

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION RELATIONSHIP

POPESCU CONSTANTIN

UNIVERSITY "EFTIMIE MURGU" OF REȘIȚA, popescu_titel@yahoo.com

Abstract:

The social and economical development must be approached in such a way that it minimizes the effects of the economic activity over the deterioration of resources and to discourage waste. The pollution control depends on humans' ability to understand the seriousness of the ecological lack of balance.

The sustainable lasting development, being a long term economical development, is possible by efficiently using the economical instruments (cost, profit); the political, juridical and social ones, which utter signals for the economic agents, so that they can become aware of the limited character of natural resources and of the damage caused to the environment.

Key words: *pollution, environment protection, economic growth, sustainable development, recycling.*

JEL classification: *Q00, Q01*

1. Introduction

Man has a more or less powerful impact on nature, human society itself being a response to nature, and from this point of view man (society) does not exist but in and by reference to the natural environment.

Although man-nature relations are very recent as opposed to the age of nature on a geological scale, man has succeeded, through its intellectual supremacy, to change the picture in the last 250 years in a much greater extent than it has been changed over millions of years by natural causes.

The absolute priority given to industrial development, massive exploitation of natural resources and the assertion of conception according to which science and technology can provide solutions to any problems led to neglect of the adoption of appropriate legislation, the protection and improvement of environment and pollution and degradation continue.

Economic growth proper to industrialized civilization is mostly based on non-renewable energy resources and on profit-based relationships. Furthermore, there occur residues that through accumulation cannot be assimilated anymore, cannot be reintegrated in nature causing the change of the environmental factors, inducing imbalances in fauna, flora and in the health of people as well as of animals.

Schematically, we can say that the entire human activity, carried on in the environment, will interact with it, imposing changes that beyond a certain limit cannot be balanced by the natural processes of the environment, causing irreversible changes.

In his article "Toward a Sustainable World" regarding the continuity of life and activity on this planet, William D. Ruckelshaus shows that "sustainability is the emergency doctrine in which development and economic progress to be made and maintained over time, in limits set by ecology in the broadest sense – by the interdependence of human beings and their jobs, by the biosphere and the laws of

physics and chemistry which govern it ... as a result, the environment protection and the economic development are indeed antagonistic processes."¹

The fact that the ecological imbalances occurred once with the economic increase made some researchers consider the pollution a fatality and suggest a break in development. Nevertheless, development and ecological balance can be compatible only if we consider new model of development, i.e. the sustainable economic development.

2. Conditions and implications of the economic development

If so far, development *has been subject to monetary profit* to those who call themselves entrepreneurs, the natural-human crisis of that kind of economic progress now trots out the fact that it needs to be reconsidered, i.e. *centered on people*, so that, together with the communities they live in, they should be able to effectively control and use their resources for their present and future benefit.

Life shows that most development projects based on funds and foreign aid, transfer the control of local and regional resources in the hands of institutions, companies and corporations that are more powerful and with a higher degree of concentration, which do not take on any liability whatsoever towards people's needs, or towards the ecology of the environment.

From this interpretation of the natural - human development crisis, arises the essence of the final transition: from the people-aided increase of economic growth, people who are seen as tools of achievement/performance to a new development, in which people represent the ultimate aim, as well as the means of achieving it. We define it as the final transition, because, like other experts, we consider that if such a process will not occur at the appropriate time when we should gradually overcome the natural-human development crisis, probably humanity will not get another transition.

The increasing tension that exists between our spiritual-human nature and the economic environment on which economic and social life is based, establishes that the heretofore development, keenly sustained by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, and by the administrations of the modern economy countries, was not in the general benefit of humanity, nor of the generations to come.

In these conditions, researchers assert that the causes of the heretofore natural-human development crisis: "...should not be sought among the world's poor, but in countries which establish the world standards of wasteful extravagance that dominate the world policies, heading our world towards social and ecological self-destruction"².

Here is, in the opinion of most responsible experts and politicians of the world, the source of the natural-human development crisis, in the accumulation and concentration of economic power, beyond the possibility of being controlled and used for the welfare of humanity.

In support of this cruel, but realistic statement, a series of arguments are brought, the most essential and common being:

- a) the pursuit of continuous growth in the economic production through free market mechanisms, directly subordinated to the financial profit, caused, especially after 1990, the collapse of the environment and social structure regeneration capacity, together with the irreversible loss, by poor countries, of the competition for resources, with rich countries;
- b) the gradual movement of power and social and democratic responsibility, from the hands of national governments in those of large corporations and monetary financial institutions, driven by financial profit, as the rise and diversification of the globalization of economic development;

¹ Ruckelshaus D. William, Toward a Sustainable World, Scientific American, September, 1989

² D.C. Korten, Corporeațiile conduc lumea, București, Editura Antet, 1997, p. 10

c) the break of the ones that support natural-human costs of the development crisis from those who make important decisions on economic life and its maintenance, with the help of a propaganda mechanism controlled by the largest centers of economic-financial power in the world, in a state of confusion regarding the real causes of poverty and disasters in which they are riveted;

d) the free market and the competition change from positive forces in market tyranny instruments which includes the global economy, and in which the strongest always wins, "*Settling more and more vital spaces of the Earth, destroying livelihood, displacing people, weakening democratic institutions and devouring life in the insatiable search of money*"³.

In addition to these arguments, we can add to our country the following:

- Lack of ecologic education among the population;
- Low environmental training of business managers and lack of interest towards this aspect;
- Lack of environmental legislation in character with European and world requirements;
- Failure in applying environmental law, etc.

3. Environment protection and policies

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro 3-14 June 1992 adopted the action program called Agenda 21 and a new concept "sustainable development".⁴

Sustainable development is a process that ensures the needs of human society, together with protecting all natural factors, in order to ensure conditions of life and development for future generations. The sustainable development takes into account three factors of equal importance that must be considered simultaneously in any type of approach: the economic, social and environmental factor.

At the *World Summit for Sustainable Development* - Johannesburg, September 2, 2002 – the president Ion Iliescu stated: "The objectives set in Agenda 21 (action plan adopted at Rio), in the following conventions, in the Millennium Declaration and more recently, in the agreements from Doha and in the Monterrey consensus provide a sound basis for the renewal of our commitment to move to concrete actions in line with the implementation guidelines to be adopted at this Summit. The "Earth Charter" provides, in addition, the moral foundation of future political action. "

The principles that underlie all environmental policies are:

- the principle of „precaution”;
- the principle „the polluter pays”;
- the principle „correcting the source” of environment damage.

Starting from the truth that prevention action involves much lower costs than the intercession of environmental factors quality, we intend to act on the causes that produce pollution or degradation (by environmental upgrading of production processes), as well as on the actions to limit the destructive or harmful effects for environmental factors.

As the world's natural resources are limited - helping conserve and reuse existing resources is more than a good civic policy, it's exactly what needs to be done.

³ Ibidem, p. 22-23

⁴ Convenția-cadru a Națiunilor Unite asupra schimbărilor climatice, semnată la Rio de Janeiro la 5 iunie 1992;

Through the conversion of waste into usable resources, recycling provides a solid waste management, reducing pollution; it conserves energy, creates jobs and develops more competitive manufacturing industries. Like the waste dumping in specially designated areas or their burning in incinerators, recycling requires money as well. The interest of society in recycling supposes full awareness of the benefits and economic and environment costs of recycling as compared to unilateral resource consumption and to the storage of used products in specially designated areas or their burning in incinerators. When taken into account, all these factors become obvious advantages of recycling.

Recycling eliminates pollution and conserves natural resources. The greatest environmental benefit of recycling is not related to the storage of waste, but to the conservation of energy and natural resources and to the prevention of pollution, by using the recycled materials, in the manufacturing process. Recovered materials have been previously cleaned and processed so that their use in the manufacturing activity requires a cleaner activity and lower energy consumption. Detailed analyzes showed that these environmental benefits of recycling are more effective than any other action of environment protection.

Recycling conserves energy. Less energy is needed to transform recycled materials into new products, compared to starting the production with raw materials. By recycling tons of materials in a common recycling program, at least 187 USD are spared by savings in electricity, oil, natural gas and coal, even when considering the consumption due to collection and transportation of materials.

Recycling eliminates the costs of waste disposal or waste incineration. Recycling costs are partially paid off by avoiding disposal or incineration costs and by the sale of resulted materials. Storage prices vary greatly depending on the area, and the recycled material market continuously increases.

Properly designed and fully implemented recycling programs can be fully competitive with the disposal or incineration of waste. Currently, many recycling efficiency techniques are available to optimize recycling, some of them being tested and implemented. They cannot be implemented on a larger scale due to high transport and recycling-exploitation expenses.

Recycling creates new jobs and increases the competitiveness of the manufacturing industry. Recycling provides cheaper resources to the manufacturing industry, long-term economic benefits that translate into value for consumers who spend less on products and packaging. The effects of recycling on the industrial development are significant.

4. Conclusions

The widely accepted view is that of sustainable or viable development, in which we seek compatibility interaction of four systems: economic, human, environmental and technological, in order to ensure the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations of securing their own needs. For the achievement of the compatibility condition of the 4 interrelated systems, the sustainable development strategy includes, as an essential, indispensable element, the progress simultaneity in all four dimensions.

The vision of the strategies of the sustainable development begins with the understanding of the fact that a country's economy is more than the sum of the component parts that the changes occurring in a subsystem involve the overall changes by reason of dynamic interdependencies existing in its components.

Based on five factors that influence themselves in the process of development - population, natural resources and natural environment, agricultural production, industrial production and pollution - the sustainable development's objective is to find

the most appropriate criteria to optimize the relation resources-needs, objectives to be achieved - funds, based on their mutual compatibility in time and space. We talk about the design and implementation of such an economic environment, through its inputs and outputs, being in a direct, dynamic compatibility with the natural environment and with the present and future needs and interests of generations that coexist in life.

Hence the sustainable development is defined by a natural dimension – i.e. it exists only as long as man-made environment is compatible with the natural environment; an economic dimension, based on competitiveness, a social and human dimension – i.e. all outputs from man-made environment must directly answer the needs and interests of present and future generations, a national-state, regional and global dimension - in terms of optimization criteria compatibility, both on a national and a regional or global level. Thus, the concept of *sustainable development*, as well as its implementation strategy raises the question of the human and the human community, from the perspectives of time and space.

Such perspectives, that the sustainable development must integrate, depend on man's culture, on his past existence, on the difficulty of problems he faces at each level, on the level of development and incorporation of the achievements of science and technology, on the national and international development strategies. Without neglecting the practical aspects of daily life, the sustainable development, through the interdependent approach of the five issues attempts to devise scenarios in which the future finds a better and safer place in our present. The four dimensions give the future development the human-sustainable character.

Through the answer that is to be given to trends that show - rapid population growth, accelerated industrialization, widespread malnutrition, loss of resources that do not recover and a deteriorating natural environment - the sustainable human development aims to create, in time and space, the conditions of overcoming the progress limits, through the quantitative and qualitative limit progress, of the man-made environment and natural environment compatibility, of the interests of generations in time and space.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. **Bell, Daniel**, Lumea în anul 2013, American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1987
2. **Eduard, Bonnefaus**, Omul sau natura ?, Editura Politică, București, 1976
3. **David, C. Korten**, Corporațiile conduc lumea, Editura Antet, București, 1997
4. **C.Popescu, D. Ciucur, I. Popescu**, Tranziția la economia umană, Editura Economică, București, 1996
5. **Ruckelshaus D.William**, Toward a Sustainable World, Scientific American, September, 1989
6. * * * **Legea nr. 24** din 6 mai 1994 pentru ratificarea Convenției-cadru a Națiunilor Unite asupra schimbărilor climatice, semnată la Rio de Janeiro la 5 iunie 1992 (publicat în M.O. nr. 119/ 12.05.1994)
7. * * * Probleme globale ale omenirii. Starea lumii, 1991 (**coord. Lester R. Brown**), Editura Tehnică, 1994
8. * * * Raport mondial Sur le Developpement Humain 1999