

National Increment of the Concept of Sustainable Development: Experience of the EEU States

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ABSTRACT: Urgency of the research is determined by global problems afflicting humanity and the need to find a way to solve them. For the second half of the 20th century a large number of different strategies to overcome the current crisis situation has been developed. One of these strategies is called the concept of sustainable development. Currently, there are several variants for this concept. The version of the concept formulated in United Nations documents is the most prevailing. A feature of the documents adopted in the EEU member states on sustainable growth is their programmatic nature. The implementation of the provisions enshrined requires the adoption of separate regulatory legal acts. This also holds true for organs. They perform coordination and deliberative functions. Decisions made by them require approval by the head of state or government (depending on jurisdiction under which this body was formed).

Keywords: sustainable development, international regional organization, post-Soviet space, Eurasian Economic Union, state, Council for Sustainable Development.

INTRODUCTION

Humanity has faced a number of challenges and threats as of today's date. Of these, one can mention poverty, infectious diseases, environmental problems, corruption, etc. These processes impel humanity to develop patterns of behavior that would ensure a sustained existence and growth. One such model is the concept of sustainable development. It should be noted that there are different variations for the concept. The most widely used variant at the present stage is the concept formulated in United Nations documents. Moreover, only fundamental principles and ideas are enshrined in these documents. It is assumed that each state should formulate specific ways of implementing these ideas independently and enshrine them in acts at the national level. Many states of the world have performed these actions. The methodological basis of the study is general scientific (systemic, logical, analysis and synthesis) and specific scientific methods. The

latter comprise the formal legal method to be used in considering documents adopted within the framework of the United Nations and individual states; comparative legal, to be used in considering documents and bodies in individual states.

RESULTS

The category of “sustainable development” is central to the sustainable development concept. The definition of sustainable development that is deemed the only legitimate is given in the report of the International Commission on Environment and Development, “Sustainable development is a development that keeps up with needs of the present but does not jeopardize the ability of future generations to cover their own requirements” (Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, 2019). The lack of unambiguously official (legitimate) definitions of sustainable development is replenished with a wide palette of scientific opinions. For example, according to E. I. Inshakova, sustainable development is “a sustained socio-economic balanced growth that does not destroy the natural environment and ensures the continuous progress of society” (Inshakova, 2004). According to E. Barbier, the main goal of sustainable economic development is “... the diminution in the absolute poverty of the world’s poorest people through their long-term and reliable supply, minimizing the depletion of natural resources, environmental degradation, cultural disruption and social instability” (Barbier, 1987). D. Pearce believes that sustainable development is “a continuous increase, or at least a non-decrease in per capita consumption of gross national product, or anything else that is agreed to consider an indicator of development” (Haveman, 1989). R. Haveman believes that sustainable development is “a sustaining of the growth of the general level of economic well-being, defined as the level of economic well-being per capita” (Jeffrey & Sachs, 2015).

An American economist, the director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University, Jeffrey David Sachs, in his work *The Century of Sustainable Development*, notes that sustainable development is “a socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable economic development” (Pearce, 1993). To date, there are several variations for the concept of sustainable development. The most widely used variant is the one formulated in documents adopted under UN auspices. In 1992, the UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro adopted two key documents: Declaration of Principles and Agenda 21 (Rio Declaration on Environment, 1992: Agenda, 2019). Declaration of principles enshrines the following fundamental provisions: “people have the right to a healthy and fruitful life in harmony with nature,” “states have the sovereign right to develop their own resources,” “environmental protection should be an integral part of the development process,” “all states and all peoples cooperate in solving the most important task of eradication of poverty” and others. Agenda 21 is a kind of action plan that defines the measures that need to be taken and the institutions that must realize these measures. The UN, international regional organizations and states are comprehended in the institutes. Paragraph 38.33. of Agenda 21 states, “Regional intergovernmental organizations on technical and economic issues have an important role to play in helping governments take concerted action to solve regional environmental problems”.

In 2014, the Eurasian Economic Union, a regional organization of economic integration which pays great attention to the implementation of the concept of sustainable development, was created in the post-Soviet space. So, within the framework of the Eurasian Economic Union, a document “The Main Directions of the Economic

Development of the Union until 2030” which reflects the main provisions of the concept of sustainable development has been adopted. Moreover, the EEU is the first regional economic association in the world to have presented a report on the progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals within a particular region. Such attention from the EEU to the issues of sustainable development is determined by the fact that the member states of the association have quite a lot of experience in realizing the sustainable development concept and, when creating this organization, they sought for combining the best national practices in this area. It is worth noting that paragraph 38.36. of Agenda 21 notes, “States have an important role to play both in the follow-up to the Conference and in the implementation of Agenda 21. The efforts made by all countries at the national level should be comprehensive in order to have environmental development solved consistently”.

After the Conference, many states of the world began to develop national strategies for sustainable development and create bodies that should coordinate these activities. This process has not passed the post-Soviet space by. In the first years after the foundation of the Commonwealth of Independent States, there were attempts to develop a single program document on sustainable growth. The draft of this document was prepared by a team of experts from regional environmental centers from Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Uzbekistan and Ukraine. However, this document was not adopted (Ryabkova, 2011). The Presidential Decree № 440 “On the Concept of the Transition of the Russian Federation to Sustainable Development” was adopted in the Russian Federation in 1996. This document defines the tasks, directions and conditions of transition of Russia to sustainable development.

Also, by this Decree, the Government of the Russian Federation was tasked “to develop and submit in 1996 the draft state strategy for sustainable development of the Russian Federation for consideration by the President of the Russian Federation”. Such a strategy has not been adopted in Russia until now. In our opinion, the government has not opted for preparation of a single document on sustainable development, but, instead, a number of program documents has been adopted, including the Concept of Long-Term Socio-Economic Development of the Russian Federation, the National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation, etc. In 2012, by order of the President of the Russian Federation, an Interdepartmental Working Group was established under the Administration of the President of the Russian Federation on issues related to climate change and ensuring sustainable development.

This order provides that this group is “a coordinating body formed with the aim of ensuring effective interaction between federal executive bodies, other state bodies, public associations, scientific and other organizations in implementing state policy on issues related to climate change and ensuring sustainable development”. In Belarus, in 1997, the first National Strategy for Sustainable Development (NSSD-1997) was adopted. In 2004, the second National Strategy for Sustainable Development (NSSD-2020) was adopted and approved by the government. The main development objectives in NSSD-2020 are as follows: shift to an innovation-based development, implementation of system-wide transformations of the economy and society, construction of a highly efficient socially oriented market economy, reduction of the negative impact of manufacturing activities on the environment and improvement of its quality condition

In 2017, Decree of the President of the Republic of Belarus №181 “On the National Coordinator for Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals” was issued. This Decree states that the National Coordinator “carries out the overall coordination of the activities

of state bodies and other organizations on the achievement by the Republic of Belarus of the Sustainable Development Goals”. The National Coordinator leads the Sustainable Development Council. This body is vested with deliberative and advisory powers.

In Armenia, in 2002, on the initiative of the Association for Sustainable Human Development, with the participation of 40 national experts, with the support of the UN Development Program, the Concept of Sustainable Development of the Republic of Armenia was developed. This document formulates national priorities for the implementation of the sustainable development concept in Armenia. Also, in 2002, the National Council for Sustainable Development with the participation of representatives of all major population groups was created. In Kazakhstan in 2006, the Concept of the transition of the Republic of Kazakhstan to sustainable development for 2007-2024 was adopted. The Concept determined the relevance and prerequisites, principles, priorities, purpose and objectives of the shift to sustainable development. In 2012, the Kazakhstan-2050 Strategy which superseded the Concept was adopted. This document defines the basic lines of development of Kazakhstan for the period up to 2050. In 2018, the Coordinating Council for Sustainable Development Goals was created. As provided, “The Council is founded to develop proposals and recommendations for the promotion of sustainable development goals in the Republic of Kazakhstan.” In Kyrgyzstan, in 2012, the National Council for Sustainable Development was established. This body “is a consultative advisory, coordinating body. The goals of establishing the National Council are to ensure the adoption and implementation of a strategic document on the sustainable development of the Kyrgyz Republic, and to coordinate efforts in this direction by all branches of state power”. In 2018, the National Development Strategy for 2018–2040 was approved. This document also reflects the main guidelines for the development of society and ways to achieve the defined results.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that in the post-Soviet space the idea of sustainable development has been firmly entrenched. Confirmation of this conclusion comes from the activities of the regional integration association – the Eurasian Economic Union, and in the activities of individual states. Special documents called either the Concept of shift to sustainable development, or the Development Strategy were adopted at the state level. Bodies responsible for implementing the provisions of these documents were also established. The Sustainable Development Councils are mainstream, but there is also a National Coordinator and an interagency working group. A feature of the documents adopted in the EEU member states in the field of sustainable development is their programmatic nature. The implementation of the provisions enshrined requires the adoption of separate enactments. This also holds true for organs. They perform coordination and deliberative functions. Decisions made by them require approval by the head of state or government (depending on jurisdiction this body was founded under). We believe that for a more effective implementation of the adoption of the sustainable development model it is necessary to ensure the adoption of a law on sustainable development in the EEU member states, which outlines the goal, objectives, principles and mechanism for realizing the sustainable development concept. Also, in this law it is necessary to determine the powers and responsibilities of a special body, which should coordinate the shift of the state to a model of sustainable development.

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