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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND ITS ROLE IN THE STATE POLICY OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN IN THE FIELD OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

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ABSTRACT

This article gives a brief definition of the concept of sustainable development, the goals and objectives of economic and social development in view of their sustainability, in accordance with environmental requirements in all developed and developing countries, as well as the protection of plant life and its sustainable development. In addition, the Sustainable Development Goals have been emphasized and the work carried out in the Republic of Uzbekistan to realize these goals has been discussed.

KEYWORDS

Sustainable development, environmental protection, Agenda for Sustainable Development, global governance, SDG Index.

INTRODUCTION

Human life depends on the land. Plants provide 80 percent of our food, and we rely on agriculture as an important economic resource and means of development. Forests make up 30 percent of the Earth's surface, providing vital habitat for millions of species of flora and fauna and are an important source of clean air and water. They are also crucial to combating climate change.

Today we are witnessing unprecedented land degradation and loss of arable land 30 to 35 times faster than in the past. Drought and desertification are increasing annually, resulting in the loss of 12 million hectares of land and affecting poor communities around the world. Of the 8,300 known animal breeds, 8% are extinct and 22% are at risk of extinction.

The goals and objectives of economic and social development should be determined in accordance with environmental requirements in all developed and developing countries, taking into account their sustainability. [1. P 67] After all, the main goal of the state in the field of environmental protection is to create an ecologically safe environment for current and future generations, as well as to realize the right to a healthy environment. [2. P. 66]

Currently, there are about 60 definitions of sustainable development in the literature. The most common is the definition given in the report of the commission of G. H. Brundtland. H. Brundtland. [3. P 13]

"Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." [4]

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015 with the aim to "transform the world for the better by 2030" (United Nations, 2015, 35). The SDGs have acquired a strong normative status within the United Nations system and in numerous countries. They have been celebrated as high aspirations to attain sustainable development in its economic, social and environmental dimensions. More long-standing and going back to the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, international human rights have been institutionalised as core norms in the United Nations system. They have continuously been under severe pressure with economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights being violated in many countries. [5. P. 134]

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) offer a novel and contested approach to global governance on the range of development and environmental challenges that together constitute 'sustainable development.' The SDGs are composed not just of 17 goals, but also 169 targets that are meant to give specificity and substance to these broad global ambitions and 244 indicators selected to track global achievement. Each of these elements has been scrutinized and contested. The goals-framed approach itself, and the idea of sustainable development embodied by the SDGs, have both been critiqued (e.g., Van Norren, 2020; Weber & Weber, 2020). Commentators have debated whether the goals and targets set too little or too great an ambition (e.g., on different aspects, Fletcher & Rammelt, 2017; Winkler, 2018). Methodological challenges remain around their measurement (Mugellini et al., 2021; Shinwell & Cohen, 2020), raising questions whether the SDGs are genuinely measurable at all (Rodríguez Antón et al., 2022). [6. P. 150] This goal aims to conserve and restore the use of terrestrial ecosystems by 2030. Halting desertification is also vital to mitigating climate change. Urgent action is needed to reduce the loss of natural habitats and biodiversity that are part of our common heritage. [7]

Today our country is consistently working in the field of environmental protection, rational use of natural resources, and improvement of the sanitary and environmental situation. In order to live, we need to protect nature, manage natural resources wisely, and use them sparingly. [8. P. 111]

The Republic of Uzbekistan is an arid climate country with a total area of about 44.9 million km², which consists mainly of mountains and plains, comprising mostly desert and semi-desert areas and, to a lesser extent, arable land in intensively irrigated valleys. Land

use reforms were mainly focused on irrigated agriculture, which occupies about 10% of the total land area. More than 90% of crops are grown on irrigated lands of the country. A characteristic feature of most natural ecosystems in Uzbekistan is their increased fragility associated with the aridity of the climate. In this regard, the resistance of ecosystems to external impacts is rather low and any anthropogenic interference serves as an additional factor of degradation of natural complexes. Agricultural activities, distant cattle breeding, development of energy and extractive industries have a negative impact on almost all natural ecosystems in the country. Plain, foothill, aquatic and near-water ecosystems, especially in the lower reaches of major rivers, including the Aral Sea region and the Aral Sea, have been subjected to the greatest changes. In addition to experiencing serious anthropogenic pressure, ecosystems are also greatly affected by changing hydrological and climatic conditions.[7]

In 2015, the Government of Uzbekistan committed to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In 2018, 16 national Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 125 corresponding targets were adopted. Simultaneously, an inter-agency Coordination Council for implementing the national SDG Roadmap was established. A web-portal was launched with data on about 100 indicators and work is underway to establish data collection on the remaining 100 indicators. The bicameral Parliamentary Commission on SDGs, civil society, youth and leading national NGOs are actively involved in SDGs promotion and implementation, including the preparation of this first VNR. The implementation of the SDGs in Uzbekistan coincided with large-scale reforms in the framework of the national Action Strategy for 2017-2021. This strategy and its five priority areas have been confirmed as a pathway to achieving the SDGs. Work is

underway to integrate the SDGs into national and regional development strategies and programs, including the Concept of Comprehensive Socio-economic Development of the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030. The government is assessing the results of the reforms through monitoring 23 global ratings (indexes), including the global SDG Index, where Uzbekistan is currently ranked 52nd. The country's long-term objective is to become a high middle-income country by 2030, therein doubling per capita income, as well as reducing poverty and inequality (SDG1 and SDG10). To achieve this, Uzbekistan is implementing structural reforms to strengthen the market economy, alongside currency and tax reforms, and systemic agricultural reforms (SDG2). A range of measures have been taken to improve the business climate, stimulate entrepreneurship and formal employment, including among youth and women (SDG5 and SDG8), as well as to attract investment and promote innovation (SDG9). Current challenges include ensuring sustainable employment for youth and women, as well as improving the effectiveness of the social protection system. In healthcare (SDG3), measures are being taken to improve the quality and accessibility of services through improving the financing and insurance system, stimulating private investment, improving the training and professional development of medical personnel, as well as developing medical science and the widespread introduction of e-health. Current priorities in the field of education (SDG4) include improving the quality and coverage of education at all levels, as well as encouraging increasing public and private investments. The reforms in Uzbekistan are guided by one principle: "Human Interests Are Above All," which is closely aligned with the fundamental principle of Agenda 2030, "Leaving No-one Behind." Since the adoption of the SDGs, Uzbekistan has made significant progress in improving the protection of human rights and strengthening rule

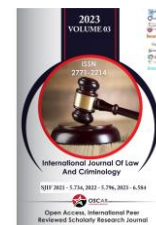
of law. The country has established a system of People's Receptions of the President, administrative reform is ongoing, e-government is being improved, and reforms are being implemented to ensure the independence of the media and bloggers as well as to enhance the role of civil society. The country has also prioritized strengthening the role and protecting the rights of women. Recently, laws have been adopted on gender equality and the protection of women from violence, the proportion of women in parliament has doubled (up to 32%), and women have been promoted to leadership positions at all levels of state and local authorities (SDGs 5 and 16). Uzbekistan pursues a foreign policy of openness, cooperation, and peace. In recent years, the country has opened borders and is deepening cooperation with the Central Asian countries in the areas of rational use of trans-boundary resources and trade. Collaboration with UN agencies and international financial institutions (SDG17) is being strengthened. Following the liberalization of the visa regime, the annual tourist arrivals exceeded 6.7 million people in 2019 (compared to 2.5 million in 2017). In environment area, Uzbekistan prioritizes mitigation and adaptation to climate change (including under the Paris Agreement) with a special focus on the Aral Sea region, conservation and the efficient use of water, land and energy resources, as well as biodiversity conservation (SDG 13, 14 and 15). [9]

Based on the above, we can confidently say that environmental protection, environmental security and sustainable use of natural resources, as well as combating climate change are the priorities of the policy of the New Uzbekistan, and the ongoing constitutional reforms in our country, as well as all other areas, are aimed at protecting the human environment, serves to strengthen the constitutional basis of its rights and environmental security,

environmental protection, sustainable use of natural resources.

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