

IMPLEMENTATION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT – PRIORITY FOR THE STATES OF THE WORLD

Associate Professor Ph.D. Alina VOICULEȚ

"Constantin Brâncoveanu" University of Pitești, Romania
E-mail: alinav06@yahoo.com

Associate Professor Ph.D. Nicoleta BELU

"Constantin Brâncoveanu" University of Pitești, Romania
E-mail: nicolbelu@yahoo.com

Abstract: *In the current context in which most states of the world register economic growth and the economic development process is now very desired because it highlights not only the quantitative evolution of an economy, but also the qualitative and structural changes, a new challenge rises: implementation of sustainable development. The evolution of humanity, the spectacular industrialization over the last decades and the focus put on the growing satisfaction of the needs of a growing global population, have determined the world's states and international bodies to realize that the environmental situation is increasingly dramatic. The exploitation of the planet's resources and the extremely low regeneration capacity of many of them creates an unparalleled situation. Mankind is facing a new challenge, even if the technological progress, innovation, computerization, etc. have led to new backup solutions, world's states have to realize that if they do not focus on future developments on environmental protection, the future is uncertain.*

Key words: *environment, economic development, sustainable development, economical growth.*

JEL Classification: *F64, O10.*

1. Introduction

Sustainable development has to satisfy current needs, without compromising the possibility of future generations to satisfy their own needs. The concept of sustainable development implies the compatibility of four systems: economic, human, environmental and technological. These four systems will become compatible only if the strategy regarding sustainable development includes, as an indispensable element, simultaneous progress of the four systems. Sustainability, as an equilibrium between economic growth and environmental protection, requires a change in current economic policy in order to increase the importance of social, food and environmental component.

2. Sustainable development – priority perspective for the world's states

The concept of sustainable development begun over 40 years ago as a response to environmental problems and natural resources crisis. After the Second World War, as a result of the way of usage of the development of the factors of production, the premises of a grave ecological imbalance have accumulated at an extremely fast pace. From the first moment when the natural environment could not absorb the shocks from human intervention, an ecological crisis broke out. It was for the first time in history that mankind faced such a phenomenon, vast yet profound, generated by his own activity.

A series of events have had a lead role in environmental protection and sustainable development fields.

The Stockholm Conference on Environment in 1972 is the moment in which it is brought out that human activities contribute to environmental damage, which endangers his very own future.

Several years later, in 1983, the World Commission for Environment and Development, lead by Brundtland begins it's activity, after a resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly.

In 1987, one year after the catastrophe that happened in Chernobyl, the so-called Brundtland Report appears, which gives the most cited definition of sustainable development.

Respect for the requirements of sustainable development requires social, political, economic, demographic and technical solutions.

The term of sustainable development started to become very well known after the United Nations Environment and Development Conference, held by the UN in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 known as the „Earth Summit”, attended by representatives of approximately 170 countries.

Agenda 21 or the Agenda for sustainable development – a plan to support it, was then developed.

In 2002, the Summit on sustainable development, the second Earth Summit, took place in Johannesburg.

At the same time, sustainable development has become an objective for the European Union as well, in 2001 the European Union’s Sustainable Development Strategy was adopted.

In June 2012 another Earth Summit takes place in Rio de Janeiro.

Despite Earth Summits, practical results have not been reached, mankind facing a major environmental problem, along with a lack of social equity and inequality of opportunity.

In 2015, Agenda 2030 was adopted at the UN Summit in New York. Through this UN document it has provided a universal agenda with clear, quantifiable objectives. Agenda 2030 includes a set of 17 Sustainable Development Objectives and an action plan over the next 15 years, towards eradication of extreme poverty, inequalities combat, injustice and protection of the planet by 2030.

Sustainable Development Goals, according to the UN, are:

- Eradicate poverty in all forms and in any context;
- Eradicate hunger, ensure food security, improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture;
- Ensure a healthy life and promote the well being of all, at any age;
- Guaranteed quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all;
- Achieve gender equality and empower all women;
- Ensure availability and durable management of water and sanitation for all;
- Ensure access to affordable, safe, sustainable energy sources for all;
- Promote sustainable economical growth, sustainable and open to all, full and productive employment and decent work for all;
- Build a sustainable infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization and encourage innovation at all times;
- Reduce inequalities between and inside countries;
- Development of cities and human settlements that will be open to everyone, safe, resilient and sustainable;
- Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns;
- Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impact;
- Conservation and sustainable usages of oceans, seas and marine resources for a more sustainable development;
- Protect, restore and promote the sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainable forest management, desertification combat, stopping and repairing soil degradation and stopping biodiversity loss;
- Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, justice for all, creation of effective, responsible and inclusive institutions at all levels;
- Revitalize and strengthen the means of implementation and partnership for sustainable development;

Figure nr. 1. Sustainable Development Goals



Source: <http://futureearth.org/future-earth-sustainable-development-goals> [Accessed 7 April 2019]

Since the development of Agenda 21, the UN has requested that the countries and international communities develop sustainable development indicators. These indicators are necessary in order to implement the concept of sustainable development and to help decision-makers at all levels to adopt solid sustainable development policies at a national level.

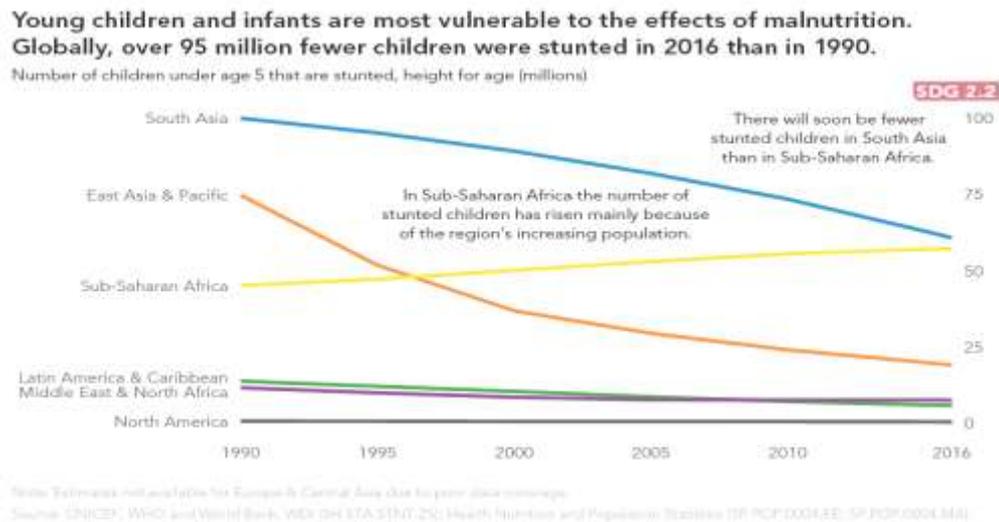
Global indicators were adopted by the UN General Assembly later, on July 6, 2017 and are included in the Resolution adopted by the General Assembly regarding the activity of the Statistical Commission on Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development. Development experts estimate that a total of \$1 billion dollars a year will be necessary to allow 77 of the world's low income countries to recover and introduce statistical systems capable of measuring sustainable development indicators.

The World Bank launched in 2018 Atlas of Sustainable Development Goals, to highlight all the global efforts in order to achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

For example, the second objective for sustainable development, which aims to eradicate hunger and ensure food security, is presented by the World Bank through a suggestive figure.

Thus, insufficient access to food resources, determined by economic causes is the main cause of hunger, phenomenon with which a large part of the Earth's population is facing. Its highest proportion is in Sub-Saharan Africa, but also Asia, the Near East, even Latin America and the Caribbean are dealing with this phenomenon. The need for food, being a primary need for mankind, the impossibility to satisfy it by the entire population of the Earth is a big concern for all the empowered organisms in this field.

Figure nr. 2. The number of children and young people affected by malnutrition



Source: <http://datatopics.worldbank.org/sdcatlas/SDG-02-zero-hunger.html> [Accessed 7 April 2019]

Efforts made to improve the nutrition of the population will contribute to progress in many fields of sustainable development. Persistent malnutrition reflects a failure to the development process.

Almost every country in the world is confronted with malnutrition problems that represents a high risk towards public health.

According to World Bank data (see figure 2), the number of children and young people affected by malnutrition has decreased in 2016 compared to 1990, by more than 95 million. Only Sub-Saharan Africa, as a result of population growth registers a slight increase in 2016 compared to 1990.

Based on these data, the world's states will have to adopt viable and realistic measures in order to implement the concept of sustainable development in the strategy appropriate for 21st century changes.

The economic growth from some of the states is not enough. Excessive population growth, especially in poorer areas of the planet, its aging in advanced countries, technology, depletion of resources, productivity gains, excessive industrialization are just some of the challenges in the 21st century. Mankind is at a crossroads, if the necessary measures are not taken, the situation will degenerate, reaching the hypotheses made in the 1970s by the representatives of the Club of Rome. According to them, a series of parameters have been taken into account: world population, natural resources, industrial production per capita, food per capita, pollution, economic expansion and demographic decline will stop during the 21st century, due to natural resources depletion.

The Sustainable Development Objectives which the 193 UN states have proposed to implement must become a priority in local, national and regional policies, if the world governments want to ensure a peaceful and healthy life for the planet's citizens.

Many of the challenges with which mankind is dealing, like climate change, water deficit, inequality and hunger, can be resolved only at a global level and through sustainable development promotion.

Diversifying and multiplying the needs of a growing population will bring new solutions based on last generation discoveries.

However, cutting-edge technology from artificial intelligence to zero emission electric vehicles can be a two-edged sword for the world's countries. Technologies from renewable energy field and efficient energy storage systems are already enhancing environmental sustainability, allowing countries to "overcome" already existing technology solutions. New technologies have improved access to medicines and increased the welfare of the most vulnerable. New frontier technologies – from renewable energy technologies to biodegradable materials, artificial intelligence and electric vehicles – they hold an enormous potential to improve human life and significantly accelerate efforts towards reaching Sustainable Development Goals. But, without the proper policies, they can lead to bigger inequality and social dislocation, according to *World Economic and Social Survey* report from 2018.

That is why António Guterres, the UN Secretary-General said that we need policies that can secure border technologies - which increasingly exceed the sectoral, geographical and generational boundaries – and are not only viable from a commercial point of view, but also fair and ethical. This will, however, require a thorough, continuous, objective and transparent assessment involving all interested parts.

In the field of sustainable development, the European Union is in an advanced position. It is determined that, together with the member states, be among the first actors that implement the UN Agenda 2030. Sustainable Development Goals are integrated into all 10 European Commission action priorities. In 2016, the European Commission presented its strategic approach towards the implementation of Agenda 2030 and achieving all sustainable development goals.

In this context, Romania, as a UN member since 1995, has elaborated a national volunteer magazine in 2018 with the occasion of the 100th anniversary celebration of the Great Union, providing information on the implementation process of Agenda 2030 and its objectives of sustainable development. Romania's first national sustainable development strategy has been elaborated in 1999, revised in 2008 (one year after EU accession), and now the National Strategy for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals of Romania 2030 are in the process of implementation.

Therefore, at a national level, the Department for Sustainable Development was established in 2017, coordinating at a national level the implementation of the 17 sustainable development objectives.

For Romania, both as a UN member and as a European Union member, as well for all the world's states, sustainable development is not one of many possible options, but the only rational perspective in order to advance as a nation.

3. Conclusions

Agenda 2030, which contains the Sustainable Development Objectives, is a call to action to protect the planet and guarantee the well-being of people. These common objectives require active implication of individuals, businesses, administrations and countries from the whole world.

The states of the world, regardless of their level of development, will have to compete to provide future generations a chance for a better life, in which the satisfaction of basic and superior needs is a normality.

Between 24 and 25 september 2019, the heads of state and government will meet at the United Nations headquarters in New York to track and properly analyze progress made in implementing the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and its 17 sustainable development objectives. This event will be the first UN summit regarding sustainable development objectives since adopting the 2030 Agenda in september 2015.

"Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Objectives are our collective response towards building the right globalization", UN Secretary-General António Guterres declared.

References

1. Acciona, 2019. *Sustainable Development. What is sustainable development and how to achieve it?* [online] Available at: <<https://www.acciona.com/sustainable-development/>>.
2. Asociatia de Dezvoltare Durabila a Judetului Tulcea, 2019. *Dezvoltare durabilă.* [online] Available at: <<https://addj.ro/dezvoltare-durabila/>>.
3. Duțu, M., Niculcea, S., Ciucur, D., Scurtu, M., Voiculeț, A., Ioneci, M., Bălănescu, M., 2008. *Macroeconomie.* Pitești: Independența Economică Publishing House.
4. European Commission, 2019. *Viziunea UE cu privire la dezvoltarea durabilă.* [online] Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/international-strategies/sustainable-development-goals/eu-approach-sustainable-development_ro#de-ce-ne-preocup-dezvoltarea-durabil>.
5. Ministerul Afacerilor Externe, Guvernul României, 2019. *Agenda 2030 pentru dezvoltare durabilă.* [online] Available at: <<https://www.mae.ro/node/35919>>.
6. Relief Web, 2018. *World Economic and Social Survey Frontier Technologies for Sustainable Development.* [online] Available at: <<https://reliefweb.int/report/world/world-economic-and-social-survey-2018-frontier-technologies-sustainable-development>>.
7. Tita, O., Oprean, C., 2015. *Perspective actuale privind dezvoltarea durabilă,* Bucharest: Pro Universitaria Publishing House.
8. United Nations, 2015. *Data for Development – A Needs Assessment for SDG Monitoring and Statistical Capacity Development.* [online] Available at: <<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=400&nr=2017&menu=35>>.
9. United Nations, Sustainable Development Goals, Knowledge Platform, 2018. *Indicators in the Transforming our Worlds – The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.* [online] Available at: <<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics/indicators>>.
10. United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2018. *SDG Indicators.* [online] Available at: <<https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/indicators-list/>>.
11. United Nations, 2018. *Romania.* [online] Available at: <<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/memberstates/romania>>.
12. United Nations, 2019. *About the Sustainable Development Goals.* [online] Available at: <<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>>.
13. United Nations, 2019. *SDG Summit, 24-25 September 2019, New York.* [online] Available at: <<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgsummit>>.