

TRENDS IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

ENERGY

FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT



ATMOSPHERE & AIR POLLUTION



CLIMATE CHANGE



Department of Economic and Social Affairs
Division for Sustainable Development

TRENDS

IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



United Nations
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DESA

The Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat is a vital interface between global policies in the economic, social and environmental spheres and national action. The Department works in three main interlinked areas: (i) it compiles, generates and analyses a wide range of economic, social and environmental data and information on which Member States of the United Nations draw to review common problems and to take stock of policy options; (ii) it facilitates the negotiations of Member States in many intergovernmental bodies on joint courses of action to address ongoing or emerging global challenges; and (iii) it advises interested Governments on the ways and means of translating policy frameworks developed in United Nations conferences and summits into programmes at the country level and, through technical assistance, helps build national capacities.

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Since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 and the subsequent World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, significant efforts have been made in pursuit of sustainable development. At the political level sustainable development has grown from being a movement mostly focusing on environmental concerns to a widely recognized framework utilized by individuals, governments, corporations and civil society that attempts to balance economic, social, environmental and generational concerns in decision-making and actions at all levels. At the September 2005 World Summit, the UN General Assembly reiterated that “sustainable development is a key element of the overarching framework for United Nations activities, in particular for achieving the internationally agreed development goals”, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (A/RES/59/227).

This report highlights key developments and recent trends in the areas of Energy for Sustainable Development, Industrial Development, Atmosphere/Air Pollution and Climate Change — the four interrelated topics being considered by the Commission on Sustainable Development at its 14th and 15th sessions (2006-07). It notes progress in a number of areas while, at the same time, acknowledging that in other areas significant work is still needed to advance implementation of intergovernmentally agreed goals and targets.

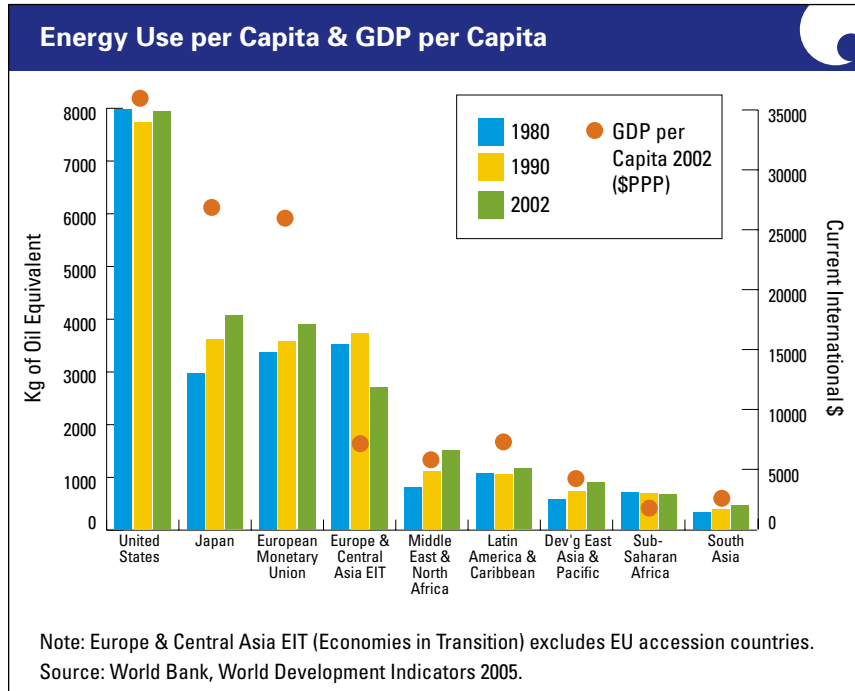
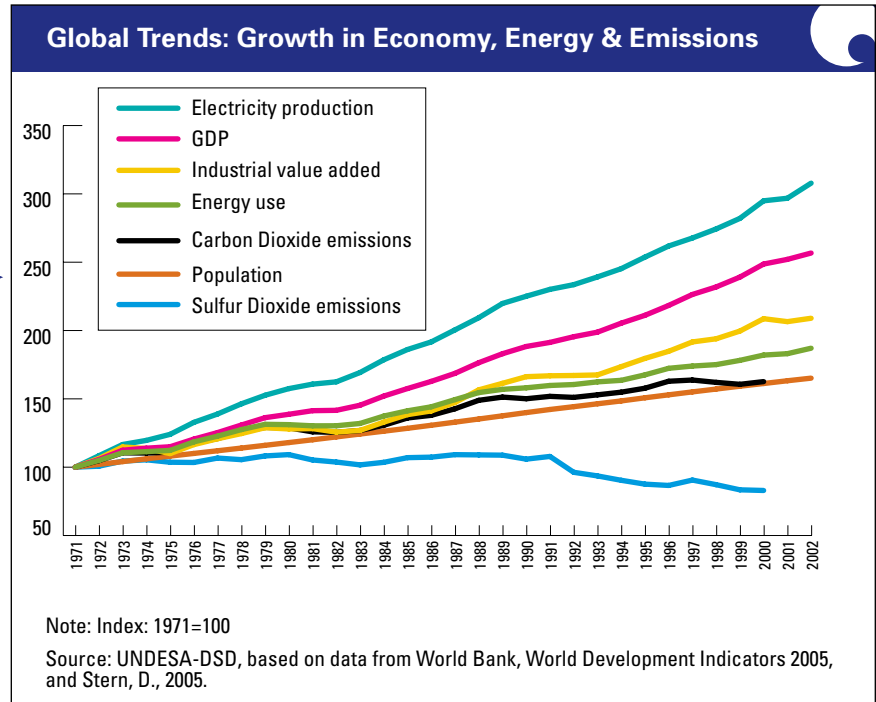
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GLOBAL TRENDS

in Economic Activity, Energy, Electricity Use, and Emissions

- Energy consumption has generally grown more slowly than economic activity as energy efficiency has improved and economies have shifted to less energy-intensive industries and services.
- Electricity use has outpaced GDP growth, particularly in developing countries, as access to electricity and the use of appliances have grown with rising living standards.
- Energy efficiency combined with increased use of natural gas — and to a lesser extent nuclear and renewable energy — have helped keep the growth in CO₂ emissions slightly lower than the growth in energy consumption.¹



- Globally, per capita CO₂ emissions remained roughly constant, as emissions grew at about the same rate as population.²
 - Since the early 1970s, particularly in developed countries, major investments in technologies to control SO₂ emissions, combined with greater use of low-sulphur fuels, have contributed to reducing SO₂ emissions.³
- ◀ In developing countries, per capita energy consumption is between one-third and one-fifteenth what it is in developed countries. While per capita energy consumption is correlated with per capita income, Europe and Japan are considerably less energy intensive for their income levels than is the USA. Among developing countries, South Asia's lower per capita energy consumption than sub-Saharan Africa's, despite slightly higher per capita income, results in part from a lesser reliance on inefficient biomass fuels.