

**FROM “ONLY ONE EARTH” TO “THE FUTURE WE WANT”: THE
EMERGENCE OF SUSTAINABILITY, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT,
ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND THE GREEN ECONOMY IN
ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE.**

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The world became aware of the finite nature of the environment in the 1960s following the Earthrise, leading to a series of environmental protection conferences and treaties in the 1970s championed by the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (UNCHE) held at Stockholm in 1972. This earlier awareness was followed by a series of other environmental conferences now popularly known as the Earth Summits. Since the Stockholm conference, global environmental governance has improved but has failed to achieve substantial environmental sustainability. The article creates a connection between UNCHE and the earth summits, revealing why they have failed to achieve substantial environmental sustainability. It argues that considering the failure of concepts and approaches employed in environmental governance before 2012, the more practical ideas of the green economy which emerged at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development 2012 hold the best prospect for practical environmental sustainability. It argues that the general concepts of sustainability and sustainable development have failed to achieve environmental protection, hence the need to adopt specific field-based mechanisms that the green economy offer. The paper is qualitative, employing descriptive and analytical methods. It reveals that environmental problems mainly arise from development projects, and attempts to combat environmental problems have failed owing to the absence of specific integrative field approaches. It recommends that states should not only strengthen legislative frameworks alongside other governance and supporting structures but also boost enforcement capacities and field integration systems, embracing the concepts and practices recommended by the green economy in pro-implementation manners.

Keywords: Sustainable development; Earth summit; Green economy; Field approaches.