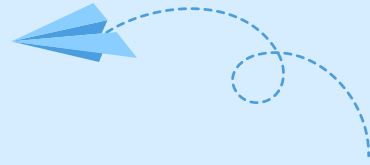




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ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT REPORT

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The environment is a critical asset that one should strive to not only protect, but also enhance by various measures of sustainable development in terms of good and efficient environmental management. As such, the advent of the European industrial revolution propelled one towards industrial development, later paving way for the rise of both scientific and technological advancement. It, hence, propelled humanity to greater levels of development, which inherently relied majorly on existent earth resources as well as environment at large. Thus, in order to ensure continued growth and development, the important aspect of raw material (resources, minerals, fuels etc.) acquisition continues to influence greatly the global industrial arena.

Sustainable development, therefore, refers to the means by which human development occurs, with resource utility being advanced towards meeting both human needs and consumption while concurrently ensuring sustainability of the environment and pertinent natural systems. An appropriate definition, as formulated by the Brundtland Commission, best describes the above-mentioned notion of sustainable development: it is development which meets contemporary needs/requirements without necessarily compromising future generations' ability to sustainably meet their own demands/needs. Educating the above is the fact that such human needs are not only requisite in the contemporary arena, but also to future generations to come, thus the prerogative to develop sustainably (Smith & Rees 1998).

From the above-mentioned information, it is critical to note that efficient environmental management is crucial for sustainable global development, given the presence of globalization. This continued

interconnectedness in the global arena through interdependent interactions requires both efficiency and effectiveness in overall management. Sustainable development as such brings together both the social challenges facing Humanity and the greater concern for existent natural systems' carrying capacity. It is traceable to the 1970s when 'sustainability' (as a term) was descriptive of an economy based on equilibrium with basic ecological support systems, hence addressing various existent pertinent environmental concerns.

With time, and as man become more self-sufficient, an analytical breakdown of sustainable development became necessary with four distinct domains, i.e. ecological, economic, cultural, and political sustainability. This report will analyze the first ecological sustainability with the oil and gas industry being the main area of focus. As aforementioned, the Brundtland Report released by the United Nations addresses the issue of sustainable development, with two core concepts being encompassed by the aforementioned definition. As such, there is the concept of needs, particularly referring to the essential needs of the global majority, which should have an overriding priority. In addition, there are some limitations as a result of not only current social organization, but also the state of science and technology (Arscott 2003).

The oil and gas industry is a vital aspect of contemporary human existence, which provides a driving force for the existent industrial arena as well as social advancement. The ecological aspect of sustainable development has been quite complicated due to its social dimension component. As such, it delves into both social as well as environmental issues, with focus being made on sustainable development and

particularly, human health and wellbeing. Consequently, the availability of resources such as air, food, water, shelter, fuel sources, mineral resources etc. is part of ecological foundations aimed at ensuring sustainable development.

The oil and gas industry, hence, is pertinent to human development, wellbeing, and overall advancement due to its critical nature as a key driver of industry and economy. Consequently, there is a need for enhanced addressing of issues pertaining to public health risk through various investments, especially in the field of eco-system services. It is because it is both a transformative and powerful force requisite for sustainable development extending to not only humanity and the environment, but also all other living things/organisms. Hence, there is the need for various organizations in this critical field to act in an ethical way towards ensuring continuous achievement of their environmental management targets.

Due to the nature of oil and gas exploration, drilling, and tapping, the environment is influenced by various aspects, which inadvertently end up affecting overall human growth and development. In many jurisdictions where oil and gas exploration has been conducted resulting in drilling and extraction, the environment, unfortunately, has been the biggest casualty. As showcased by various incidences of oil spills, gas pipe explosions, corrosive output affecting water systems, as well as general socio-economic and political instability resulted from various tensions within such social contexts as the oil and gas industry. Due to the complex relationship between human development and the overall quality of the environment, it is fundamental for the industry to display some level of ethical behavior (Finn, 2009).

Ethics, as such, refers to the adherence to morally correct ways and means of doing things, with consideration of all aspects encompassing the energy industry. Due to the fact that various environmental disasters occur as a result of people's quest towards achieving higher levels of development, this implies that there is a lack of sufficiently implemented precautions aimed at balancing overall human developmental objectives against the critical need for maintenance of desirable environmental quality. The planet continues being threatened by not only a rapidly increasing population ratio, but also the accompanying environmental impact. However, environmental protection cannot be effectively implemented without the development of satisfactory levels of economic and social capital.

Consequently, sustainable development is challenged by the need to find an appropriate balance between the aforementioned socio-economic capital and the environment. Sustainability with regard to the oil and gas industry necessitates moral/ethical adherence through effective utility of these energy sources. Thus, such organizations are required to be included in their undertaking, from adhering to government regulations and policies to overall inclusion of various communities affected by these energy resource extraction activities. Moreover, there is the need for sustainable utility of the environment taking caution in all pertinent processes involved in energy extraction and distribution. It has great impact not only on such organizations, but also on their stakeholders.

Through various guidelines related to the above-mentioned information, there is a collective quest towards preparing or improving the policies, regulations, and programs necessary for minimizing such activities'

impact on the environment. Through utilizing various management practices, systems, procedures, and technologies, such entities, in collaboration with others, will be able to reduce, minimize, and prevent resultant impacts. It may be achieved through continued sharing of the best practices, in addition to applying comprehensive management systems. It, in effect, is critical for not only oil and gas corporations, but also for their suppliers and contractors. It, hence, entails collaboration with government, corresponding agencies, as well as communities towards finding a workable solution to sustainable extraction and supply of resources (Agyeman 2005).

By observing provisions, regulations, and policies, oil and gas organizations can effectively minimize the potential impacts on the environment. By utilizing performance-based regulations, rather than more traditional control and command approach, these entities can ensure continued achievement of their set environmental management targets. Affecting these entities due to acting/conducting themselves ethically/morally, they are able to stimulate more effective and innovative ways of environmental management. By embarking on widespread consultation with local communities as well as other stakeholders, they are able to find more effective ways of conducting their business and ensuring sustainable development.

Various measures are, therefore, crucial for sustainable use of resources and at the same time, managing the environment including meeting all standards, implementing all necessary safety and precautionary measures, as well as preparing for disastrous consequences as a result of various accidents. It entails the continued utility of various measures deemed as more effective towards attaining strong environmental

management. At the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 under the auspice of the UNCED (The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development), focus was made primarily on the close links between socio-economic development and the environment. In addition, there was an inclusion of important social change dimensions as well as the overall impact of cultural values accompanying various developmental projects.

It is especially true in remote areas, where partnership is requisite in such endeavors. By conforming to contemporary good practices, such entities need to emphasize instituting effective management systems, where environmental issues are core components of their various corporate cultures. Moreover, there should be strict adherence to agreed forums such as the Oil Industry International Exploration and Production Forum in addition to the globally agreed upon Health, Safety and Environmental Management System. Effective measures of environmental management pertaining to both the upstream and downstream sectors (exploration and production vis-à-vis refining, processing, distribution and marketing) are other facets displaying moral/ethical responsibility (Hasna 2007).

They may be inclusive of backup measures, accident control and mitigation measures, pollution reduction as well as sustainable management of the environment. In conclusion, to achieve the aforementioned sustainable development rooted in positive environmental management, there is a need for collaboration between this industry, government, and pertinent agencies, as well as the larger community.

