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10.2478/v10103-012-0012-z

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# The Concept of Sustainable Development and Its Impact on the Shaping of Modern International Relations through Global Agreements

## Abstract

*The goal of this article is a depiction of the process of the molding of the concept of sustainable development as well as a look at the influence that this concept has exerted on contemporary international politics, especially taking into account agreements of worldwide scope. This article is also an effort at demonstrating that the foundations of the concept of sustainable development can be traced to certain economic theories. The final section of this article is devoted to the characteristics of individual conferences initiated by the United Nations in order to promote enduring and sustainable development on a world scale. Also presented are the achievements of the individual conferences and their roles in demarcating universally obligatory principles and standards of sustainable development.*

## 1. Introduction

The beginning of the 21st century was a period of several changes throughout the world—already initiated in the 20th century. It is a period of development and broadly understood transformations in many fields, such as the economy, industry, agriculture, the labor market, modern technology, and environmental protection. The process of world globalization has become exceptionally important. It is leading to the mutual penetration of world norms

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in the functioning of companies, the development of uniform standards, and the transfer of information in matters of greatest importance. A key position in all these changes is played by society, which stands to benefit or suffer frustration as a result of all the economic processes taking place. The role of the natural environment absolutely must be indicated at this point. As the natural area of human life it is often utilized in an inappropriate manner, which, as a consequence, leads to degradation.

All of the above aspects have contributed to the commencement of close cooperation among countries throughout the world as well as to the concluding of agreements and the calling of conferences of the highest order. The development of collaboration on a global level has borne fruit in numerous agreements that, in their essence, have assumed the implementation of many goals in matters relating to the economy, society, and the environment. Not all agreements have ushered in expected effects, but they have started a wave of development in social awareness in which care for the further development of mankind without harm to the natural environment is the only proper road that should be taken. Among dominant trends in matters of the rational use of natural resources, there is no doubt that a key role is played by the concept of sustainable development. The article below is an effort at bringing this concept closer.

## 2. The Concept of Sustainable Development: Genesis

The functioning of every civilization is, to a great extent, dependent on its environment and culture. Culture is the determinant of people's approach to the natural basis of all aspects of life, including the existence and development of Man. The conviction during the industrial era was that the economy is an element that is separate from the environment and that its development has played a role in pushing nature into the sidelines in the development of the economic sphere. A watershed in this reasoning did not occur until the looming of the global environmental crisis. Scientific research has proved that rapid demographic growth and an unproportionately large increase in economic growth aimed at the utilization of nature's resources are serious threats to the nature–related aspects of life as well as to the future development of civilization. However, there is still no answer as to whether or not negative aspects shall first make their appearance in the economic sphere and subsequently in the biological one, if economic conditions will undergo improper changes throughout the world as a whole or only in certain geographic areas, and ultimately if the destruction of natural economic conditions in one region will perhaps play a role

in improving conditions in other regions. Many pessimistically inclined observes have stressed that the world is inescapably approaching a limit threatening the very existence of *Homo sapiens* as a species beyond which changes will be such that the human organism will no longer be capable of adapting by way of further development (Wilson 2003).

Difficulties that make their appearance in any attempt to make a proper diagnosis primarily stem from the long duration and differing development cycles of nature, the economy, and culture. Studies relating to global environmental threats are usually conducted over a short period of time as compared with the cycles of an evolving nature. It is the limitations on influencing evolutionary processes in nature that have made it necessary to introduce changes in the economic sphere as well as in the social one. References to social culture have also made themselves known at this point. Without changes in the sphere of social culture there can be no talk of far–reaching transformations in the economy or revaluations in the social sphere that are, in fact, implicated by economic changes (Poskrobko 2005, pp. 28–29).

Any acceleration in changes taking place in culture usually occurs under the influence of various states of crisis. Significant changes over recent years in the awareness of society have been caused by global environmental threats. Cultural information, which has a major impact on social views, now includes theories and ideas that, as a consequence, have brought about the reshaping of the attitude of people to the world of nature. In disseminating such ideas an important role was played by environmental and social organizations as well as the United Nations.

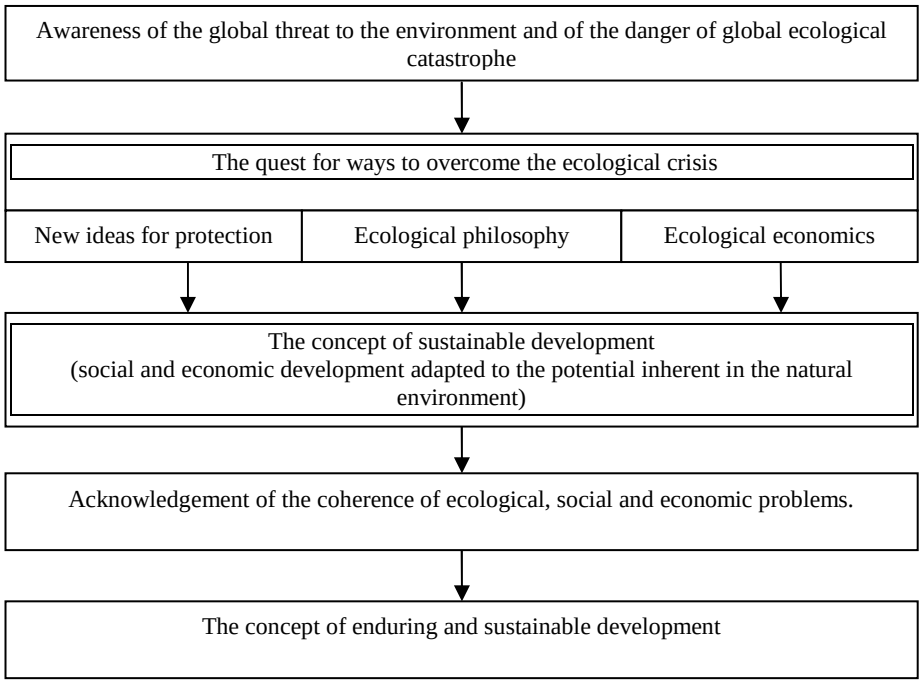
New theories regarding the biosphere started making their appearance at the turn of the 20th century. This gave rise to new philosophical (M. Bookchin), economic (K. Buolding), and nature–oriented (E. O. Wilson) ideas. A question was put as to should what already is be improved or is it perhaps a better solution to direct societies and economies onto new tracks.

As a result of these considerations, two streams of recommended and recognized solutions made their appearance—the biometric solution and anthropocentric solution. These streams are also universally recognized today.

The biocentric stream, based on a philosophy of all–embracing ecology, maintains that nature is the cradle and foundation of all life and the seat of evolution. This means that there exists a need to subordinate Man's economic and extra–economic activities to the potential created by the ecosystem in each process of nature organization. This stream is behind the inspiration for the emergence of new areas of activity—social ecology, ecological philosophy, and ecological economics. The biocentric stream has also created the basis for studying social and economic development, subject to conditions of limited

biosphere resources. However, as of yet, it has not developed recommendations that can be implemented in practice (Figure No. 1).

**Figure 1. The process of shaping the concept of sustainable development**

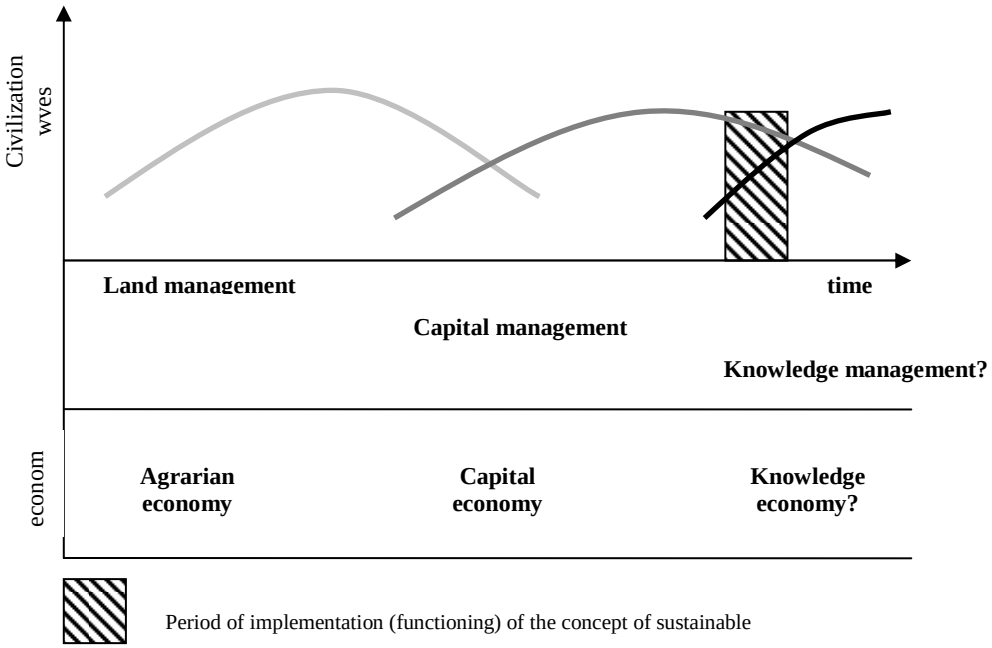



Source: B. Poskrobko, S. Kozłowski, *Sustainable development: Selected theoretical problems and implementation in light of European Union documents*, Warsaw, 2005, p. 30.

The nineteen–eighties were a time when it became obvious that without reforming such areas as the economy, the environment, and society, it will not be possible to overcome the worldwide environmental crisis. It was during this period that the concept of enduring and sustainable development, based on the assumption that contemporary knowledge makes it possible to consciously shape all components of the macro–system by Man, especially restrict social and economic pressure on the environment and strengthen the ecosystem, made its appearance.

One might risk the statement that the concept of enduring and sustainable development is a bridge between the capital–oriented economy and the future–oriented economy, which will commence studies on economic processes characteristic of the post– industrial civilization. The future may mean the replacement of the capital–oriented economy with a knowledge–based economy (Poskrobko 2005, p. 31) (Figure No. 2).

**Figure 2. The Concept of Sustainable Development as a Bridge between the Industrial and Postindustrial Civilization**




Source: B. Poskrobko, S. Kozłowski, Sustainable development: Selected theoretical problems and implementation in light of European Union documents], Warsaw, 2005, p. 30.

## 3. The Concept of Sustainable Development in Light of Contemporary Economic Theory

The roots of the concept of sustainable development may be found in classic economics (D. Ricardo, T. Malthus, and J. S. Mill). Its representatives conducted a discourse on the limits to growth, while examining the falling output of arable land, taking into account its fertility and the relationship between arable land resources and population growth (Rechul 2004). In a later period, representatives of neoclassical economics (mainly W. Jevons), Marxism, institutionalism, and also Keynesian economics also took up this subject matter. The main credit should be awarded to representatives of the Roman Club. Today, sustainable development—one of the main subjects of economic and environmental studies—is primarily undertaken by ecological economics,

energy analysis, environmental economics, and other related disciplines (Jeżowski 2005, p. 57).

The definition of *sustainable development* differs from that of *balanced economic growth*. It was stated for the first time in the Brundtland Report—"Our Common Future"—in 1987. It is a generalized concept and, in its essence, means the "… path of human progress which meets the needs and aspirations of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Estes 1993). The above definition clearly indicates that the economic and civilizational development of the present generation should not take place at the cost of exhausting nonrenewable resources and environmental degradation, but for the good of future generations, which includes the right to further development[1] (Mol 1999).

A more precise definition of sustainable development is detailed in Agenda 21, ratified at the Rio de Janeiro summit. It looks at the principles of sustainable development in forty chapters of detailed recommendations. Possibilities for introducing this concept into the real world were confirmed by the successive United Nations conference in Johannesburg in 2002 (Poskrobko, 2005, p. 31).

The definitions for enduring and sustainable development stress and identify two qualities of this concept—**permanence** and **sustainability**.

The basic pillar of exceptionally great importance for the category of sustainable development (enduring development) is *permanence*. Essentially, this is a question of decisions relating to the ethical premises of permanence that entail intra–generational justice and inter–generational justice, as well as justice with respect to non–personal entities. An important role is also served by assumptions in the area of substitutionability among services rendered by nature capital and forms of social capital as well as the problem of irreversible processes (Jeżowski 2005, p. 58).

*Sustainability*, for its part, signifies the need, or even the necessity, of maintaining and creating proper—the most appropriate from the point of view of management—effects. According of B. Fiedor, this is not a question of balance in light of the theory of growth, but a much broader understanding that may be called a "qualitative dimension." Sustainability so–understood is primarily the achievement of economic and social objectives while maintaining a high quality

[1] www.bsp-pl.org –*A sustainable development strategy for Poland up to the year 2025: Guidelines for ministries developing sector strategies*, Ministry of the Environment, Warsaw, December 1999.

of the natural environment and the securing of accessibility to its resources, taking into account the dimension of time and space (Fiedor et al. 2002).

In connection with systems theory, it may be stated that sustainability is primarily a reference to development links in a macro–system—i.e. the environment–economy–society—and inside each and every one of those subsystems (Poskrobko 2007, p. 22).

In ecological economics (a socio–economical discipline concerned with environmental protection and sustainable development) it is possible to identify three assumptions (conditions connected with sustainable development) presented as a problem of hierarchically coupled character.

They are:

1. The maintaining of a permanent economic scale in terms of its life–supporting environmental system,
2. The maintaining of a just distribution of resources and opportunities not only among members of the present generation, but also among the present and future generations and, to a certain extent, between people and other species, and
3. The maintaining of the efficient allocation of resources in time (Norton et al., 1998).

Simplifying, this means an appropriate scale of human activity, reliable and just distribution among generation and species, and the efficient allocation of natural–market and non–market resources (Collados and Duane1999, pp. 441-460.). The assumptions of ecological economics are unrealistic, however. This is because each and every use of nonrenewable resources undermines the principle of permanence that, as was mentioned earlier, is a basic pillar of sustainable development. It is an obvious fact that Man, in his economic activity as well as during consumption, usually reaches for natural assets of key importance. Thus, restricting the scale of consumption or use must have a significant impact on the functioning of the market and the distribution of income within the framework of the present generation and also between generations (Stewen 1998).

A closer to real life or, more importantly, possible approach to the concept of sustainable development is presented by neoclassical environmental economics, which concentrates on economic permanence and economic growth (the quest to an optimum prosperity).

Environmental economics, in its turn, defines sustainable development as subject to conditions of weak permanence assuming that nature–based capital and capital as generated by Man may be substituted for each other. The permissibility of mutual substitution and supplementing between these production factors opens up possibilities for economic growth. Only weak

permanence, where nature–based capital may be replaced by generated capital makes possible economic growth and sustainable development. This approach is very far from the view of ecological economics, which is illustrated by a statement made by H. Daly (2002). In his view, economic growth does not solve the problem of poverty, for example, because growth in GDP ultimately causes a more rapid growth in environmental and social costs than growth in the benefits of production (Daly 2002).

At the present phase of study on enduring and sustainable development, this concept may be understood as a way of organizing economic activity, and using and shaping possibilities offered by the environment, as well as the organizing of social life so as to guarantee the development of future production processes, management systems, the permanence of natural potential, and the perfecting and, in the more distant future, maintaining of a high standard of living of society (Poskrobko 2007, p. 22).

Sustainable development is not only environmental protection in its traditional sense. It is primarily "development" delimited by a framework of ecological space, where economic, environmental, and social processes are taken into account and mutually penetrate each other—a process safely and favorable influencing the development of Man, the environment, and the economy. Thus, it is a "stimulator" of progress in its broad sense. It also appears as a way of living and something of a form of ethics allowing for the making of choices from among known forms of consumption and production in today's world. Sustainable development is also a "fad." This is because today's consumer considers an environmentally–friendly product as something that is safe, healthy, and even modern[2] (Mol 1999).

Sustainable development is not some clearly defined and final objective—a limit that society must reach. Rather, it is a process spread out over a long period of time (years or maybe even centuries) and generations.

Presently, it is possible to find over one hundred definitions and interpretations of sustainable development. This is a sign of a significant problem in perception, both in reality and in practice, because sustainable development may be examined in many ways. The concept is becoming increasingly popular, comparable with the popularity of the concepts of "environment" and "environmentally–friendly" of a decade ago. It is also for this reason that one often comes up against difficulties in defining if this is an economic–ecological category or simply a marketing gimmick (Jeżowski 2005, p. 58).

[2] Ibid.

## 4. The Ethical Basis of Sustainable Development

A positive attitude by Man with respect to nature and the natural environment is provided by the teachings of religions such as Taoism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism, and is also present in Christianity. St. Francis of Assisi is a good example. In 1979 he was announced the patron saint of ecology by the Roman Catholic Church. There are also the teachings of Pope John Paul II. Questions tied with care for the natural environment found their way into the *Centesimus Annus* encyclical of May 1, 1991 in which John Paul wrote "Equally worrying is the ecological question which accompanies the problem of consumerism and which is closely connected to it. In his desire to have and to enjoy rather than to be and to grow, man consumes the resources of the earth and his own life in an excessive and disordered way" ("Dlaczego rolnictwo w Polsce sprzyja ochronie ptaków?" [Why does Polish agriculture foster the protection of birds?], *Ogólnopolskie Towarzystwo Ochrony Ptaków* [Polish Society for the Protection of Birds], p. 2.).

Ethical principles that play a part in achieving sustainable development have been identified by the creators of *permaculture*. Permaculture is a system of design for sustainable human settlement (gardens, farms, villages, and even towns). Two Australians—Bill Mollison and David Holmgren—developed this system in the nineteen–seventies and are responsible for its launching. The name *permaculture* is derived from two English words: *permanent* and *agriculture*[3]. Permaculture is characterized by the following ethical principles:

1. Care of the earth,
2. Care of people,
3. The just distribution of surplus, and
4. Limiting consumption to a minimum.

Care of the earth should be understood as caring for all living things, but also for the inanimate environment. This principle encompasses plants and animals as well as the soil, air, and water. Care for people, for its part, should be understood as satisfying their needs, including food, shelter, education, motivating work, and interpersonal contacts (Berdo 2006, p. 20).

Bill Mollison also identified the following ethical principles relating to natural ecosystems:

1. Absolute protection of natural forests,
2. Intensive renewal of degraded ecosystems,

[3] Seeds of Change, http://www.seedsofchange.com/about/research_farm.asp, November 13, 2005.

3. Establishing systems for the needs of Man, even on the smallest used piece of land, and
4. Founding nature reserves for rare and threatened species of plants and animals.

The idea of permaculture also encompasses a "life ethic," in line with which each and every living being has value in and of itself (e.g. a tree has value in and of itself, even if it does not represent any economic value).

The ethical principles proposed by the creators of permaculture have the following application in the design of sustainable ecosystems:

- Foreseeing the long–term consequences of actions and planning to achieve enduring effects,
- Primarily raising local species of plants and evading invasive species,
- Establishing multi–species cultivation,
- Promoting social responsibility and helping people become independent,
- Forestation and soil recultivation,
- Recycling waste,
- Seeking appropriate solutions, not concentrating on problems, and
- Design of small and efficient systems that do not require large outlays of work and energy.

## 5. Sustainable development as the goal of global agreements

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development was held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. It is universally known as the "Earth Summit." The ideas and principles of sustainable development were discussed and ratified in their binding form. The most important achievement of this meeting of state governments was the *Declaration on Environment and Development* that was negotiated. It confirms the currentness of the Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment and defines twenty–seven general principles of global sustainable development[4].

The Rio Declaration and the above principles were supplemented by a set of 2,500 recommendations for states, governments, intergovernmental and international organizations, and for society, known as the "**Agenda 21 – Action Plan for Global Sustainable Development for the 21st Century**." This set,

[4] www.poznajemyonz.pl – UN Awareness Action. A list of principles of sustainable development as approved in the Declaration on Environment and Development at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in June of 1992. It is accessible on the Web pages of the United Nations – http://www.un.org/en/

better known as simply "Agenda 21," is a key document promoting the concepts of sustainable development and environmental protection. It consists of guidelines for the development of regional, national, and local sustainable development strategies.

Agenda 21 is subdivided into four sections. Each makes reference to a separate, albeit mutually integrated, sphere of development, specifically:

- The Social and Economic Dimensions,
- Conservation and Management of Resources for Development (questions relating to arable land, forests, the rural countryside and agriculture, endangered ecosystems, and protection of the oceans and inland waters),
- Strengthening the Role of Major Groups, who implement sustainable development (trade unions, nongovernmental organizations, scientists, ethnic groups, youth, and women), and
- Means of Implementation of sustainable development encompassing financial means, technology transfer, training, legal mechanisms and instruments, international law, etc. (Ciechanowicz 1999, p. 36).

Agenda 21 presents basic policy assumptions as well as programs aimed at achieving balance among such elements as consumption, world population numbers, and the earth's capacity for the further evolution of life. Agenda 21 stresses the fact that environmental changes are, to the greatest of extents, dependent on factors such as consumption, technology, and changes in the demographic structure. Ways of mollifying the impact of inefficient models of consumption in certain parts of the world have been identified, as have ways of simultaneously enticing others towards accelerated, but sustainable development. Also presented were guidelines relating to fighting environmental degradation in land, in the air, and in water, and the preservation of forests and the diversity of species populating the Earth[5]. Agenda 21 is something of an appeal calling for action against all the key problems of present times as well as an effort at readying society for future challenges (Wysokińska and Witkowska 2004, pp. 14–15).

The most important problems in the matter of implementation of principles of enduring and sustainable development:

1. International cooperation aimed at accelerating enduring and sustainable development as well as the introduction of relevant internal policies in developing countries. A key area of work on the part of economic development should be the creation of a nurturing climate to achieved the goals specified in Agenda 21 with respect to environmental protection and development through:

[5] *Eko–Bałtyk*, No. 3/4 (64/65), July/August 1999, pp. 9–10.

- The promotion of enduring and sustainable development as an effect of the liberalization of commerce,
- A mutual dependence between commerce and environmental protection,
- Maintenance of an appropriate level of financial resources for developing countries as well as the solving of the problem of international debt, and
- Support of macro–economic actions for environmental protection and development (Wysokińska Z. and Witkowska J. 2004, p. 10).

2. Changes in the model of consumption through:
   - Balancing the consumption and production models, and
   - The undertaking by individual countries of economic policies and strategies that will play a role in eliminating unsustainable consumption models.
3. Protection of natural resources that are the basis for the social and economic development of future generations[6].

It is obvious that each level of implementation of sustainable development (global, regional, national, and local) has its own recommendations adapted to development problems peculiar to that level and requiring the use of a different set of instruments as well as serving to involve various actors of the political scene in Agenda 21[7].

An exceptionally important success of the Rio Conference was the establishing of the Commission on Sustainable Development (a functional commission of the ECOSOC), thanks to which the development of a global action strategy in the area of environmental protection, especially climate change, biodiversity, and fighting desertification, has gained the proper momentum.

An unquestionably significant effect of the Conference was also the signing of the following conventions[8]:

- Convention on Biodiversity. The objective of this Convention is the preservation of the world's biodiversity and a sustainable exploitation of its elements, including the just distribution of benefits stemming from work on genetic material. It was on the basis of this Convention that the Protocol on Biosafety (international commerce in genetically modified organisms) was negotiated.

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[6] Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, *The World Summit on Sustainable Development One Year On: Implementing Our Commitments*, Brussels, December 12, 2003.

[7] A sustainable development strategy for Poland up to the year 2025: Guidelines for ministries developing sector strategies, Ministry of the Environment, Warsaw, December 1999.

[8] www.poznajemyonz.pl – UN Awareness Action.

- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The essence of this Convention is the achievement of a level of concentration of greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere that will not be a threat to the world's climate system. The Convention is an initiative that goes far beyond the boundaries of a traditional understanding of the frameworks for environmental agreements. Implementation of its provisions comes down to the appearance of economic repercussions encompassing such sectors as power engineering, transportation, agriculture, forestry, and the maritime economy. Thus, it is not only an environmental convention, but also primarily an agreement of exceptionally great economic importance of significant political weight.

The Third Conference of the Parties (COP 3) was organized as a result of the failure to implement all of the provisions as contained in the Framework Convention. Its outcome was the development of a new legal instrument. It was approved under the name of the Kyoto Protocol. The protocol obligated industrialized countries to reduce emissions of the basic greenhouse gasses by at least 5.2%. It was assumed that this was to be achieved over the years 2008–2012.

The Kyoto Protocol came into force on February 16, 2005. It was ratified by 170 countries (excluding the United States and Australia).

Successive international instruments vital for protection of the environment and important to sustainable development were drafted in 1994 as a result of efforts aimed at implementing the decisions from Rio de Janeiro:

- United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification,
- Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) expressed in action against the negative impact of POPs on the environment. This Convention was ratified in 2001 and is in force as of May of 2004.
- Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade. The goal of this Convention is to control and prevent illegal trade in hazardous chemical substances. This Convention came into force on February 24, 2004.

The updating and vitalizing of global obligations regarding enduring and sustainable development as well as the assessment of ten years of achievements in implementing obligations taken up in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 took place at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, which was held on August 26 – September 4, 2002 in Johannesburg, Republic of South Africa. It was at this summit that possibilities for fighting poverty as well as hunger, which is intrinsically tied to it in many countries of the world, as well as health care and environmental protection on a global scale were looked into.

State representatives (almost 200 countries) took the decision to pass a global plan for reducing poverty while simultaneously respecting principles of protection of the natural environment. The driving force for developing this plan was the millennial development goals passed at the United Nations Millennium Summit held in New York. It included:

- The decision to increase efforts in the matter of boosting possibilities of using cheap and renewable sources of energy,
- The agreement on protection of selected regions of the seas and oceans aimed at the renewal of fish stocks, destroyed by the excessive fishing of certain species, by 2015,
- The agreement on the production and use of chemical compounds in ways that cause the least harm to human life and the environment, which will be implemented by the year 2020,
- The agreement on the need to slow the rate of extinction of rare species of flora and fauna by the year 2010,
- Affirmation of the principle of the assumed threat to the environment and the maintenance of care even when evidence of the appearance of a potential threat to the ecosystem is not unequivocal, and
- Affirmation of the principle of the joint, but varied, responsibility of all countries, who are obligated to pay the closest attention to saving the Earth's natural environment, where wealthy countries should support this goal financially to a greater extent than poor ones.

## 6. Rio +20

The United Nations Rio +20 Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) is the most significant event in sustainable development this year. Discussion that will be conducted that shall be revolve around two main matters:

- The effective promotion of sustainable development, and
- Global institutionalization of collaboration in this sphere.

The designated date and venue are not random. May of 2012 marks ten years since the first World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg. Also worth remembering is that it was twenty years ago in Rio de Janeiro that the Earth Summit tool place. It ended in the signing of Agenda 21, which defines international principles of cooperation for environmental protection, which was discussed in greater detail in the above section of this article.

It is with reference to this event that the upcoming conference has been called Rio +20. Its main objective is the summing up of the past twenty years in terms of implementation of sustainable development as well as the identifying of new priority actions that shall be adequate with respect to the world's economic, environmental, and social challenges. The conference shall be held on June 20–22, 2012 in Rio de Janeiro.

All people and entities taking part in this year's conference shall concentrate on two priorities. The first is an economy based on "green" solutions that is playing a role in solving social problems, especially in the context of the elimination of poverty, in a sustainable way.

The organizers have developed a list of seven significant challenges in this matter[9]:

- Jobs – The need for creating new jobs and better working conditions, including especially "green" work places, and social inclusion.
- Energy – The mandatory guaranteeing of broad access to modern energy sources, taking into account renewable ones, as well as the efficient utilization of existing networks and resources.
- Cities – The growing need to support the sustainable development of cities, especially with respect to environmental and social questions.
- Food – The need for redefining global policies and philosophies in the context of the production, distribution, and consumption of food, especially in matters relating to hunger and growing population numbers.
- Water – The need for change in managing world fresh water resources, and the improvement of access to it as well as its quality.
- Oceans – The need for sustainable management of maritime resources and the protection of the oceans as an element stabilizing climate and nature processes.
- Natural disasters – The need for active preventive efforts and global cooperation in combating their economic, environmental, and social effects.

The second conference postulate is the institutionalization of global cooperation for sustainable development, which is intended to bring about greater harmonization and efficiency of actions. Among the things the organizers are proposing are[10]:

- Expanding jurisdiction and the financial potential of already existing institutions—i.e. the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), the

[9] http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/7issues.html

[10] http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/isfd.html

United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD),

- Stronger collaboration in world climate change management, and
- A more active role for international financial institutions such as the World Bank, the Regional Development Bank, and the International Monetary Fund.

The ultimate outcome of this successive Earth Summit is to be the signing of a document entitled "The Future We Want"[11]. Among the things it proposes is the significant expansion of the jurisdiction of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development or its changing into the United Nations Council on Sustainable Development, and the launching of a new initiative—Sustainable Energy for All. This document also forwards proposals for creating a list of Sustainable Development Goals, modeled on the Millennial Development Goals, which would be defined through relevant indicators to be achieved by the year 2030.

## 7. Conclusion

An unequivocal conclusion crops up in summing up the above discussion. The **Concept of Sustainable Development** is an idea that has been evolving over the course of time and is continuously playing a part in molding modern international relations and introducing defined regulation into the world economy. This idea gave birth to many economic processes currently taking place on European markets and has acted to increase concern over the fate of future generations and their living conditions. It has also played an exceptionally important role in questions of state and public involvement in environmental protection, in its broad sense. There is no doubt that the most important outcome of the implementation of the assumptions of the described concept is the signing by the member states of the United Nations of agreements and declarations on implementing the goals and observing the principles of sustainable development that are the outcome of participation in United Nations conferences on enduring and sustainable development. The concept of sustainable development has brought about global changes in developing the policies of individual countries through greater involvement in the use of renewable energy sources, restricting the level of industrial pollution, increasing care over the preservation of natural resources, fighting neediness and poverty, and growth in employment through

[11]http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/content/documents/370The%20Future%20We%20Want%2012Jan%20clean%20_no%20brackets.pdf

the introduction of changes on the labor market as well as equal opportunities among social classes in finding work.

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## Streszczenie

### GENEZA KONCEPCJI ZRÓWNOWAŻONEGO ROZWOJU ORAZ JEJ WPŁYW NA UKSZTAŁTOWANIE SIĘ WSPÓŁCZESNYCH STOSUNKÓW MIĘDZYNARODOWYCH POPRZEZ ZAWIERANIE GLOBALNYCH POROZUMIEŃ

*Celem niniejszego artykułu jest scharakteryzowanie genezy kształtowania się Koncepcji Zrównoważonego Rozwoju, a także wskazanie, jaki wpływ miała ona na ukształtowanie się stosunków międzynarodowych w zakresie ochrony środowiska i rozwiązywania problemów społecznych. Przedmiotem analizy są także teorie ekonomiczne, które stały się fundamentem dla wykrystalizowania się koncepcji zrównoważonego rozwoju. Poniższy artykuł jest także próbą wykazania, iż konferencje organizowane przez ONZ na rzecz trwałego i zrównoważonego rozwoju, stały się siła napędową do rozpowszechnienia tej koncepcji w skali światowej.*