

## **PRINCIPLES OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN PRACTICE**

As a socio-economic strategy, sustainable development was proposed above all for the purpose of long-term (multigenerational) existence in a healthy and friendly natural environment. According to the first principle of the Rio Declaration, human beings “are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature”. This entitlement was confirmed in many international documents (UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights) and national deeds (the Constitution of the Republic of Poland).

The aim of sustainable development is to meet physical and psychological human needs by establishing right attitude to the environment. Sustainable development must provide natural basis for man’s existence and introduce economic, functional and aesthetic order in the environment we live in. According to Fritjof Capra [2, chapter 12], the main objectives of sustainable development are: (1) long-term use of renewable natural resources, (2) efficient exploitation of non- renewable sources of energy, (3) maintaining stability of ecological processes and ecosystems, (4) protection of genetic diversity and nature, (5) maintaining and improving people’s state of health, well-being and security. Stefan Kozłowski [3, p. 56] pointed out the following goals: (1) safe environment for people’s health, (2) ecological balance in main ecosystems, (3) essential conditions for biological regenerations of man’s strength, (4) prospects for further economic growth.

Analogically to the objectives, the rules of sustainable development also formulated for state’s economy as a whole, or for group of states. The fundamental principles of ecological development are [1, pp. 46-50]:

- the principles of environmental protection, such as: (1) full protection of preserved natural ecosystems within natural landscape, (2) full protection of cleanness of atmospheric air, (3) full protection of surface and underground water;
- principles referring to the culture of management, such as: (1) regular evaluation of targets and wishes, addressed to the environment, in the context of their better adjustment to the human development needs and harmonizing with environmental requirements, (2) respect of the principle of economical management and full utilization of run down resources (there are limits to growth determined by quantity of resources which must be also at future generations’ disposal), (3) full assessment of impact on the environment and planned actions, including entire economic, ecological and social profit and loss evaluation, (4) uncompromising remediation of the environment where inevitable spatial transformations are taking place, posing a potential threat to its ecological structure, (5) requirement of harmonious arrangement of forms permanently embedded in landscape, as well as reshaping it in order to contribute to its beauty and preserve its aesthetic values;
- principles of action planning, such as: (1) consolidation of research and methods of planning resulting from the requirement of systemic approach to environmental processes, (2) focusing of public activity on the ecological region level which in an optimal way reconciles social needs, economic activity and natural environmental balance.

Conservation and shaping of the environment in well developed countries has long ago ceased to be exclusively scientific and serving social purposes issue. It is also an element of the state politics (both domestic and international). The possibility of implementing the principles of sustainable development depends on meeting three fundamental prerequisites, i.e. formation of democratic society, introducing market economy, and focusing attention and popularization of informed ecological awareness. Democratization of socio-economic reality

should lead to revival of civic society which competently and consciously decides on its future and allows its members to express their creativity. However, the increasing role of society in implementing the principles of eco-development will not lead to positive changes unless it is integrated with the development of eco-social market economy. Every business activity within it, especially conforming to current needs of the public and its social and natural surroundings, should be run as an independent entity (local authority, councils, or union of communities) and according to market mechanisms.

Sustainable development is a fundamental idea for state's ecological policy and should become an indicator of socio-economic transformations that took place in Poland and other countries at the turn of the centuries. This exceptionally complex and multidimensional process entails numerous economic, legal and social threats. It also creates opportunities. Such transformations cannot be short-lived. They should correspond with long-term strategy of socio-economic development. In this way the economy can take advantage of sustainable development and connect socio-economic reforms with care for the quality of the environment. This demand is even more significant in view of the fact that previous methods of management were characterized by high environmental pressure followed by pollution, low effectiveness of the use of resources and energy, and systematic degradation of the environment, including its assimilation ability and aesthetic assets.

As the strategic objective, sustainable development in its implementation phase focuses on intermediary goals such as: (1) raising the effectiveness of the use of resources and energy carriers, (2) cutting down on pollutions, including greenhouse gas emission, (3) reinforcement of assimilation ability of ecosystems. The philosophy behind the construction of such strategy is based on the following principles, conforming to state's ecological policy: (1) polluter pays, (2) elimination of pollution in a place of its production, (3) prevention from excessive emission of pollutants.

The strategy of sustainable development encompasses several vital elements (systems) without which its correct implementation would be impossible. They are: (1) environmental protection management system, (2) system of political and self-government authority, (3) system of scientific research, (4) pro-ecological technical and technological innovations diffusion system, and (5) social, economic and legal system taking care of rational use and protection of the environment. Moreover, the strategy of sustainable development requires bolstering ecological awareness and new ecological ethics in society. Popularization of recycling and non- and low-waste technologies is essential. Also, it is necessary to consistently minimize wastes output resulting from processes of production and consumption. Implementation of the strategy of sustainable development is accompanied by structural changes in economy where effectiveness of the use of resources and energy plays a major part [1, pp. 54-55].

Due to its complexity, sustainable development strategy requires a comprehensive discussion. Moreover one should remember that sustainable development is a process and not an undertaking with specified realization horizons. As a strategy, its objectives, rules and solutions are based on an equalization of economic, social and ecological dimension. As a result, it is extremely demanding towards the entities carrying it out. In addition it forces to systematic improvement of used methods and introduction of new instruments and solutions and to continuous learning. Only such understanding of the strategy combined with a consequence of realization is a chance to succeed which guarantees an auspicious future for development of human civilization.

1. Becla A., Czaja S., Zielińska A. (2010), *Ecological information management in the context of sustainable development. Chosen issues*, Wrocław-Jelenia Góra: Wydawnictwo I-Bis. 2. Capra F. (1987), *Punkt zwrotny. Nauka, społeczeństwo, nowa kultura*, Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy. 3. Kozłowski S. (1985), *Ekorozwój. Koncepcja rozwoju*, „Człowiek i Światopogląd”, nr 5 (232).