbanization and rapid ageing put major stresses on the national infra-structure and health and education systems. If necessary investments are not made, such demographic changes will also heighten the vulnerability of countries and populations to economic, social and environmental crises.

In addition to globalization, inequalities and major demographic changes, there is a fourth megatrend, accelerating environmental degradation, which introduces critical challenges for sustainable development. This megatrend is driven by unsustainable production and consumption patterns, and already impacts development at all levels. In the long run, a continuation of current trends and the breaching of planetary boundaries in particular would undermine all efforts to achieve sustainable development.

## **References**

1. Global trends and challenges to sustainable development. UN. [https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/wess/wess\\_current/wess2013/Chapter1.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/wess/wess_current/wess2013/Chapter1.pdf)