CONCEPTUAL BASICS OF CHANGES IN THE SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE FRAMES OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PARADIGM OF SOCIETY
(BY THE EXAMPLE OF RUSSIAN FEDERATION)

Darina Krivova¹, Yury Myachin²

¹Saint-Petersburg State University of Engineering and Economics, Russia, darina.krivova@engec.ru
²Saint-Petersburg State University of Engineering and Economics, Russia, dept.fm@engec.ru

Abstract

The concept of sustainable development, formed in the world, must develop into a theory from scientific point of view and a program of sustainable development from practical point of view to be implemented by the world community in order to preserve the world civilization in the current millennium.

Determination of regularities, principles, methods and conditions of stability of position and development of educational systems constitutes a serious scientific problem and undoubtedly gives an important approaching condition of education systems of the countries and regions.

The analysis of the processes, determining the sustainable development as a science, allows drawing a conclusion that in the nearest future it could be formed as the methodological base for scientific justification to modern paradigm of development of the terrestrial civilization.

Russia increasingly reveals a tendency to integrate into the world economy system. The main objectives in modernizing Russia harmonize with the Programme for Sustainable development, but they have certain national and regional distinctive features.

Keywords: sustainable development, education systems, modernizing.

Introduction

The concept of sustainable development, formed in the world, must develop into a theory from scientific point of view and a program of sustainable development from practical point of view to be implemented by the world community in order to preserve the world civilization in the current millennium. The report Our Common Future mentions that the strategy of sustainable development is aimed at achieving the harmony between people and nature.

Education for sustainable development is a dynamic concept, comprising all aspects of the society’s awareness, education and professional training in order to provide and expand understanding of interrelations between the issues of sustainable development and development of knowledge, skills, prospects and values that will give people of any age the opportunity to assume obligations for creating sustainable future and possessing it.

Governments in their activities form efficient models of sustainable development, introduce new methods for their implementation, develop high quality educational programs, and elucidate the necessity for further development of the theory and practice of sustainable development and overcoming distrust to the mechanisms of its implementation.

Genesis of the term “sustainable development”

In 1987 World Commission on Environment and Development published the report by then Prime-minister of Norway Gro Harland Brundtland Our Common Future (Brundtland Report). For the first time the problem of necessity to find a new model for the development of civilization was raised in this report. Since that time the term “Sustainable Development” has become popular with the media. It stands for such development of the world civilization which satisfies people’s needs without any damage for future. Back in 1980 the report World Conservation Strategy released by the International Union of the Conservation of the Nation and World Wildlife Fund stressed that in order to achieve sustainable development the society should take into account not only economic but also social and ecological factors. In 1980s the problems of linkages between ecology and development were widely discussed in the studies by the scientists of Worldwatch Institute (USA) and especially by its Director L.P. Brown. Beginning from the mid-1970s the term ‘development without destruction’ was widely used, later it was replaced by the term ‘ecodevelopment’ which meant ecologically acceptable development i.e. the development with minimal negative impact on the environment.
The Declaration of the First United Nations Conference on Human Environment (Stockholm, 1972) can be considered one of the first to discuss the linkages between the economic and social development and the environmental issues. A valuable contribution to a new understanding of development was made by Club of Rome and their reports, especially the report *Limits to Growth* (1972). The reports presented the ideas of civilization’s transition from exponential economic growth to the state of global dynamic equilibrium, from quantitative growth to organic (qualitative) growth towards a new economic order.

Nowadays the world is on the threshold of the third (after agricultural) revolution and it is impossible to create the strategy of sustainable development on the basis of traditional human ideas, values and stereotypes. It requires working out new scientific approaches and vision, corresponding not only to up-to-date realities but also to presumed prospects of development in the 3rd millennium.

The concept of sustainable development can be defined through two major indications: anthropocentric and biospherecentric. Anthropocentric indication, in the wide sense, can be understood as survival of mankind and the capability (potential) of continuous development so that our descendants had at least the same possibilities for satisfying their needs under natural and ecological conditions on the Earth and in the space as our generation has (equal opportunities principle for generations in satisfying their needs). Biospheric (generally, ecological) indication of the concept relates to preserving biosphere as natural basis for life on the Earth, the essential condition for its existence and natural evolution so that further development of mankind were not ecophobic. The report *Our Common Future* mentions that the strategy of sustainable development is aimed at reaching the harmony between people and nature.

The next stage of forming the theory of sustainable development was the UN Conference on Environment and Development (the Earth Summit) held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. The Conference adopted a number of important documents such as the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, the statement of Forest Principles. Agenda 21 became the programme document of the Conference, a comprehensive action plan, defining sustainable development of the world, regions and countries from social, economic and ecological viewpoints. First, the document focuses on social and economic aspects, then, on international cooperation, alleviating poverty, changing consumption patterns and so forth.

**The World Summit on sustainable development and its results**

In 2002 the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg (called by the media the Millennium Summit), summarized the results of implementation of Agenda 21 and outlined the essential requirements for reaching sustainable development: poverty eradication, changing unstable consumption and production patterns and protecting and managing the natural resources base for economic and social development, public health, working out regional strategies of sustainable development. The report of the Russian delegation at the Summit in Johannesburg presented a number of important indicators having negative dynamics of development. But it also mentioned that the analysis of some major factors and trends that affect achieving progress at national and international levels showed that Russia was taking the path of sustainable development with confidence. The strategies of sustainable development at national and regional levels were worked out by the government, special bodies responsible for developing theory and practice of sustainable development were created, Russia actively participated in international cooperation in the sphere of sustainable development.

At present sustainable development is a serious theoretical and practical issue studied by the best minds of the world. Developing the theory includes forming concepts, principles, objectives and main indicators of it. Meanwhile, new aspects of sustainable development come to light: historical, philosophical, natural science, methodological, informational, educational and some others are of the most importance. The practical part of the issue comprises working out programmes of sustainable development at different levels, mobilization of the world community for their implementation, establishing institutions and organizing their work, selection personnel etc.

At the World Summit on Sustainable Development the General Assembly of the UN recommended to consider the issue of declaration the Decade of Education for sustainable development (paragraph 117d, Plan of Implementation). In December 2002, resolution 57/254 on the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) spanning from 2005 to 2004 was unanimously adopted by the United Nations General Assembly. It was initiated by Japan and sponsored by 46 countries. UNESCO was designated as lead agency for the promotion of the Decade and preparing the International Implementation Scheme (IIS). UNESCO being the leading UN organization in education has the key role in developing
problems of education for sustainable development. To achieve this goal UNESCO should reorient its programmes proposing amendments necessary to render assistance to the sustainable development.

**Education for sustainable development of the world**

The Declaration of the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro (1992) began with the following words: «Human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development. They are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature» and education is «critical for promoting sustainable development» which is mentioned in chapter 36 of the programme document Agenda 21. The Declaration adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002 reflected the commitments of the world leaders to build «a humane, equitable and caring global society, cognizant of the need for human dignity for all».

Education for sustainable development is a dynamic concept comprising all aspects of society’s awareness, education and training in order to provide or expand understanding the linkages between the issues of sustainable development and developing knowledge, skills, prospects and values that will allow people of any age to assume obligations for creating sustainable future and possessing it. The overall objective of the Decade of Education is declaration that education is fundamental for creating a more stable society and intergrading the ideas of sustainable development into all levels of educational system.

Education for sustainable development comprises four major fields having different aims and target audiences: access to quality basic education for everybody; reorienting existing education programmes, developing public understanding and awareness; providing training. The key issues are poverty reduction, gender equality, health care, environment protection and rural development.

For fulfillment of the decisions of the UNO UNESCO united its leading long-term programmes and re-oriented them to the task of education for sustainable development. UNESCO provided coordination of activities on two important international initiatives in the field of education – Education for All (EFA) and the United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD). The Framework for Action on the coordination of EFA was adopted by the World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000 but it was rooted in the previous decade (the World Declaration on Education for All, adopted in 1990 in Jomtien, Thailand). UNLD started in 2003 and was on the first stages of implementation. For efficient control and achieving the best results it was essential that the activities in the framework of Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) were coordinated with EFA and UNLD. International Implementation Scheme was a very reasonable basis for that.

**Russian education for sustainable development and modernization of Russia**

Russia increasingly reveals a tendency to integrate into the world economy system. Market relations are being actively formed, main directions of government activities being reformed. At the end of 2005 the national project for reforming public health system, education, city economies and agriculture were launched. The main objectives in modernizing Russia harmonized with the Programme for Sustainable development adopted at the Summit of the Millennium in Johannesburg in 2002, but they had certain national and regional distinctive features. Russia claimed that one of the major current priorities was to reform and further elaborate the educational system:

- the Concept of Modernization of Russian Education for 2006-2010 was adopted by a special law of the Federal Government on September, 3, 2005;
- The Ministry of Education and Science was designated as governmental customer-coordinator and Rosobrazovanie (Russian education) and Rosnauka (Russian science) designated as governmental customers;
- 45.3 bn rubles were allotted from the Federal Budget for developing the target program. The organization responsible for the target Program was Ministry of Education and Science.

The Concept of Federal Target Program for Developing educational system for 2006-2010 (further The Concept) claimed that «The main advantage of a highly developed country is its human potential» in many respects determined by education. This was namely the key sphere for ensuring steady economic growth of the country in mid- and long-term outlook.

For the present time this program is completely fulfilled. In the frames of fulfilling were planed and realized new directions of Russian higher education system:

- from January 2010 is being fulfilled transaction of Russian higher education in total on the level training on the bachelor-master scheme;
in 2007 – 2010 came into force laws, determining new legal status of leading Russian universities: were pointed 2 leading universities – Moscow and Saint-Petersburg; were created 9 federal universities, accumulating science and education in leading regions of Russia; for the right now the system of research universities is actively forming;
– the leading Russian universities has serious tasks in scientific development of solving of the main problems of economics and national economic complex;
– were implemented normal acts, in the serious way changing the system of financing of Russian universities and commercialization of science researches.
For the present time Russia transacts on the way of modernization of its economics. The new mechanisms of science-academic and staff supply of modernization of Russia. In the solving of these problems education has one of the leading places.

Conclusions

1. Now all the system of Russian education is on the stage of radical reform.
2. Higher professional education is reforming in accordance with requirements of Bologna Declaration.
3. Creation of a new system of education is the most important stage of its modernization and sustainable development.

References