

## GREEN ECONOMY IN THE CONTEXT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

### ECONOMIA ECOLOGICĂ ÎN CONTEXTUL DEZVOLTĂRII DURABILE

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**Abstract:** The sustainable economic development is able to assure a successful exploitation of the natural resources offered by the Earth, in a way which will help us keep our land alive and clean for the next generation. But, really, sustainability seems to be only a theory, which is different from practice, and, the idea of an ecological sustainable economy doesn't mean to „send through mail” the environmental responsibility from the developed to the less developed countries.

**Rezumat:** Dezvoltarea economică sustenabilă este una capabilă să asigure o exploatare optimă a resurselor naturale oferite de Terra, astfel încât pământul să poată fi locuit de generațiile viitoare. Însă teoria sustenabilității nu corespunde cu ceea ce se întâmplă în practică și soluția unei economii ecologice durabile nu constă în a pasa răspunderea ecologică de la țările dezvoltate la cele slab dezvoltate.

**Key words:** human capital, ecological injustice, natural limit of sustainable exploitation, environmental responsibility

**Cuvinte cheie:** capital antropic, injustiție ecologică, praguri naturale de exploatare durabilă, responsabilitate ecologică

#### INTRODUCTION

Business is affected by changes in society and has to respond accordingly. Over recent years there has been a move towards the global consumption.

For example, a large group – the so-called Green Movement – has become increasingly aware of the damage we are doing to the planet and has demanded environmentally safe products. Business has had to react to these and other changes in its social environment by producing the right products and services to meet the new demands.

In addition, business has had to adjust its manufacturing processes to ensure that the public do not believe it to be a polluter of the environment.

For a better understanding of the environmental economy, we need to reconsider the link between the economical system and the environment, and to accept that the first is part of the second and, at the same time, a subject of natural and energetically laws. For a good work of the economic system they are necessary huge quantities of unconventional and renewable energies. It's well known that the human activity always have a dangerous impact on the environment, and, the capacity of mankind to assimilate and manufacture the waste is limited.

Economy studies the life cycles of the “free products” offered and obtained from the nature; that is because the change value of those products is null and because they are free-offered in spite of the reality that these products are of main importance for the economy.

Our planet, the Earth is a limited natural resource; that is one of the main reasons why natural goods must be considered and treated in another way than the economy use to handle the other goods.

This is just a step the mankind has to do, to solve the international crises (economic and ecological one): both, the centralized planning and the market economies can't solve the irrational handling of the natural resources. The developed countries are the highest pollution sources at international level.

Environment has a direct link with the human being especially, and with the society generally. Opinion polls suggest that most people's concern for the environment is a little fickle and strongly influenced by media coverage. When times are good and the economy is growing, people worry about the fate of the planet and future generations.

When recession looms or an international crisis blows up, green worries are showed aside by more immediate concerns about personal security. Nowadays, there is not functioning an economic system able to take into account the biological capital of the ecological system, and, as a result, practically still are a huge difference between the economic actions and the imperative of the environment.

Generally, capital means a patrimony, a property of a person, able to assure an income. Total capital has a lot of elements; one of them is a natural element: the "entropic capital".

In the '60s, economists found out that there are a lot of environmental factors which didn't belong to nobody, but, these factors should deteriorate the human health, the ecological equilibrium and the economic interest. That means, total capital has another element named "natural capital" which is free, not accounted, but, this capital has a major role in human life, in the conservation of the earth and in obtaining the "entropic capital".

Long time, entropic capital was considered a limited factor which stopped the economic progress. Now, the limited factor is the natural one. In the economic evaluations must be included both – natural and entropic – sides of the capital, which are not a substitute one for the other.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The main principles of environmental economy are the major accent putted on the ecologic elements which have a free character. This „environmental gifts” offered by the nature are public goods. Public goods are free externalities because they don't have an owner which could establish a price for those goods. That is why, missing such a price, the value of this goods can't be internalized, and, these goods were exploited without limits.

A substantial proportion of the population have their environmental consciousness raised permanently and have changed their lives. That's why businesses try to influence the behavior of the government. Pressure groups exist to attempt to influence the actions of governments by making both voters and politicians aware of their opinions.

Businesses form pressure groups to attempt to make their action more effective. In recent years, a number of pressure groups have increased. In the ecological domain, modern methods of communication have made people more aware of issues, such as pollution. For example, Greenpeace has campaigned to persuade the government to pass laws to prevent the dumping of sewage sludge, chemicals and other toxic items into seas.

The changes made by "green activists" may not appear profound. They may have

joined a pressure group, begun recycling bottles, cans and newspapers, switched to take the environment into account in everyday decisions. Green issues will affect what they will buy, where they holiday, and how they vote – even if it is not for the Green Party.

Let's see an example: at 22 December 1988 was murdered in Brazil (Amazonas) Chico Mendes, because he had connections with ecological movements. His main purpose was to protect the rights of the inhabitants which worked in the extraction field of latex, or in agriculture (exploitation of coconuts).

The ecological movement managed by Mendes wanted to save internationally the tropical forest. He demonstrated that equilibrium of the forestry system can financially sustain a huge workforce of latex production. Using the ideas of Chico Mendes, it was created the Extractive Reservation Chico Mendes (with a surface of 1 million area protected forest).

The destiny of Mendes was a tragic one. When he was alive, Mendes proved the direct link between the fundamental and main rights of the human being and the environmental protection. After his death, victims of the human incest proved that to obtain a real ecological protection depends on the reaching of the main human rights. The environment deterioration implies a high human cost. This cost includes a lot of efforts, like Mendes did – to sustain the so called „justice of environment”.

Nowadays, the human activity reached a level which can harm the life of our planet. The ecologists are conscientious of the harmful deterioration of the earth ecosystem, but, inside of this, social movements (like this managed by Mendes) were necessary to show the immediately human price of the environmental destruction.

Ecological injustice exists at all the society levels. The fight against individuals which protect through movements the environment shows high injustice done against the human being. At international level, the environment deterioration is higher in the poor countries which usually use to exploit the own natural resources to sustain the high consume in the reach countries. But, without a serious analyze of the level of exploitation, it is proved that, when the sustainable exploitation limit of a resource is higher than normally, it means that, it exist fundamental changes in the relationship: consumer – consumed product. To show these changes from an economic point of view, let's compare the difference between: to consume the interest and to spend the own capital.

The needs of our generation are higher than the income, and than the sustainable productivity of the free goods offered from the nature; that is the ecological system of the planet.

In the first half part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the limits of the sustainable exploitation of the natural systems where exceeded day after day, in each region of the earth. It's hard to found a developed country which has an unchanged forestry surface. In each country able to supply goods, it takes place a massive lost of fertile soil because of the natural erosion caused by wind and water.

The European forests are suffering because of the high air pollution and because of the acid rain. In 1989, all the fishing areas where exploited at the highest capacity. They still remain 15 main areas of fishing, but 13 of them decline (because of the high pollution, harming oceans and seas). Yearly, this areas use to provide a fish production higher than 100 million ton, but in the future, this production will be lower because he must be distributed yearly at a supplementary population of 90 million human beings.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSIONS**

Exceeding the natural limits of the Earth is impulsive for a lot of events which affects

the way and the speed of the history. For example, because of the excessive demand for wood products, the greatest part of the soil remains unprotected. The rainfalls are torrentially, and use to erode the soil, harming his fertility and generating the rivers destruction.

As specie, the human was always prepared to be competitive with other species, and to survive. But, we are not able to understand and solve the danger. We don't have enough wood, water and food, but we can't understand the meaning of these facts: that we are not able to keep our needs in the limits of the Earth's supply.

Now, in the 21st century, we can see a dangerous tendency: all the human destructions have a huge negative impact upon our lives: the big problem is that we lose the growing capacity of food producing. That means, we are looking forward in the direction of a huge food crises.

To solve these natural problems, a lot of groups, organisms, institutions try to find ways to stimulate the social responsibility of the peoples with power and which can make changes in this economic sector.

The idea which makes this groups to action that way is the supposition that, the environmental destructions are provided because the missing of the capacity of the community to prevent that problems. Such reforms will be successful only if they can protect fully the main rights of the human. At the origins of such measures are not only the reasons of environmental protection, but the individual rights too.

But, a lot of ecologists are without interest and without concern in the „human problem” which is the support of the environment protection. A lot of ecological projects where awful organized and they affected the human legal rights. The developing countries suffer the most because of the expansion of the developed countries. That happens because the developed countries uses the natural resources provided by the developing countries, to assure the products/services requested by a consume society.

The regional environmental damaging is the main reason why there is a huge environmental disequilibrium. To maintain the fundamental civil rights is one of the best ways to protect the environment. When the regional rights will be in top, the communities will be the best agents to maintain the natural resources.

The environmental projects implemented locally are the most efficient ways to solve the above mentioned regional issues. That happens because the most regions/communities want to control their own destiny. The projects which conserve the environment are larger and larger, thanks to the local initiatives sponsored from the communities and from social groups which recognizes the ecological and social justice, and the economical viability.

All the regions must be part of each sustainable development long term model. The big infrastructure projects – in the public and private sector – have as final goal the general welfare. But, we recognize that the greatest part of the environmental projects must come from the regional initiatives, were exists relevant „green information” which may allow the strictly control of the own regional destiny. Politics can facilitate our link to sustainability by using ways to help the individuals to keep in good situation the local environment.

But, we can't deny that a lot of human rights and elements of environmental justice are larger than the regional limits. Pollution exists everywhere, without limits, all the specific environmental elements are global, and, the total threat of the contemporary ecology exists at international level. Because of that ecologist, politicians and the whole world must give the consensus for a healthier environment.

The United Nations have a huge potential as the largest force able to promote international campaigns in the environmental field. The above stated organization was founded on the idea of the interdependence between the nations (at the end of the Second World War).

This idea sustains that, the only concern about what happens with the natural resources of a country must come from these one country. But this condition means not to assume responsibilities (for the developed countries which lives using huge quantities of resources exploited from the developing countries).

This is an abuse which comes from the developed industrialized countries which are responsible for more than 90% of the 400 million ton dangerous wastes produced yearly.

At all this waste we must add the huge waste transports from the developed nations (e.g., in Africa, where environmental legislation did not exist, the price of 1 ton waste is 2.5 \$). Of course, in the most cases, this money is earned not by the poor population, because it constitutes the income of the officials or managers.

But, this „toxic imports” are harmful for the whole country. More than this, the whole world can't ignore that reality, because all the international elements of environmental justice are global (e.g. global warming). A number of causes of environmental damages have emerged over recent years. This is an enormous and complex area, which makes nations to become aware and environmentally responsible.

Scientists readily admit that they do not know all the causes or consequences of pollution. To prevent the environmental injustice, it's needed collaboration between the industry and the governmental bodies, which may recognize the fundamental rights of each individual and of the whole society in the context of sustainable development. The environmental justice is a solid concept because each individual depends on a healthy environment.

Scientists may have underestimated the damage of the pollution, because they are more concerned about the importance of the pollution minimization than in avoiding the issue of the effects pollution use to generate. Environmental pressure groups have caused many businesses to re-evaluate their production costs.

As protecting the environment has achieved a higher priority amongst societies throughout the world, so the pressures upon businesses to adapt environmentally friendly processes and products have grown internationally. The necessity of altering business practice and policy to take account of environmental protection has implications for most aspects of business behaviour. Protecting the individual rights is the best way to protect the next generation and to assure them the in heritage of a planet which deserves to be alive.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Scientists readily admit that they do not know all the causes or consequences of pollution. To prevent the environmental injustice it is needed collaboration between the industry and the governmental bodies, which may recognize the fundamental rights of each individual and of the whole society in the context of sustainable development. The environmental justice is a solid concept because each individual/human being depends on a healthy environment.

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