



The Genesis of the Concept of Sustainable Development: Implications For Romania

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The purpose of this article is to make a synthetic presentation of the genesis of the concept of sustainable development (SD) and to highlight the directions of action for Romania for the implementation of the EU 2030 Agenda for SD. The UN General Assembly adopted the Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, "Our Common Future. From One Earth to One World" (1987). "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

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Introduction

A. At the UN Stockholm Conference (5-16 June 1972), 113 nations present expressed concern about the way in which human activity is adversely affecting the environment.

Sweden first suggested to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in 1968 the idea of holding a UN conference to focus on human interactions with the environment. ECOSOC adopted resolution 1346 in support of the idea. General Assembly Resolution 2398 of 1969 decided to convene a conference in 1972 and mandated a set of reports by the UN Secretary-General, suggesting that the conference focus on "stimulating and providing guidance for action by national government and international organizations" that faces environmental issues.

The meeting agreed on a statement containing 26 principles on environment and development; an action plan with 109 recommendations and a resolution¹⁵².

B. On 4 August 1987, the UN General Assembly adopted the Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, "Our Common Future. From One Earth to One World" (A / 42/427)¹⁵³. Most citations of the Report are related to the concept and issue of sustainable development (I, 3). This concept meant that type of development that "responds to present needs, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." (p. 24) "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." "The concept of sustainable development involves limits - not absolute limits, but limitations

¹⁵²Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, 1972, <http://web.archive.loc.gov/all/20150314024203/http%3A/www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?documentid%3D97%26articleid%3D1503>, Archived: 03/14/2015.

¹⁵³ World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED). 1987. Our Common Future. Oxford University Press, Oxford and New York.



imposed by the current state of technology and social organization on environmental resources and the ability of the biosphere to absorb the effects of human activities." (paragraph 27) Sustainable development involves "meeting the basic needs" of all people, which will lead to equitable economic growth (28).

Sustainable development "is not a fixed state of harmony, but rather a process of change in which resource exploitation, investment direction, technological development orientation and institutional changes are made in line with the future as well as present needs." (30)

C. In 1992, the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) was held in Rio de Janeiro, attended by delegations from 172 countries. The message of the Conference was very clear: "The necessary changes would occur only by changing our attitude and behavior." The "Earth Summit" laid the groundwork for several international agreements on environmental protection. The Rio Summit (1992) developed an action plan ("Agenda 21").

In the following, we will present a summary of Chapter 35 SCIENCE IN THE SERVICE OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:

FIELDS OF ACTIVITY

35A. Strengthening the scientific basis for sustainable management

35B. Intelligent promotion of scientific questions

35C. Improving long-term scientific evaluation

35D. Strengthen scientific capacity

We will present below a summary of Chapter 36 PROMOTING EDUCATION, PUBLIC AWARENESS AND TRAINING

FIELDS OF ACTIVITY

36. A. Reorient education towards sustainable development

36.B. Public awareness

36.C. Promoting training

In order to establish a new and equitable global partnership between states, recognizing the integral and interdependent nature of the Earth, the Rio Declaration proclaimed 27 principles to be respected¹⁵⁴.

D. THE MILLENNIUM DECLARATION, 2000

The UN Millennium Declaration, agreed at the Millennium Summit (6-8 September 2000, at UN Headquarters in New York), summarized the UN agreements and resolutions on setting eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The first seven objectives aim at reducing poverty and the eighth aim at establishing a global partnership for development (Hens & Nath, eds., 2005)¹⁵⁵: Concrete indicators have been attached to each objective, which allow the monitoring of progress.

¹⁵⁴ United Nations, 12 august 1992, Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Annex I, Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, A/CONF.151/26 (Vol. I), <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/conf151/aconf15126-1annex1.htm>.

¹⁵⁵ Hens L., Nath B., eds., 2005, THE WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: The Johannesburg Conference, Springer, Dordrecht, The Netherlands, p. 8, 9-10.



Fig. 1. Millennium Development Goals

Within the eight millennium development goals, the one regarding people with disabilities was omitted. This gap was corrected at the 2010 Summit of the UN General Assembly and the inclusion of this issue of people with disabilities in the post-2015 process¹⁵⁶.

Periodic assessments of the achievement of the eight Millennium Development Goals have been made¹⁵⁷.

E. THE DOHA DECLARATION (2001)

The Ministerial Meeting of the World Trade Organization (WTO), held in Doha, Qatar, adopted a declaration¹⁵⁸ on the regulation of international trade, in the context of globalization and ensuring sustainable development, especially for developing countries.

F. World Summit on Sustainable Development (2002) (Rio +10)¹⁵⁹

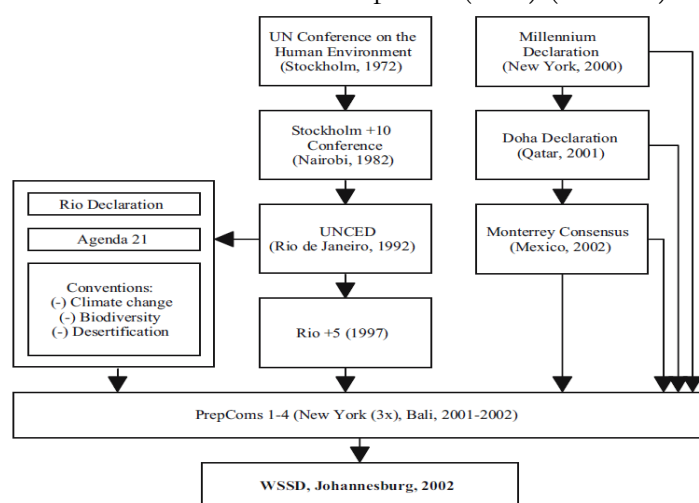


Fig. 2. WSSD Sources, Johannesburg, 2002,
Hens L., Nath B., eds., 2005, p.14

¹⁵⁶ Post-2015 development framework and NCDs,

<https://ncdalliance.org/post-2015-development-framework-and-ncds>.

¹⁵⁷United Nations, 2013, A life of dignity for all: accelerating progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and advancing the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015. Report of the Secretary-General, 26 iulie 2013, A/68/202.

Nation Unies, 2015, Objectifs du Millénaire pour le développement : Rapport 2015.

¹⁵⁸Organisation Mondiale du Commerce, 2001, Conférence Ministérielle, Quatrième session, Doha, 9 - 14 novembre 2001, Déclaration Ministérielle, Adoptée le 14 novembre 2001, WT/MIN(01)/DEC/1 20 novembre 2001.

¹⁵⁹Hens L., Nath B., eds., 2005, The World Summit on Sustainable Development: The Johannesburg Conference, Springer, Dordrecht, The Netherlands.



Figure 3. WSSD logo, Johannesburg, 2002

The conference adopted the "Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development" is a political document that was to clarify the vision of the conference on sustainable development and pave the way for new negotiations (Hens & Nath, eds., 2005, p. 15). The draft under discussion led to a document of 37 articles (smaller than the original document). Section d) remains the core of the document, which refers to long-term sustainable development, highlights the main actors and the main problems, outlines the main working tools in this regard. The statement was crucial and essential to ensure its credibility. However, the statement leaves no door open for new international negotiations. Hence, perhaps, the relatively limited impact of the statement (Hens & Nath, eds., 2005, p. 16).

The Implementation **Plan for the World Summit on Sustainable Development (JPI)**¹⁶⁰, the basic document of the Conference, was also adopted, on which a consensus was reached, following interesting negotiations. It contains a list of actions, some with quantified objectives, to implement the objectives of Agenda 21 set in Rio de Janeiro (Hens & Nath, eds., 2005, p. 16). The implementation plan has 11 chapters with 170 paragraphs.

At the Johannesburg Summit, a theoretical distinction was made between Type I and Type II actions. Type I actions are negotiated by governments and are in turn divided into two categories: Type I A, which can be found in the political statement of the meeting, and Type I B, which are addressed in the Program of Action.

Type II partnerships have been an innovation of the Johannesburg Summit and result from the involvement of several stakeholders (governments, international organizations, NGOs, etc.), through which concrete projects for the implementation of Agenda 21 on sustainable development are negotiated, as well as the Millennium Declaration Goals. On the occasion of PrepCom 4 in Bali, several guidelines were established. On 28 August 2002, a list of 128 Type II projects was presented, working groups were set up and several projects were selected.

G. Europe 2020 Strategy

In March 2010, the European Commission adopted the "EU 2020 Strategy" for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, which was endorsed by EU Heads of State and Government in June 2010.

Europe 2020 is the EU's strategy for promoting smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

¹⁶⁰ United Nations: 2002, World Summit on Sustainable Development. Plan of Implementation. Advanced Unedited Text, 4 September 2002.

The EU has set ambitious targets to be achieved by 2020 in five main areas:

- ‖ Employment - the population between 20 and 64 years old must be employed in proportion of 75%;
- ‖ Innovation - 3% of EU GDP must be invested in research and development;
- ‖ Climate change - the target values "20/20/20" for climate / energy must be reached (including a 30% increase in emission reductions if possible);
- ‖ Education - the share of those who leave school early must be below 10% and at least 40% of the population between 30 and 34 years old must have graduated from tertiary education or equivalent;
- ‖ Poverty - poverty reduction through the goal of lifting at least 20 million people out of poverty and exclusion.

Cohesion policy provides the investment framework and implementation system needed to achieve the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy.

E. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development¹⁶¹

At the UN Summit on Development in September 2015, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted, a comprehensive global action agenda for development that promotes the balance between the three dimensions of sustainable development - economic, social and environmental. The 2030 Agenda is intended to be a collective journey of the world towards the consolidation of universal peace, the eradication of poverty in all its forms and dimensions, towards a sustainable development of the world through its 17 objectives. A journey to make sure no one is left behind! To achieve these ambitious goals, the world needs a global partnership, based on "a spirit of strengthened global solidarity". The agenda envisages a "just, equitable, tolerant, open and socially inclusive world, in which the needs of the most vulnerable are met"; "A world in which every country enjoys sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth and decent work for all."

The core of the 2030 Agenda is the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), aimed at eradicating extreme poverty, combating inequality and injustice and protecting the planet by 2030.

The European Union has welcomed the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development from the outset and has been at the forefront of financial support for this process. The objectives of sustainable development have been integrated into the 6 priorities for action of the European Commission¹⁶²:

- a) A European Green Agreement;
- b) A Europe fit for the digital age;
- c) An economy that works for people;
- d) A stronger Europe in the world;
- e) Promoting our European way of life;
- f) A new impetus for European democracy.

H. Sustainable development in the European Union. Short history

The European Union has taken several concrete actions to shape its vision of sustainable development, but also to implement this vision, in the direction of concrete steps at European, national and local level. We mention only a few actions:

¹⁶¹ United Nations, Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 25 September 2015, Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, A/RES/70/1.

¹⁶² 6 Commission priorities for 2019-24, <https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024>



- 1972- The Paris Summit highlighted the need to protect the environment, in the context of economic expansion and improved living standards.
- 1987 - Single European Act, adopted on 28 February 1986, amending the Treaties establishing the European Community, environmental policy was first mentioned in a Treaty establishing the European Community.
- 1993 - The Maastricht Treaty gives environmental protection a full status in European policies.
- 1999- The Treaty of Amsterdam strengthened European policy in the field of environmental protection and promoted sustainable development within the European Union.
- 2000 - The Lisbon European Council decided, at the level of heads of state, to create by the year 2000 "the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world".
- 2001- The Gothenburg Summit approved the EU's Sustainable Development Strategy¹⁶³.
- 2005- The European Commission revised the Sustainable Development Strategy¹⁶⁴.
- 2006 (June) - The Sustainable Development Strategy for an enlarged European Union was adopted. The European Council adopted in Gothenburg (2001) the first EU Sustainable Development Strategy, which was complemented by an external dimension (Barcelona, 2002)¹⁶⁵ following the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg (2002).
- 2007-Treaty of Lisbon¹⁶⁶ was signed at the Lisbon European Council on 13 December 2007 and ratified by all Member States (OJ C 306, 17.12.2007) and entered into force on 1 December 2009.

I. Sustainable development in the European Union - A statistical look at the UN Sustainable Development Goals (2020)¹⁶⁷

Sustainable development has long been at the heart of European policy, found in strategic documents, in EU treaties. The UN General Assembly adopted the “2030 Agenda” in 2015, which also includes the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As I have already pointed out, the EU has outlined its own vision for sustainable development, and aims to monitor the achievement of the SDGs every two years.

The 2020 edition of the publication, developed by Eurostat, includes 100 indicators correlated with the 17 SDGs. The document does not present the effects of COVID-19 as it covers the situation in the EU and the Member States until 2019.

Instead The 2020 Europe Sustainable Development Report: Meeting the Sustainable Development Goals in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic makes an analysis of the fulfillment of the sustainable development objectives in the context of the pandemic triggered by COVID-19¹⁶⁸.

¹⁶³ Commission Communication of 15 May 2001 ‘A Sustainable Europe for a Better World: A European Union Strategy for Sustainable Development’ (Commission proposal to the Gothenburg European Council) [COM(2001) 264 final – not published in the Official Journal]

¹⁶⁴ Commission Communication of 13 December 2005 on the review of the Sustainable Development Strategy – A platform for action [COM(2005) 658 final – not published in the Official Journal]

¹⁶⁵ Council of the European Union, 9 June 2006, Review of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy (EU SDS), 10117/06, Brussels (available in Romanian language).

¹⁶⁶ Tratatul de la Lisabona, <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/ro/sheet/5/tratatul-de-la-lisabona>.

¹⁶⁷ European Union, 2020, Sustainable development in the European Union: Monitoring report on progress towards the SDGs in an EU context, 2020 edition.

¹⁶⁸ SDSN and IEEP, 2020. The 2020 Europe Sustainable Development Report: Meeting the Sustainable Development Goals in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. Sustainable Development Solutions Network and Institute for European Environmental Policy: Paris and Brussels

In the ranking of the scores on the achievement of the 17 goals of sustainable development achieved by the 193 UN member states, the first 15 places are occupied by EU countries¹⁶⁹: Sweden (84.72); Denmark (84.56); Finland (83.77); France (81.13); Germany (80.77); Norway (80.76); Austria (80.70); Czech Republic (80.58); The Netherlands (80.37); Estonia (80.06); Belgium 79.96 Slovenia 79.80 United Kingdom 79.79 Ireland 79.38 Switzerland 79.35. Other EU countries obtained lower scores and also affected the efforts of other EU countries Romania (38th place with 74.78); Bulgaria (39th place with 74.77) and Greece (43rd place with 74.33).

J. Steps towards the sustainable development of Romania

1. Romania's National Strategy for Sustainable Development (1999)

The first National Strategy for Sustainable Development of Romania was elaborated by a working group approved by the Romanian Government (no. 305 / 15.04. 1999), through a financing project of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), entitled “Center National for Sustainable Development ” under the patronage of the Romanian Academy. The slogan of the strategy was "To achieve more with less resources".

The document stated in its introductory part that, for Romania, “sustainable development is not a matter of choice, an option among many others, but is the only responsible way to plan development in the medium and long term, in accordance with Romania's national interest and with the requirement of international cooperation. ” (Romania-NSDS, 1999)¹⁷⁰

1. Romania's National Strategy for Sustainable Development. Horizons 2013-2020-2030



Fig. 4. Romania’s NSSD 2013-2020-2030

Motto: Keep healthy what keeps you healthy.

¹⁶⁹ Rankings: The overall performance of all 193 UN Member States, pe baza datelor din : Sachs, J., Schmidt-Traub, G., Kroll, C., Lafortune, G., Fuller, G., Woelm, F. 2020. The Sustainable Development Goals and COVID-19. Sustainable Development Report 2020. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, <https://dashboards.sdindex.org/rankings>.

¹⁷⁰ Government of Romania, 1999, Romania - National Strategy for Sustainable Development.



In the context of joining the European Union, Romania revised its sustainable development strategy, which led to the adoption on November 12, 2008 (Decision 1460) of the National Strategy for Sustainable Development of Romania. Horizons 2013-2020-2030¹⁷¹.

3. Romania's National Strategy for Sustainable Development 2030¹⁷²

SNDD of Romania 2030 was adopted by the Government of Romania in the meeting of November 9, 2018, by GD no. 877/2018 and published in the Official Gazette no. 985/21 November 2018. This strategy aims at applying the 2030 Agenda and the 17 objectives of sustainable development (SDG) to the concrete situation of Romania. The strategy considers the three interdependent pillars: economic, social and environmental. "The strategy is citizen-oriented and focuses on innovation, optimism, resilience and the confidence that the state serves the needs of every citizen, in a fair, efficient way and in a clean, balanced and integrated environment." (NSSD 2030)

Conclusions

A. The genesis of the concept of sustainable development can be understood as a process of changing the paradigm through which the world finds solutions to the complex problems it faces.

B. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015) is a global action program in the field of development with a universal character and which promotes the balance between the three dimensions of sustainable development - economic, social and environmental. The 2030 Agenda is intended to be a collective journey of the world towards the consolidation of universal peace, the eradication of poverty in all its forms and dimensions, towards a sustainable development of the world through its 17 objectives.

C. The EU has set out its own vision for sustainable development, aiming to monitor the achievement of the SDGs every two years.

D. Romania's Sustainable Development Strategy aims to apply the 2030 Agenda and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to Romania's concrete situation.

E. As poles of education and research, universities are called upon to play an important role in educating future citizens to implement the global, European and national paradigm of sustainable development

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¹⁷¹ Government of Romania, Ministry of Environment, National Strategy for Sustainable Development of Romania. Horizons 2013-2020-2030, Bucharest, 2008.

¹⁷² Government of Romania, 2018, National Strategy for SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT of Romania 2030, Bucharest, Paideia Publishing House.



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