

CONSIDERATIONS CONCERNING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY OF THE EU AGENDA 2030

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Abstract

In recent years, the term of sustainable development has become more prominent, as a proof being the worldwide adoption of a global development strategy based on the sustainability principles. This strategy contains not only all types of policies, economies and societies, but also an integral part of the life and well-being of all people. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda through the objectives of sustainable development aims to cover all the problems that humanity is facing at the moment and which they may have in the future due to pollution and worldwide changes. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to highlight the role of the 2030 Agenda in the context of globally raising awareness of sustainable development.

Key words: *agenda 2030; sustainable development; Sustainable Development Goals.*

JEL Classification: *Q01.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Sustainable development has been defined as a development that meets current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. (Comissão Mundial, 1987). This requires concentrated efforts to build an inclusive, sustainable and resilient future for humans and for the planet. For the achievement of sustainable development it is essential to harmonize three essential elements: economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection. These elements are interconnected and all of them are essential for the individuals' well-being and societies.

World Commission on the Environment and Development, WCED stated in the Brundtland Report (1987) that development is "sustainable" only if it "responds to the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs." Its objective is to reconcile the economic development and the protection of the social and ecological balance. Therefore, over the years, the concept of sustainable development has become a "global objective" for the entire planet.

In 1992, the United Nations (UN), in its conference on environment and development (UNCED), held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, also known as the Earth Summit, more than 178 governments adopted Agenda 21- an action program on sustainable development for the 21st century. This program entailed the creation of a system in which economic development and environmental protection would not exclude each other, indicating measures to combat poverty without affecting natural resources.

Ten years later, at another summit, in Johannesburg, the participating countries agreed on an implementation plan together with the commitment to reach the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), eight time-related goals, ranging from halving extreme poverty rates to ensuring universal primary education all until the target date of 2015 (Frey, 2017).

Following another UN Conference held in 2012, it resulted a final political document, which contained clear and practical measures for implementing sustainable development, which meant that the plans outlined a few years ago started being transposed into reality. Member States have also decided to launch a process of elaboration of a set of sustainable development goals, which should be based on the MDGs, but which also include aspects such as natural resource management, sustainable consumption and production, efficient institutions, good governance, the rule of law and peaceful societies (ONU, 2012).

Finally, 17 sustainable development goals were established, which were adopted by world leaders in September 2015, at a historic UN summit (ONU, 2015). On January 1st, 2016, they officially entered into force. So, in the next fifteen years, with these new goals that are universally applicable to everyone, countries will mobilize efforts to end all forms of poverty, to fight inequality and tackle climate change, ensuring that no one is left behind. (<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda/>).

The 2030 agenda is an essential pact that will ensure both the increase of the quality of life and the maintenance of the human-nature balance. For this purpose, sustainable, inclusive and equitable economic growth must be promoted, creating more opportunities, reducing inequalities, raising basic standards, encouraging equitable development and social inclusion and promoting integrated and sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystems.

II. THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES OF THE 2030 AGENDA AND THEIR IMPORTANCE

In the context of taking into account the various measures adopted by the United Nations (UN), The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals which seek to address the main challenges related to social, economic and environmental problems. These objectives are intended to provide a framework for policy development in the Member States over a period of 15 years. They are grouped into six thematic areas: *dignity, people, planet, partnership, justice and prosperity* (see Figure 1).

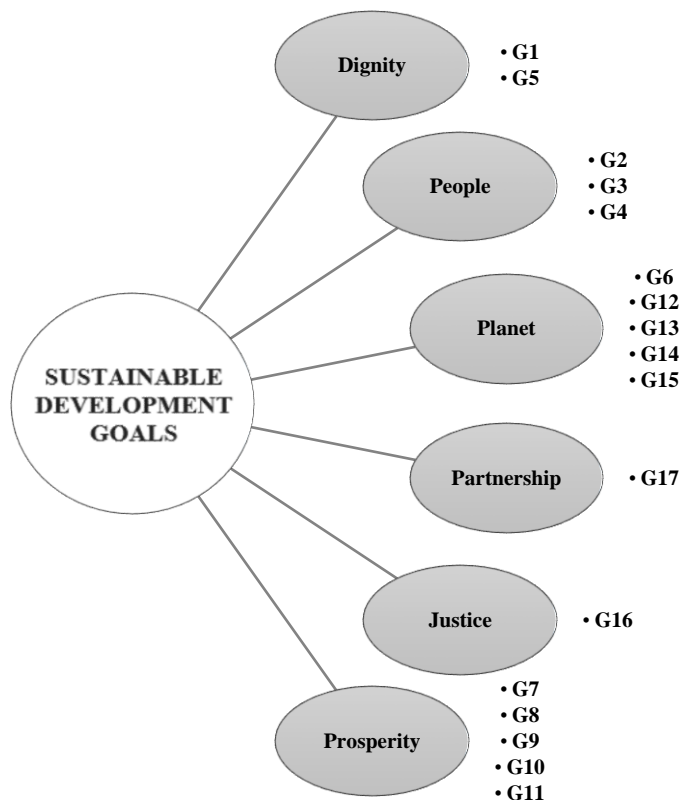


Figure 1 – The thematic areas and the sustainable development objectives of the 2030 Agenda

Source: Leal Filho, et al., 2017

While the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) focused primarily on the results of human development concentrated on poverty reduction, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) address a more comprehensive approach, broadening the range of objectives to capture aspects of the so-called sustainability approach. SDGs can be divided into four categories. The first six goals can be seen as an extension of the MDGs. The objectives from seven to twelve introduce economic development, with an emphasis on inclusive growth, for the first time on the global sustainability agenda. Objectives thirteen, fourteen and fifteen refer, with a greater focus than the MDGs, to environmental sustainability. The last two objectives can be considered as factors favoring the others, namely, meant to create the conditions for the achievement of the previous fifteen goals. In the table below we have presented the Sustainable Development Goals according to the classification described above.

Numerous unique indicators have been established to monitor progress towards sustainable development; however, the need to assess the degree of sustainability of the countries triggered the creation of the SDG Index, which initially compiled 77 indicators and evolved to 99 at present. In addition, the differentiation of national factors in geographical areas should emphasize the importance of some objectives to the detriment of others which were almost achieved. Therefore, it is suggested to implement some personalized SDG indicators (Sustainable Development Goals) to improve the assessment of certain regions (Diaz, 2018).



Figure 2 – Sustainable Development Goals

Sursa: <https://en.unesco.org/sustainabledevelopmentgoals>

These goals have the role of establishing a balance between man and nature, taking into account the three essential dimensions: economic, social and environmental. They are influenced by the decisions and choices we make every day, more or less assumed in relation to the three dimensions. These choices affect not only nature protection and poverty reduction, but also other important aspects of the 2030 Agenda such as: from food and health security to peaceful and inclusive societies. Technology will be the one that stands between all that means humanity and nature. It will bring more and more extraordinary opportunities, but this will determine extraordinary risks. According to Steiner (2018), extraordinary is the new normal, which is determined by the width, the depth, the rhythm, the interconnection and the complexity of the change.

So, no matter what size we know or will know, the rule is simple- between all of this components there should be a balance, and the existence of one should not compromise the basic dimensions.

III. PARTICULARITIES REGARDING THE IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING OF THE 2030 AGENDA

The 2030 agenda involves a global revitalized sustainable development partnership. This is necessary to support national efforts to implement the programs developed in this regard.

In order to mobilize financial resources efficiently to support the new sustainable development agenda-Agenda 2030, during the 3rd International Conference on Financing for Development, the Action Agenda from Addis Ababa was implemented. This document involves monitoring and reviewing the means of implementing the Sustainable Development Goals.

The implementation and success of the 2030 Agenda will be based on countries' own policies, plans and programs on sustainable development. The Sustainable Development Goals are like a compass for the alignment of countries' plans with their global commitments. Sustainable development strategies, based on the properties of each country, require the mobilization of resources and financing strategies. Of course, it is important, and even more, it would be an obligation of all stakeholders: governments, civil society, the private sector and others, to come up with proposals and contributions for the realization of the new agenda.

European NGO confederation for Relief and Development (CONCORD) believes that the EU should continue to play a key role in the implementation of the Agenda 2030 by implementing integrated plans and well-defined tools, this way inspiring others and demonstrating that it is capable of meeting the ambition of the 2030 Agenda.

Likewise, the same organization mentions that the success of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda implementation plan - both at EU and national level - should include at least the following 9 components, each of them being specified in the position document:

1. „Political leadership to push the agenda forward”;
2. „Overarching strategy to implement the integrated 2030 Agenda at home and abroad”;
3. „An in-depth gap analysis”;
4. „Adequate financial resources”;
5. „Governance: horizontal and vertical integration; clear roles and responsibilities”;

6. „Legislation and policies revised or developed”;
7. „Communication Strategy (to the people)”;
8. „Participation of all people in planning, design and implementation processes”;
9. „Regular monitoring, review and accountability on the basis of relevant indicators”.

Globally, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 goals of the new agenda are monitored and reviewed using a set of global indicators. Also, governments can develop their own national indicators to help monitoring the progress in terms of goals and targets. The follow-up and review process is supposed to be informed by an SDG annual progress report to be prepared by the General Secretary.

IV. CONCLUSION

With the adoption of the new sustainable development agenda - Agenda 2030, the international community has committed to addressing a large number of challenges, many of them affecting directly the life of the population. Their knowledge and know-how, deeply rooted in their harmonious relationship with nature and community, have proven to be effective in responding to some of these challenges. However, this is not enough. Their systems of survival and knowledge are under constant threat due to environmental hazards and development initiatives. The loss of knowledge has already increased vulnerability and risk for indigenous populations. This is why the mobilization of the national and international community is very important.

In this sense it is important to recognize the knowledge of the population and its acceptance as a valuable ally in the fight against the challenges related to climate change and sustainable development, and also in maintaining global biodiversity.

In the light of the new 2030 Agenda, by implementing the 17 sustainable development goals, joint efforts are indispensable to develop and implement suitable and adapted initiatives to help the population support and apply their rights and be involved in the decision-making process, thus becoming active agents of change.

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