



## World Youth Alliance

### **Statement on Sustainable Development**

As a global coalition of young people committed to promoting the dignity of the person, the World Youth Alliance affirms Principle 1 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, which states that, “human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development”.<sup>1</sup> Responsible stewardship of the earth is a critical obligation for all; however, the human person is never secondary to the protection of the environment. Human dignity is the starting point for the pursuit of a sustainable world and the foundation of human rights.<sup>2</sup>

#### **Three Pillars of Sustainable Development**

The international community recognizes three interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars of sustainable development.<sup>3</sup> It is imperative that a person-centered response be applied to each.

##### Economic Development

The aim of authentic economic development is to create social, political and economic conditions that allow each person to reach his or her full potential. The capacity of the human person to generate wealth using knowledge, skills and creativity is unique and reflects a fundamental aspect of human dignity. It is this dignity and the value of human capital as a whole that comprise our greatest resource, and form the basis upon which to ground all steps toward economic development.

##### Social Development

When societies are built upon respect for human dignity and the family, sustainable economic growth and environmental protection become achievable. Social development is thus a prerequisite for a thriving economy and environment. Basic necessities such as access to clean water, sanitation, and adequate healthcare are essential for development. Progress in the reduction of maternal morbidity and mortality likewise are critical given the integral role a woman plays in fostering development in her community. By affirming the fundamental human needs, desires, and rights of each person, a unified commitment to sustainable development may be made.

##### Environmental Protection

Each person is called to recognize his or her personal responsibility to be an effective steward of our natural environment. The fundamental premise upon which responsible stewardship is based is the belief that each person is a precious resource, and that together we may answer the challenges of a growing population with innovation and invention. The goals of development and environmental protection do not stand in opposition, but are instead mutually attainable through a person-centered approach.

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<sup>1</sup> Rio Declaration on Environment and Development.

<sup>2</sup> Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Preamble.

<sup>3</sup> Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.