

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT reality and future

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Abstract

Sustainable development is regarded as the issue and method of solution of a number of global problems, which originated namely in relation to dynamic industrial development and the prominent growth of world population. Sustainable development is, above all, the concept closely related to human attitudes and values. The contribution presents the global trends and future development.

Key words: Sustainable development, global trends, future development.

INTRODUCTION

The present development, global trends and future development

The present development is not of sustainable character. The volume of world economy, measured by the sum of all countries GDP, grows continually, even if slowly than before during the last two decades. Economic growth enables extended satisfying of material needs and the overall growth of welfare. As has been already outlined, the present development is of non-proportional character. The analysis of long-term, trends in the division of incomes shows, that the difference between the richest and poorest country was 3:1 in 1820, 34:1 in 1950 and 74:1 at present. The average growth of the most developed countries was about 2.5% p.a.; the growth of the poorest stagnates approximately on the same level for the whole period of 180 years.

It shows that less rich countries have less means for development and thus are not able to compete with the rich ones in technological innovations.

If people are to live in economic prosperity and healthy environment, then already the present generations have to cope with the trends which might still worsen the mentioned problems. According to B. Moldan, the main trends of the present world are:

Economic growth – the consumption patterns are changing, people eat and are housed better, utilise a higher share of their means for mobility, comfort, entertainment.

Changes in social sphere – the level of human development, education, health growth, people live longer. However, important problems are the growing world unemployment and deepening inequality in incomes and the social position of the individual strata of society, and that also among individual countries.

Globalisation – a still strengthening process multiplied namely by liberalisation and the exceptionally quick

growth and explosive development of all kinds of communication.

Demographic development – population growth is slowing down considerably on the world level, but in connection with the quickly growing average life span it evokes fears of the population ageing.

Technological development – an accelerated development of science and technology brings about the change of production patterns and natural resources utilisation.

The growing stress on natural eco-systems – the vital planet systems are showing negative trends in consequence of the still higher burdening of environment by the economic activities^{x)}.

Economic growth

For economic growth, it is necessary to ascertain not only suitable conditions, but also suitable resources. Monetary policy is important but not limiting for economic growth. For that, resources are important. What, then, is the main resource leading up the economic growth? On the examples of countries like the Saudi Arabia, it can be shown, that it is neither raw materials nor capital. These countries have them to their disposal; still they do not belong among the richest countries. Neither is this resource the simultaneous utilisation of democracy, since we would hardly find it for example in China – the country with the highest growth during the last years. This resource is education. Education and educated population are that what is not lacking in the economically developed countries but what is, on the other hand, costly for the poorest countries. In the South-West Asia, education is highly evaluated and these countries reach a considerable growth even after the Asian crisis.

U.S. economist Lester C. Thurow said lately: "I would say that the time has come when the division of world

^{x)} Moldan, B.: (Non)Sustainable Development of Ecology, Karolinum, Prague 2001, p.79

into the rich and poor is already overcome. People are still more divided into educated and non-educated. Those with competencies on the world level can earn big money every time and everywhere. The worker in a car factory will have to reconcile to the fact that his incomes will gradually get to the level of the workers in Indonesia or Malaysia. “

Changes in the social sphere

As has been mentioned already, the differences between the rich and poor are deepening, and that not only among states, but also inside individual states. This is a very considerable problem. This social inequality does not constitute anything positive for the future. If all cannot take advantage from the growing product, it always creates a social tension, notwithstanding the fact that the children of poorer parents have worse chances for the future and the society thus deprives itself of the potential of these young people. Therefore, it is necessary to offer education to the widest number of people possible. Education for all is one of the U.N. slogans and it is the remedy towards unemployment.

Globalisation

Globalisation is the process of society integration on the world level which newly roofs the present national, regional and local systems. The globalisation process has two driving forces: technology and the persisting wave of deregulation, privatisation, growth policies based on export which followed the breakdown of the Brettonwood system of firm exchange rates at the beginning of 70ies^{xx)}. The main element of the present integration is globalisation of economic activities which interlinks the production and markets of different countries through the trade with products and services, flow of capital and information and the mutually interlinked net of ownership and management of supra-national companies. Other forms of integration are still lagging behind. The character of the present phase of global integration of society is given by the temporary non-equilibrium between the global dimension of the ongoing economic integration and the limited scope of the supra-national political integration and regulation frames of the society development^{x)}.

Among the most important social consequences of globalisation, there belongs the multiplication of the non-balanced social and economic development which issues from the fact that the firms, individuals and through them also the localities, towns and states have a different power and ability to incorporate actively into globalisation. The most important social impact of

globalisation is the influence of supra-national companies and world financial markets and on the changing share of power between the public and private sector. Globalisation multiplies the non-balanced spatial development. Almost all places on the Earth are at present influenced by globalisation in a certain way, but most of them are mere recipients of the globalisation processes. The majority of the active actors of globalisation are located in the big cities of developed countries.^{xx)}

Technological development

A mere increase of the technological processes efficiency will not be sufficient. Important is to think over the own production process. Of late, there is therefore often discussed the need to change the patterns of consumption in the developed countries. These proposals lead to the decrease of natural resources and the total burden of the environment through modern technologies for which lower inputs will suffice, as well as a lower amount of different refuse.

Growing stress on natural eco-systems

The growing human population uses for satisfying its needs still higher amount of material and energies. In the rich North countries, where the human population is already stabilised, where the increase is minimal or even negative, the consumption of goods and energy is still growing. The change of patterns presupposes the change of the value orientation and is therefore a long-term question.

In some resources, this is enlisted as one of the elements and prerequisites of SD. The eco-system approach works from “inside“, it searches, evaluates and quantifies the frame and function of eco-systems from the first level satisfying of human needs up to the ensuring the global functioning of nature. SD, on the other hand, works from “outside“ and asks after the entitlement of these claims and after the limits with which man is confronted in satisfying his needs and claims. The eco-system approach means an integrated approach in the ecosystems utilisation. It issues from the prerequisite that eco-systems work as a whole and cannot be managed only from the one-sided utilisation viewpoint. At present, we use and manage eco-systems with regard to the one or a few goods or services most needful for man – fishery, timber, water energy - without the knowledge of the fact which other goods and services we are losing.

We try to maximise utilisation of one given asset without regard to this influencing the further functioning of the eco-system, further goods or services,

^{xx)} Henderson, H.: Over the Horizon of Globalisation – Creation of Sustainable Economy. DharmaGaia, Prague, 2001

^{x)} Jeníček, V.: World Economy Globalisation. H.C.Beck, Prague, 2002

^{xx)} Sýkora, L.: Globalisation and Its Social and Geographic Consequences. FNS CHU, Prague 2000, p.62

which we neither do nor regard as the priority from our present human viewpoint.

RESULTS

Fulfilment of the negotiations accepted at the Summit of Earth in Brazil in 1992, as evaluated by the following Summit of Earth in South Africa in 2002:

Poverty and international aid

Obligation: To spend more money on developing aid. Rich countries donate in average 0.7 % of GDP.

Reality: In 2000, rich countries donated in average only 0.22 % of GDP

Result: 1.1 bill. People live in extreme poverty, 850 million suffer from hunger.

Diseases

Obligation: To limit considerably deaths by contagious diseases, for example up to 90 % at measles.

Reality: A certain progress was reached, but only 26 % less people died by measles in 2000 compared to 1990. On the contrary, the number of deaths by malaria increased. Regarding AIDS, the increase was by the unbelievable 600 %.

Climate changes

Obligation: By 2000, the glass-house gasses emission should have been decreased to the 1990 level (the Rio obligation); the Kyoto protocol was still more strict in obligations.

Reality: In the years 1990-2000, the carbon dioxide emissions grew by 9.1 % per year. The only bright exceptions are Great Britain, Germany and – unwillingly – also Russia (drop of production). The worst examples: Australia, Canada, U.S., Spain.

Biodiversity

Obligation: The agreements on biodiversity which should protect living organisms were signed by 182 states in Rio.

Reality: Only 120 states elaborated the connected strategies and plans. The number of those who really fulfil them is still lower.

Result: There exist a number of successful projects, still one third of species are endangered, at least 11,000 species are acutely dying out.

Water

Obligation: Clean drinking water should be available for all.

Reality: 1.1 bill. people have no approach to clean water, 30,000 people die daily by diseases of polluted water.

Deserts

Obligation: The agreement on the fight against the extension of deserts is valid since 1996.

Reality: There is not enough money for its realisation.

Fishery

The Rio obligations were not ratified by 15 from the 20 biggest fishing countries. One third of industrially caught fish is endangered by extinction.

Future development

The concept of sustainable development can be implemented, if it is accepted by the big enough part of the society. Pushing through of this concept presupposes educated people; therefore the future outlook is mildly optimistic. The reasons for optimism:

- Healthy environment, nature protection, reasonable utilisation of natural resources are gradually becoming an important part of the set of human values, as testified by sociological researches.
- The knowledge of the vital planetary systems endangering brought about new approaches on the enterprise, national and international level. They are reflected in the widely implemented rules of behaviour, legal frame, and efficient international agreements.
- There considerably grows the feeling of responsibility for the environmental impacts of any human activities on the level of individuals, enterprises, governments. The wide public demands this responsibility and the quick development of information technologies considerably supports and accelerates this trend.
- Ecological efficiency of technologies is growing in all sectors and industries. The final goal, the absolute decrease of the burden even with growing performance, is generally accepted and in some cases it was already reached.

One of the ways how to change economy and get it into harmony with environment is the fiscal system reform, so that prices include the costs of the damage alleviation. The satiable future centre of gravity lays, simply said, in free enterprising using new technologies, in the combination of the renewable resources potential, hydrogen utilisation, aforestation and material recycling.

The overview of the obligations and initiatives of the Johannesburg Summit on Sustainable development (WSSD) 2002

The listed obligations are part of the implementation plan accepted by the governments.

Water and hygiene

- By 2015, to lower the number of people without access to hygienic facilities by half, the same as the number of people without access to clean drinking water.
- The U.S. announced investments into projects connected with water and hygiene at the amount of 970 mill. USD during the next 3 years.
- The EU announced starting of the initiative "Water for Life" the aim of which is fulfilment of the goals regarding water and hygiene in Africa and Central Asia.
- The Asia development Bank supplied a grant of 5 mill. USD to the U.N. affiliated organisation Habitat and 500 mill. USD for the project of so-called quick loans in the frame of the program Water for the Asian Towns.
- The U.N. registered 21 further initiatives in the area of water and hygiene of the total value of 20 mill. USD.

Energy

- To extend approach to the modern energy services, to increase energetic efficiency and to extend the renewable energy resources utilisation.
- Gradually decrease subsidies for energy.
- To support the NEPAF (New Partnership for Africa Development) goals, which presuppose to ascertain approach to energy for the minimum of 35 % Africa population in 20 years
- 9 biggest electricity producers from the G7 signed a series of agreements with the U.N. regarding co-operation in the renewable energy utilisation projects in developing countries.
- The EU announced a partnership energetic initiative of the value of 700 mill. USD and the U.S. announced that they will invest 43 mill. USD in 2003 on the same goal.
- The South Africa energetic company Eskom announced creating a partnership with the goal to secure modern energy services in the neighbouring countries.
- The U.N. received 32 announcements on partnership initiatives in the area of energy, the resources of which reach 26 mill. USD.

Health

- By 2020, the chemicals will be produced and utilised in the way not damaging human health or environment.
- Strengthening of co-operation on decreasing air pollution.
- By 2010, improvement of the approach of developing countries to the ecologically acceptable alternatives of the materials causing ozone layer hole.
- The U.S. announced that they will spend 2.3 bill. USD for the global health matters in 2003.
- The U.N. received 16 registrations of partnerships for projects in the sphere of health amounting to 3 mill. USD.

Agriculture

- The Global Environmental facility will regard implementing the Agreement for Fighting Deserts as a key area in need of financing
- By 2005, the strategy for securing food for Africa will be prepared.
- The U.S. will invest 90 mill. USD into sustainable agriculture in 2003.
- The U.N. registered 17 partnership initiatives with the resources of 2 mill. USD.

Biodiversity and eco-systems management

- Up to 2010, to limit the plant and animal species extinction
- To stop the present trend of natural resources depletion.
- Up to 2015, to renew the numbers of fish to a maximum sustainable level.
- By 2010, to create a representative net of protected sea areas.
- By 2010, improvement of the approach of developing countries to the ecologically acceptable alternatives of the chemical materials causing ozone layer hole.
- The U.N. received 32 registrations of partnerships with resources of 100 mill. USD
- The U.S. announced investments of 53 mill. USD for forest protection for the period 2002-29005.

General obligations and initiatives

- Accepting of the fact that approach to the markets is the key factor of development for many countries.

- Support to the gradual abolishment of all kinds of export subsidies.
- Setting of a 10-year strategic program for forming sustainable production and consumption.
- Active responsibility of private enterprises.
- Development and strengthening of the activities of natural catastrophes prevention and the ability of reacting to them.

CONCLUSIONS

The common feeling of the necessity to solve global problems is not carried out very much, however, and the world progress towards sustainable development was slow. The negative non-sustainable trends of the world development continue and in some cases even deepen. Notwithstanding the fact, that in many cases humankind has got the necessary knowledge and technologies to its disposal, the financial means as well as the political will are often insufficient to stop the further worsening of the global problems and to aim the necessary means just to those questions of environment and development, which have to be solved without further delay. Understanding of global problems as the long-term, cumulative and mutually interconnected problems which bring about the serious global and security implications is obviously still limited. The real policy of most industrial as well as developing countries is further oriented on the classical economic growth, therefore, the demands sustainable development has not yet started on the global level.

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