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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT – CONCEPT, DEFINITIONS

The article analyzes different approaches to defining the essence of sustainable development, its goals and conditions of achievement. The concept of sustainable development has emerged as a response to growing concern about the potential negative effects on the ecosystem due to pressure from human activity. Its aim was to prevent or at least reduce the imbalance between economic growth and social development, as well as between socio-economic development and the natural environment. The most common definition of sustainable development is recorded as the first sentence of the 1987 report, Our Common Future. This definition represents sustainable development as a development in which the needs of the modern generation can be met without sacrificing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The concept of sustainable development is attracting more and more supporters and, most importantly, it is being implemented in many countries, especially in developed market economies. The concept of sustainable development is based on people as environmental actors, our planet as an area (object) of human influence and partnership. Only a comprehensive approach will achieve the goal of this concept, that is, prosperity and peace in the world.

Key words: *sustainable development, sustainable development goals, conditions for achieving sustainable development.*

У статті проаналізовано різні підходи до визначення суті стабільного розвитку, його цілей та умов досягнення. Концепція сталого розвитку з'явилася як відповідь на зростаюче занепокоєння можливими негативними наслідками для екосистеми внаслідок тиску з боку діяльності людини. Її метою було запобігти або принаймні зменшити дисбаланс між економічним зростанням та соціальним розвитком, а також між соціально-економічним розвитком та природним середовищем. Найбільш поширене визначення сталого розвитку зафіксоване як перше речення доповіді 1987 р. «Наше спільне

майбутнє». Це визначення являє собою сталий розвиток як розвиток, в якому потреби сучасного покоління можуть бути задоволені без шкоди для здатності майбутніх поколінь задовольняти власні потреби. Концепція сталого розвитку привертає все більше прихильників і, що найголовніше, впроваджується у багатьох країнах, особливо в країнах з розвинутою ринковою економікою. Концепція сталого розвитку базується на людях як екологічних суб'єктах, нашої планети як сфери (об'єкта) впливу людини та партнерства. Лише комплексний підхід дозволить досягти мети цієї концепції, тобто процвітання та миру.

Бачення сталого розвитку підринається зростаючою корпоративною глобалізацією економічного життя з його постійним прагненням до прибутку, домінуючими системами цінностей, ідеологіями та надмірним споживанням, політичною практикою, базованою на негайних – до наступних виборів – цілях та обіцянках. Це бачення, у свою чергу, підтримується зростаючою вірою, що людству загрожує екологічне та соціальне самознищення. Цьому сприяє також прискорення зростання екологічної обізнаності у різних соціальних колах, особливо серед молоді, інтелектуального та організаційного дозрівання антикорпоративних та «зелених» змін, глобалістських рухів, а також проєкологічного технологічного прогресу.

Ключові слова: *стабільний розвиток, цілі стабільного розвитку, умови досягнення стабільного розвитку.*

В статті проаналізовані різні підходи до визначення сутності стійкого розвитку, його цілей і умов досягнення. Концепція стійкого розвитку з'явилася як відповідь на зростаюче занепокоєння щодо можливих негативних наслідків для екосистеми внаслідок тиску з боку діяльності людини. Її метою було запобігти або хоча б зменшити дисбаланс між економічним зростанням і соціальним розвитком, а також між соціально-економічним розвитком і природою. Найбільш поширене визначення стійкого розвитку зафіксовано в першому пропозиції доповіді 1987 р. «Наше спільне майбутнє». Це визначення представляє собою стійке розвиток як розвиток, в якому потреби сучасного покоління можуть бути задоволені без шкоди для можливості майбутніх поколінь задовольняти власні потреби. Концепція стійкого розвитку привертає все більше сторонників і, що найголовніше, впроваджується у багатьох країнах, особливо в країнах з розвинутою ринковою економікою. Концепція стійкого розвитку базується на людях як екологічних суб'єктах нашої планети як області (об'єкта) впливу людини та партнерства. Лише комплексний підхід дозволить досягти мети цієї концепції, тобто процвітання та миру.

Ключевые слова: *стабильное развитие, цели устойчивого развития, достижение устойчивого развития.*

Introduction. The concept of sustainable development appeared as a response to the growing concern about the possibilities of terrestrial ecosystem as a result of pressure from human activity. Its aim was to prevent, or at least reduce, the imbalance between economic growth and social development, as well as between socio-economic development and the natural environment. The most widely accepted definition of sustainable development is recorded as the first sentence of the 1987 Report “Our Common Future”. This definition represents sustainable development as a development in which the needs of the present generation can be met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The concept of sustainable development attracts more and more supporters and, most importantly, is being implemented in many countries, especially those with developed market economies. The concept of sustainable development

is based on people as environmental actors, our planet as an area (object) of human influence and partnership. Only an integrated approach will achieve the goal of this concept, i.e. prosperity and peace in the world.

The concept of sustainable development. Global threats arising in the second half of the 20th century, resulting from rapid consumption of natural resources, growing environmental pollution, excessive demographic growth, failure to satisfy the basic needs of growing groups of people and deep destabilization of natural and socio-economic systems, contributed to an intensive discussion, conducted with a large participation of international institutions, primarily the United Nations, on worrying development trends. Finally, the idea of sustainable development was born at the turn of the 1970s and 1980s on the basis of the need reported by politicians, business people and economics to establish the canon of global environmental protection policy [Papuziński 2006].

The concept of sustainable development appeared as a response to the growing concern about the possibilities of terrestrial ecosystem as a result of the pressure caused by human activity. Its aim was to prevent or at least reduce the imbalance between economic growth and social development, as well as between social and economic development and the natural environment [Poskrobko 2009]. The growing awareness of responsibility for the global scale of environmental changes generated even by individual human activities led to the search for a development model that would ensure the implementation of human needs while reducing environmental damage. Therefore, sustainable development became a response to the maturing need for a new approach to environmental resources and their use for human and economic needs.

The essence of sustainable development has emerged and developed during the intensive media development. Through information in the daily press and television on environmental disasters and related threats to the population, the conviction of global responsibility for even local changes in the environment was evoked. Growing awareness of the international community has led to the development of cooperation in the field of environmental protection [Kenig-Witkowska 2011]. Therefore, the concept of sustainable development was created as a response to the growing concern over contemporary human and environmental relations and their consequences. Initially, it was presented as a way of promoting nature conservation. Then another important factor conducive to the development of the idea of sustainable development next to public care for the environment turned out to be the development of ecology as a science [Rokicka and Woźniak 2016].

By entering the term “sustainable development” into the Google search engine, we can find **9 440 000 web page views**. It is used by international and national institutions, promoted by politicians, corporations, programmes on various subjects and in various fields of activity.

Modern understanding of the concept of sustainable development was first presented in a work by the Saxon civil servant and thinker Hans Carl von Carlowitz, published in 1713, entitled “Sylvicultura economica” [Rokicka and Woźniak 2016]. The author of this work was the creator of a model of sustainable forestry. At the beginning of the 18th century in Germany there was a constant shortage of wood due to the depletion of local forests. Wood was used for mining and

metallurgical purposes. Carlowitz ordered the reconstruction of forests under his control by introducing the principles of regulated management of natural resources. These mainly consisted of cutting down the number of trees that did not exceed their natural growth. Soon his model became accepted in the forestry of the whole Germany, and then became an example for the whole world [Rokicka and Woźniak 2016].

Definitions of sustainable development. The most widely accepted definition of sustainable development is recorded as the first sentence of the 1987 Report “Our Common Future”. This definition represents sustainable development as a development in which the needs of the present generation can be met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The report points out that environment and development are inextricably linked and should therefore be treated as a single issue.

Moreover, the United Nations Conference Declarations were of fundamental importance for the terminology of sustainable development from a legal and international perspective:

- on the environment (adopted in Stockholm on 16 June 1972, the so-called Stockholm Declaration) [Lipiński 2010, Rokicka and Woźniak 2016],
- and on the environment and development (adopted in Rio de Janeiro on 14 June 1992 at the so-called Earth Summit).

As a result of undertaken activities, 27 principles related to sustainable development were listed, among which the following can be mentioned:

- a) man has the right to a healthy and creative life in harmony with nature,
- b) States have a sovereign right to use their natural resources, but are responsible to present and future generations for ensuring that their activities do not damage the environment,
- c) in order to achieve sustainable development, it is necessary for environmental protection to be an inseparable part of development processes and not to be considered separately from them,
- d) sustainable development requires the eradication of poverty and reduction of disparities in the standard of living of most people in the world,
- e) in order to achieve sustainable development, States should reduce or eliminate production and consumption patterns hampering this development, deepen scientific knowledge in this area and effectively provide every citizen with adequate access to environmental information and raise public awareness in this field [Rakoczy and Wierzbowski 2010, Rokicka and Woźniak 2016].

The World Summit on Sustainable Development (Rio+10) held in Johannesburg in 2002 presented the so-called Declaration on Sustainable Development, which included the following statements:

- a) sustainable development is the responsibility of the entire international community,
- b) conditions necessary to achieve this goal are, inter alia, the eradication of poverty, changes in consumption patterns and protection of natural resources,
- c) the effect of human activity is deterioration of the state of environment on a global scale consisting in, inter alia, a decline in biodiversity and the emergence of negative climate changes, which as a result deprives many people of the possibility of dignified life [Lipiński 2010, Rokicka and Woźniak 2016].

The Rio+20 World Summit, held in Rio de Janeiro on 20–22 June 2012, had a significant impact on shaping the importance of sustainable development. The result of this meeting was the adoption of a declaration “The future we want to have” and the decision to inaugurate a process to develop a set of new sustainable development goals (SDG) [Rokicka and Woźniak 2016].

In addition, the 2030 Sustainability Agenda Summit was held at the UN headquarters in New York on 25-27 September 2015. It adopted the document “Transforming our world: Agenda for Sustainable Development – 2030”, which sets out, inter alia, 17 key goals for sustainable development – Table 1.

Table 1

Sustainable Development Goals

| | | |
|---------|---|---|
| Goal 1 | Lack of poverty | Eliminate poverty in all its forms throughout the world |
| Goal 2 | No hunger | Eliminate hunger, achieve food security and ensure better nutrition, promote sustainable agriculture |
| Goal 3 | Health and well-being | Ensure a healthy life and promote prosperity for all people of all ages |
| Goal 4 | High-level education | Provide inclusive and quality education, as well as promote lifelong learning |
| Goal 5 | Gender equality | Achieve gender equality and empower women and girls |
| Goal 6 | Clean water and access to sanitary facilities | Ensure water availability for all people, as well as sustainable water management and sanitation |
| Goal 7 | Cheap and clean energy | Provide access for all to stable, sustainable and modern energy at affordable prices |
| Goal 8 | Decent work and economic growth | Promote durable, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all |
| Goal 9 | Industry, innovation and infrastructure | Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and support innovation |
| Goal 10 | Reducing inequalities | Reduce inequalities within and between countries |
| Goal 11 | Sustainable cities and communities | Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable |
| Goal 12 | Responsible consumption and production | Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns |
| Goal 13 | Climate action | Take urgent action to combat climate change and its consequences |
| Goal 14 | Living underwater | Protect the seas and oceans and use their resources sustainably |
| Goal 15 | Life on earth | Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, manage forests sustainably, combat desertification, stop and reverse soil degradation, and halt biodiversity loss |
| Goal 16 | Peace, justice and strong institutions | Promote peaceful and inclusive societies conducive to sustainable development; ensure access to justice for all; create efficient, civic and inclusive institutions at all levels |
| Goal 17 | Partnership for CZR | Strengthen the implementation of Goals and renew the global partnership for sustainable development |

Source: <http://www.un.org/pl/strony-2011-2015/agenda-na-rzecz-zrownowazonego-rozwoju-2030-i-cele-zrownowazonego-rozwoju/2850#sthash.8qR1AcBI.dpuf>

The basic principles of sustainable development are not set and unchanged once and for all, but are developed through global dialogue. In its initial phase, the emphasis was on economic development and environmental protection. The concept of sustainable development was then broadened and deepened to include social development and ecocentric vision of nature. Therefore, the concept of sustainable development is being developed with the participation of various interested parties representing different perspectives [Rokicka and Woźniak 2016].

At the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development, the three commonly used pillars of sustainable development were identified: economy, environment and society, which are inextricably linked. In this way, attention was drawn to the fact that development cannot be seen only in economic terms. Sustainable economic development should lead to greater social cohesion (equal opportunities, counteracting discrimination and exclusion, greater economic equality) and improve the quality of natural environment by reducing the negative impact of production and consumption on the environment and by protecting ecosystems [Rokicka and Woźniak 2016].

With regard to the inclusion of three pillars in sustainable development, the right definition is given by Piontek [2005], stating that it is “a lasting improvement in the quality of life of present and future generations through the formation of appropriate proportions between three types of capital: economic (E), human (L) and natural (P)”. Usually the abbreviation 3xP is given, from the English words planet, people, and at the very end profit. This order suggests emphasis on preserving the Earth’s resources, not threatening the environment, and only at the very end do we see profit. The definition given above also indicates the recipients of sustainable development – both current society and future generations.

Boris [2003] states that the essence of sustainable development is the integration of environmental, economic and social order. According to Piątek [2007], there are different ways of understanding the concept of sustainable development depending on which of the three interdependent sectors is the reference point of conducted analyses. If the sustainable development is analyzed from the natural sector point of view, then in the semantic field of this notion, the eco-development, i.e. subordination of the social and economic activity to the requirements of environmental protection, comes to the fore. If the sustainable development is analysed from the economic sector point of view, then the principle of substitution and sustainability of this development and intergenerational justice come to the fore, i.e. the postulate that economic development should not only satisfy the needs of the presently living generations, but also not reduce the chances of satisfying the needs of future generations. In the economic context, intergenerational justice turns out to be an important point of reference. However, when the sustainable development is analysed from the socio-political sector point of view, the analysis of its axiological background rooted in human nature and in specific political decisions concerning the strategy of balancing development in social and economic activity comes to the fore. Therefore, the three aspects of sustainable development should be treated as complementary rather than competitive.

Conditions for achieving sustainable development. Many barriers hinder the large-scale implementation of sustainable development. Identification of these barriers helps to develop solutions, prioritize and enhance good practice in sustainable development. Among the most important are:

1) building a low-carbon economy that uses resources in a rational and economical way and uses environmentally friendly technologies and production methods;

2) modernization of the global green movement: this movement must bring together communities and organizations to jointly develop practical solutions and engage in the fight for fairness and global inequalities;

3) environmental protection: reducing greenhouse gas emissions and preventing biodiversity loss;

4) building the institutional base for change: the transition to sustainable development depends on joint and coherent action by political and business leaders, governments (national, regional and urban) and effective international environmental governance [EUROPE 2020].

According to Skrobicki [2011], it is possible to define the conditions for achieving sustainable development in the following forms:

1) reduce the consumption of many raw materials and the amount of pollution generated, as the acceptable limits have already been exceeded; and

2) limit the growth of material and energy resources, as there is a risk that in the coming decades there will be a decrease in energy production capacity, which will result in a decrease in industrial and agricultural production; and

3) it is necessary to resign from the policy and practice of continuous growth of consumption, promoting a qualitative change in living patterns where it is more important to “be” rather than “have”;

4) innovative technologies are necessary in order to increase the efficiency of using material and energy resources.

Also other authors [Tapio et al. 2007, Skala-Późniak 2010] emphasize the new approach taking into account the following characteristics of development:

– immaterialization – growth of a qualitative nature, increase in the share of intangible production in global production (tertiarization of the economy – increase in the importance of service sector),

– dematerialization – eco-efficiency, separation of dependencies between environmental damage and material production,

– decarbonization – separation of the relation between economic growth and growth in CO₂ production,

– decoupling – separation of the relation between economic growth and growth in transport needs.

All elements present in the sustainability concept should contribute to its development in all spheres of life. Poverty and hunger in all their forms and dimensions should be eliminated and all people should be able to realize their potential with dignity, in a healthy environment and in accordance with the principle of equality. We should protect the Earth from a deteriorating environment through sustainable consumption and production, sustainable management of natural resources and urgent action to combat climate change, supporting the needs of present and future generations. All people must be guaranteed a dignified

and fulfilling life and economic, social and technological development must be in harmony with nature. All people should have peace in the world, because there is no sustainable development without peace, and there is no peace without sustainable development [Latoszek et al. 2016].

According to Hull [2007], the idea of sustainable development gives hope for overcoming the current crisis of civilization and entering a new path of civilization development. The chances of achieving this goal will definitely increase if:

- this idea will be understood and implemented integrally and universally in relation to
- all spheres of human activity (political, economic, social...),
- it will be integrated with commonly accepted social and ethical ideals such as equality, social justice, civilization of love, solidarity;
- it will be articulated in the form of emotionally saturated messages understandable to everyone and conducive to the interiorization of its values and content;
- its promotion and programming will go hand in hand with alleviating the disparities between the poor (hungry) and the rich – both at global and local level, which is primarily known for its self-restraint on consumption;
- this idea will not only be included (programmed) globally (as in Rio de Janeiro). It is necessary to implement it consistently on a global scale;
- it will be accompanied by the elimination of armed conflicts, war threats and progressive disarmament.

Conclusions. According to Hull [2007], the vision of sustainable development is undermined by the growing corporate globalization of economic life with its constant pursuit of profit, dominant value systems, ideologies and the daily routine of consumption and overconsumption, a political practice based on immediate – until the next elections – goals and promises, failures to implement them, international initiatives and projects, and the ever-increasing threats and war conflicts. This vision, in turn, is supported by the growing belief that humanity is threatened by ecological and social self-destruction. It is also fostered by the accelerating growth of ecological awareness in various social circles, especially among youth, intellectual and organizational maturation of anti-corporate and “green” alter globalist movements, as well as pro-ecological technological progress.

The concept of sustainable development attracts more and more supporters and, most importantly, is being implemented in many countries, especially those with developed market economies. It is based on people as environmental actors, our planet as an area (object) of human influence and partnership. Only an integrated approach will achieve the goal of this concept, i.e. prosperity and peace in the world.

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