

REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

**NATIONAL REPORT ON
“RIO+10”
ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

**CONFIRMED BY THE FINAL NATIONAL
CONFERENCE ON “RIO+10” ASSESSMENT
PROCESS, 1.06.01, PRESIDUM HALL OF
NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES,
YEREVAN, ARMENIA**

**YEREVAN
2001**

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A. NATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

THE PROBLEM OF ELABORATION OF NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (NATIONAL AGENDA 21) IN THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

Governmental delegation at the head of the President of RA took part at the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) and signed all the documents, adopted by the Summit.

In 1993 both conventions were ratified, whereupon the corresponding activities, stated below, were undertaken.

In 1993-94 the Ministry of Nature Protection published the First National Environmental Report and developed the Concept of National Environmental Program. In 1995-98, with the support of the World Bank, the ministry elaborated the National Environmental Action Program (NEAP) and Action Program on the Problem of Lake Sevan.

However, the country has not made the main steps so far — no National Council on Sustainable Development (NCSD) has been created and neither strategy nor even concept of sustainable development of the country have been elaborated.

Association “For Sustainable Human Development” (“For SHD”) has repeatedly appealed to the government of Armenia summoning it to form the mentioned Council and to get to the elaboration of the Concept. Analogous recommendations were included into the resolution of the First National Conference “Sustainable Human Development and Armenia”, which was held by the Association with the support of UNDP in 1997 within the framework of “Rio+5”. However, without any result so far.

In 1999-2000 we managed to initiate enlarged sessions of Parliament Commission of RA on Public Health, Protection of Environment and Social Issues on the mentioned topic. Parliamentary hearings on the given topic are to be held.

Several objective and subjective reasons of current situation can be stated:

Objective reasons

Karabakh military conflict of 1992-95 and the blockade of Armenia, severe energy crisis, the disaster area (consequences of the earthquake in 1988) and refugees;

Social-economic crisis, which developed in the result of the above mentioned factors, as well as disintegration of the economic space of former USSR;

Intensification of the crisis with the process of economical transition and inclusion of the country into the world market and general globalization processes.

In the result governmental structures constantly face the problems of survival and ignore the problems of the Strategy.

Subjective reasons

Lack of political will;

Internal political instability, which leads to frequent change of the government.

That in its turn prevents succession of power, which is necessary for solution of strategy problems and sufficient awareness of governmental structures concerning the gist of the matter.

In the result, all spheres of social life suffer. Permanent social-economical crisis prevents the implementation of numerous developed environmental programs. It is enough to bring the following two examples:

- in 2000 real financing of the forest sector of the country made up 0,8% (!) out of the planned amount (which was rather small itself),
- according to the results of the sociological poll, carried out by NGO “Environmental Survival” with the support of Secretariat of Convention to Combat Desertification, 84,3% of questioned people consider the poverty to be the main social factor, which intensifies the desertification process.

On the whole, it is to be stated that: within the transition period the country did not get any closer to the principles of sustainable development, and furthermore, has strayed from them considerably.

It is enough to quote an extract from National Report “5 Years of Human Development in Armenia” of 1999: “Social cost of social and economic reforms and of their consequences has turned out to be very high. Due to the shortcomings of reforms and mechanisms of their implementation the population feels mainly their negative influence, which leads to drastic decline in living standards, mass unemployment, poverty of the majority of the population, extreme social polarization, deterioration of demographic indicators, significant limitation of access to social services and emigration” (more explicitly the problem is reflected in part C₂).

It is obvious that there is a need for ***reform course correction***. First of all social orientation of the reforms should be increased along with the regulator role of the government in the transition process.

Besides, it is mandatory to begin ***all-round consultations on West-East cooperation***, since all efforts of developed countries aimed at improvement of the environmental situation in post-soviet countries have so far crashed into obstacles, caused by the social-economic crisis of the transition period.

At the same time it should be mentioned that in the country exist considerable ***institutional capacity and resources*** for elaboration and implementation of the national concept and strategy of sustainable development. Since 1992 non-governmental and scientific sectors have undertaken active steps in this direction. In particular:

- the following measures have been carried out in Yerevan (and Tsakhkadzor): national conferences “Sustainable Human Development and Armenia” (1997) and “Towards Sustainable Development of Armenia” (1999), a seminar on discussing and confirming the

National Report for the NCSD Forum in New-York (2000), national and regional conferences, dedicated to the Earth Charter (2000), national/regional orientation workshop “Rio+10” (2000);

- Numerous workshops, dedicated to the ideology and principles of the Concept of Sustainable Development in general and especially to local Agendas 21 and the Earth Charter have been held in regions for local communities and local authorities;
- a number of books and brochures have been published, considerable work has been carried out in Universities, schools and with mass-media (more detailed description in part D).

The contest of journalists, who covered the problems of sustainable development within the last decade, proved the high activity performed by mass media on the given issue. The contest was held in 2001 within the framework of the worldwide contest “101 ways towards sustainable development”.

It should be mentioned also that the scientific sector has elaborated their own system of indicators (and index) of sustainable development, which has been used by the Ministry of Statistics, State Register and Analysis of Armenia for 5 years (an example of successful cooperation between non-governmental and governmental sectors). The given work was awarded “Innovative Use of Human Development Measurement Tools” at the international contest of NHDR in October of 2000 in Rio-de-Janeiro.

Taking into consideration the current situation the Association “For Sustainable Human Development” has initiated the process of formation of the non-governmental sector of National Council on Sustainable Development (NGOs /including the women and youth ones/, the scientific sector, the business-sector, mass media, etc.) in the Republic of Armenia.

The conference discussed and approved the given suggestion, as well as confirmed the membership of the non-governmental sector of NCSD.

B. INTEGRATION AND PARTICIPATION

Due to the absence of the concept and strategy of sustainable development national plans and programs of development, unfortunately, do not display a sufficient level of *integration*.

There are examples, more or less close to the necessary level:

- Thus, structures of local authorities of Megri subregion (Siunik region) have developed a strategy of social-economic development, confirmed by Armenian Government. After minor revision (amplification of the environmental aspect), the strategy may be accepted as local Agenda 21.
- At present, the preparatory period of the project of Armenian Government and the World Bank “Natural Resources Management and Poverty Reduction” has been started in 2 regions (Tavush and Gegharkunik). It is also rather close to local Agendas 21, but the work has just begun.

Public participation in the decision-making process in the sphere of environment and development exists, but in rather small scales.

Thus, an Environmental Council has been formed attached to the city-hall of Yerevan, a Council on Gender Problems — attached to the Government, institute of independent experts, formed of the leading specialists of the country, successfully functions attached to permanent commissions of National Assembly (Parliament), parliamentary hearings with participation of public representatives, NGO (Association “For SHD”) is included into the Preparatory Committee of the Government to Habitat-3, etc. Rather broad public participation is provided during implementation of international programs, especially those connected with UN conventions, etc.

However, public participation at the decision-making level is often formal, at best consultative, and in most cases does not exert significant influence on the result. In particular, it refers to those matters, when the interests of momentary economical benefit cross out obvious environmental requirements and standards.

The most demonstrative example is the nonstop reduction of green areas of Yerevan city due to building up cafes, restaurants, hotels, gambling-houses, etc. Neither the loud protests of environmental and women NGOs, nor critical publications in mass-media, nor the suits brought by NGOs (Environmental Public Advocacy Center /EPAC/ and Green Union) have been productive. Creation of the above mentioned Environmental Council attached to the city-hall of Yerevan can be considered as a concession made by authorities. However, it is still early to speak about the results of its activities.

Participation of women in the decision-making process at all levels is also insufficient. Thus, although the current legislation guarantees (more precisely, declares) equal social partnership of men and women, the facts are the following: though women make up 64% of citizens with higher education, only 4 women (3%) have been elected into the National Assembly, while in the Government of Armenia there are no women at all.

There is hope that the above mentioned formation of non-governmental sector of NCSD will become a considerable breakthrough concerning the above stated problems of integration and participation. According to the decision of the Conference the sector should declare its plans and programs and officially invite governmental structures to cooperation. The Conference also expressed certitude that the elaboration of a national strategy of sustainable development will play a significant additional consolidating role in contemporary Armenian society.

C. NATIONAL CRITICAL ISSUES (analysis of the situation, prognosis and recommendations).

C.1. ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN IN THE COUNTRY ON IMPLEMENTATION OF CONVENTIONS OF RIO-92.

C.1.1. CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY.

The Convention was ratified by the Republic of Armenia on May 14, 1993. Thus, the country undertook a number of international obligations concerning protection of biodiversity components in-situ and ex-situ, regulation of their use, improvement of the legislation and management system, scientific researches and personnel training, increase of public awareness, maintenance of genetic resources, scientific-technical cooperation, etc. In Armenia the priority of the mentioned obligations in activities aimed at social-economic development is indisputable, since one of peculiarities of Armenian biodiversity is high portion of species, used in various spheres of human activity. Thus, around 2000 species of herbs, edible, dyeing, tanning, technical and other plants of economic value have been used for various purposes in Armenia. As to wild animals, they are mainly used at hunting, fishing and for pharmaceutical purposes. Armenian upland is considered to be one of the centers of domestication of endemic genus of animals and origin of cultivated plants.

In general the territory of Armenia is distinguished by unique rich biological diversity, especially by existence of rare, endemic and relict species.

At the same time, current condition of wild plants and animals on the territory of the country arouses serious alarm. The strongest factor that causes the unwanted changes in flora and fauna is the anthropogenic factor, including use of the land and other natural resources. The world of birds has been extremely depleted due to reduction of natural food resources and destruction of nesting-places. Many herbs, edible and decorative species of plants are threatened in the result of unsustainable use.

Not only reduction of the forest-covered territories occurs in the republic, but also modifications of these territories and specific structure of trees. During the last 70 years forests of Armenia twice have suffered over-cuttings. The first ones took place in 1930-1950, when cuttings were carried out for industrial purposes. The second ones occurred beginning from 1991 in connection with the energetic and economical crisis, due to which significant part of forest-covered territories has been destroyed. The destruction in its turn has brought to disturbance of ecological balance of the environment.

Deep structural changes have happened in the result of uncontrolled use of forests, over-pasture and hay-mowing in the forests and other reasons: stands have lost their natural ability to restoration, their productivity has reduced, erosive processes have activated, the hydrological regime of forests has been disturbed. On deforested slopes of mountains possibility of mudflows and landslides has increased due to erosion. Only within the last millenium forest-covered territories of Armenia reduced 3-4 times, which intensified erosive processes of the soil, has led to desertification of territories and increase of climate aridity. After gaining independence, when the long-lasting blockade brought to energetic crisis, the forests were the first to suffer as the cheapest and most available energy sources. Within the last years around 30 thousand ha. of forests have been cut down. Out of them 7 thousand ha. have been cut completely. According to expert assessments, approximately 0,5 mln. cub. m. of timber are burnt annually in the country, only 10-12% of it are recorded.

Lake Sevan problem, which has a strategic significance for the country, is a unique and specific demonstration of interconnection between general environmental problems (particularly biodiversity) and economic activity. A number of international organizations have acknowledged it an important regional problem. Since 1936 the process of using ages-old water reserves of the lake for irrigation and energetic purposes has begun. Eventually, the lake's level decreased for approximately 20m., which has led to disturbance of the circle of chemical substances, structural-functional interrelations within the ecosystem of the lake, specific constitution of water organisms, etc. These phenomena along with the sewage, which flows from the lake's basin, have promoted the development of eutrophication. In the result the biomass of phytoplankton has grown approximately twice, the lake systematically "flowers" with blue-green algae. In case the current rate of eutrophication remains, the water of the lake soon will not be suitable not only for drinking, but also for irrigation, power engineering and recreation. That, in its turn, will intensify the desertification processes in the lake's basin and in the region in general.

The social-economic situation of the country prevents the financing of the final stage of activities on transference of a part of the Vorotan river's flows into the lake. It would considerably promote the restoration of environmental balance of the reservoir.

Serious and irreversible changes have occurred in water and land flora and fauna in the result of the above described processes, as well as dewatering of lake Gilli and other swamps (around 10 000 ha. in lake Sevan's basin). Around 50 species of birds, nesting in lake Sevan's basin, are left out of 160 species. (It should be mentioned that at present a project aimed at restoration of lake Gilli has started up with the support of GEF/UNDP. It is essential that the leading role in the realization of the project is assigned to local communities). Fish reserves of Sevan are also significantly undermined, specific composition of mammals and reptiles has been depleted in the lake's basin.

The Convention pays specific attention to **protected territories**. 5 reserves, 1 national park and 22 sanctuaries with total area of 311 thousand ha. (around 10% of the territory) exist at present in the Republic of Armenia. However, on all the above mentioned territories the guard regime is constantly violated. Various major problems up to indistinctness of the set borders, exist on the protected territories.

The following activities have been undertaken according to the obligations set by the Convention:

In order to improve the legislation the following acts were adopted in 1994-2000: "Forest Code", "Act on Environment Impact Assessment", "Act on Nature Use and Charges for Natural Resources", "Act on Flora", "Act on Fauna". In 1966 Armenian Government issued a resolution on order of industrial fishing in lake Sevan.

Th Convention attaches importance to **scientific researches**, as well. Such work is carried out at scientific-research institutes of National Academy of Sciences, scientific-research institutions and Institutes of Higher Education of Ministry of Education and Science and Ministry of Agriculture. Scientific theses are confirmed and financed by Government of

Armenia. Within the last decade the financing has been reduced abruptly, the material-technical base has become poor, scientific researches in state reserves have almost stopped.

Forest-restoration activities carried out in the forest tracts of Noemberyan in 1999 should be mentioned in the sphere of record-keeping of biodiversity. Partial registration was carried out concerning a number of animal species (large mammals and species, after which hunting is permitted).

The Convention pays attention to corresponding national and international programs. In this connection could be mentioned the stated in part A. NEAP, Program on restoration of lake Sevan's environmental balance, as well as:

- Strategy for Development of the Forest Sector of Armenia (with the support of FAO);
- Strategy for Biodiversity Protection and Action Program (with the support of UNDP and GEF);
- Development of Full Project for in-situ Conservation and Sustainable Use of Agrobiodiversity in Armenia (with the support of UNDP and GEF).

First National Report on Biodiversity of Armenia has been developed (with the support of UNDP and GEF).

The program "Assessment of Forest Resources of Armenia" has been carried out (with the support of Agency on Development attached to the Government of Sweden).

Interconnection of activities within the framework of Convention on Biological Diversity and Convention on Climate Change is of special importance and a number of measures, which will allow to minimize the growth of percentage of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, should be carried out in this context.

Convention on Biological Diversity and Convention on Desertification are also strongly interconnected. In this aspect, there are planned activities on protection of biodiversity in situ, which implies improvement of reserves, economic mechanisms of using resources of biodiversity, as well as establishment of plantations and nurseries.

At present, due to ***severe social-economic conditions*** unsystematic and mass use of components of biodiversity is the only way to survive for a significant part of the population. In the result many species have entered the number of rare and endangered ones.

The Convention pays prior attention to the issues of ***biological safety***. At present almost nothing is done in the country in this sphere. Even the protocol "On Biological Safety", which was submitted for signing in May of 2000 in Nairobi at the 5th Conference of Parties, has not been adopted, yet. The deadline of signing is already due.

At the same time the problem is rather vital for Armenia, which today is absolutely unprotected against the possible mass invasion of genetically modified organisms (GMO) and products. That phenomenon is rather possible under current conditions of globalization.

C.1.2. FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

The Convention was ratified by the Republic of Armenia in May, 1993.

Program “Armenia — Country Study of Climate Change”, approved by Armenian Government (Resolution #115, February 25, 1998) has been carried out in Armenia since 1996 with the financial support of GEF and UNDP. The program is aimed at implementation of the main obligations on the Convention undertaken by Armenia.

The following activities have been undertaken within the framework of the program:

- The First National Report of Armenia on Climate Change has been prepared. It includes: cadastre of greenhouse gases, information on expected climate change on the territory of Armenia and its possible consequences, assessment of vulnerability of the population, natural ecosystems and climate-dependent sectors of economics, measures of adaptation and softening of negative consequences, as well as the strategy of limitation of greenhouse gas emissions. The National Report was submitted to the 4th Conference of Parties of the Convention in 1998 and placed in Internet.
- Collection of scientific articles “Armenia. Problems of Climate Change” has been published. It contains researches of national experts on a large spectrum of problems of climate change.
- Informational center, equipped with modern equipment has been created. Information on climate change is concentrated in the center.
- International cooperation and exchange of information on issues connected with implementation of the Convention, as well as regular participation of Armenia at Conference of Parties and regional workshops (Tbilisi, 1999, Kishinev, 2000, Yerevan, 2000) are carried out.
- Training of young specialists is organized. Students undergo pre-diploma practice and prepare diploma works on the mentioned topic. A thematic course of lectures on climate change is delivered in a number of institutes.
- Activities aimed at increase of public awareness on the problems of climate change are undertaken (a film has been cast, brochures have been published, workshops and speeches in mass-media are held).
- Project “Overcoming the barriers of energoefficiency of municipal heating and hot water supply” was carried out in 1999-2000 (with the support of GEF and UNDP). The project was elaborated in concordance with the national strategy of limitation of greenhouse gas emissions, since the heat-supplying sector possesses significant potential of energy-saving and reduction of carbonic acid gas emissions.
- At present activities on development and consolidation of national potential are undertaken with the aim of creation of a sustainable mechanism for commitment of technologies, which limit greenhouse gas emissions, and for adaptation of the country to possible climate changes, for increase of interagency coordination during decision-making process, as well as for increase of public awareness on the problems of climate change.

The expected climate changes on the territory of Armenia will be conditioned mainly by global climate change (contribution of Armenia into the global greenhouse gas emission makes up 0,01%). In this connection for mitigation of negative consequences Armenia will need support in order to carry out adaptation measures.

At present in international processes complicated situation has formed in the sphere of implementation of the Convention connected with *mechanisms of cooperation, envisaged by Kyoto Protocol*. Situation is complicated for Armenia also, which according to the Convention is classified as a country not included into Annex 1. With such a status Armenia can be excluded from a number of spheres of cooperation, which are determined only for developing countries within the framework of “mechanisms of pure development”. (The same happens with 8 other post-soviet countries, which have not been included into Annex 1). In particular, absence of the status of a developing country might impede the access of Armenia to the forming adaptation fund of GEF.

This issue was raised at the 6th Conference of Stakeholders in the Hague. At present corresponding joint proposals from “the group of 9 countries” are developed for submission to the Chairmen and Secretariat of the Convention.

At present in Armenia the process of ratification of Kyoto Protocol has been started up. The protocol has been approved by Armenian Government and in case of approval by Constitutional Court and National Assembly will be ratified in the nearest future.

C.2. ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN IN THE COUNTRY ON PROVISION OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND SOCIAL INTEGRATION

Poverty reduction has been acknowledged one of the main priorities of governmental activity. By the end of 2001 it is planned to elaborate Poverty Reduction Strategic Program (PRSP) (“intermediate” variant of the Program was confirmed in March of 2001), aimed at accomplishment of the following goals:

- stable and all-round economic growth;
- improvement of the state management system and corruption control;
- improvement of the level of human development on such components as education, public health, social insurance, communal infrastructure, etc.
- protection of environment.

It is planned to attract independent experts to the development of the Program, as well as organize broad public discussions in the process of its elaboration and in the stage of implementation.

In the confirmed variant of the Program it is envisaged by 2003 to reduce the portion of poor population from current 55% (according to some expert assessments 80% of Armenian population acknowledge themselves poor) down to 48%, and the Jinni coefficient from 0,59 to 0,44.

At the same time the system of state social security, according to which around 20% of the poorest families get on average 15\$ per month (officially the living wage in the country has not been set, while expert assessments demonstrate that it makes up 250-300\$ for average family) is in the process of improvement. This year the system of “allowance for labor” has

been introduced. According to it large-scale social paid labor will be organized for unemployed population.

A number of measures are planned *in the sphere of availability of education and public health* for all social strata. In particular, State Education Development Program is at the stage of consideration at National Assembly. The Program envisages, for instance, free supply of textbooks to children from poor families, wage rise for school teachers (which at present makes up around 2/3 of average salary of a public employee), etc.

At the same time sampling sociological checkups certify a rather alarming tendency of reduction of the index of children of school-going age, who study at educational institutions. At that, it's first of all the children from poor families who are deprived of secondary education. Another disturbing problem — a part of children, who are formally registered as pupils and graduates of secondary schools, in reality do not receive even elementary educational knowledge and skills. It is revealed for example when joining the National Army, during testing.

The process of structural reforms goes on in public health in the conditions of chronic budget under-financing and low paying capacity of the population. More concrete separation of the sector of free medical services for the poor from general public health, which will base on obligatory, as well as voluntary medical insurance, is the main goal of the reforms.

For now all measures undertaken by the government with the aim of assistance to the poor mainly stay at the level of decisions due to lack in financing or its absolute absence. Thus, for instance, the right on free treatment, envisaged for special social groups, as well as for patients with definite diseases is often not realized due to the following simple reasons:

- first of all, hospitals and other medical institutions do not receive from the government the envisaged scanty means;
- secondly, considerable part of the poorest people are simply unable to reach the hospitals and aid-posts, allotted to them.
- and finally, even the system of “ambulance” does not receive the envisaged financing for months.

The system of pensions of the country is based on the principle of solidarity of generations. At that, average pension makes up not more than 7-8\$ per month, which is several times less than the (unofficial) living wage. In this situation the main condition of survival for old people is family solidarity, and for single pensioners — poverty benefit, charity of communities and humanitarian aid from foreign organization (we would like to remind that earned savings of the overwhelming majority of the population were devaluated in the result of the huge inflation of early 90s).

Poverty, threatening social polarization (the society is practically separated into 2 unequal poles, which are characterized with extreme inequality of incomes and availability of social services), absence of traditions of law observance, corruption at governmental structures, weakness of the civil society and other demonstrations of instability and lack of development of typical country in transition could not bypass the condition of *environment*. Along with

compelled ignoring of rules of correct use of natural resources, for example, by peasants, uncontrolled injurious exploitation of resources by large and small entrepreneurs takes place frequently in the sphere of mining operations, timber, use of irrigation system, etc.

Finally, one of the most acute social problems is *disintegration* of contemporary Armenia society. Poor trust in the government, destruction of the traditional system of values and multipolarity of contemporary unsettled system of moral principles, unpredictability of social and political situation, practically complete absence of any guarantees concerning “tomorrow” not only for the vulnerable strata, but also for the forming intermediate stratum and even for the political and financial elite lead to prevalence of pessimistic prognoses among the significant part of the population, emigration mood, deprivation of long-term investment projects, etc.

The most intensive emigration of citizens takes place from the disaster area (earthquake in 1988) and among refugees, since these strata of the population are in the most complicated situation.

We assume, that restoration of the “social tissue”, formation of social accord in the society should become the priority for Armenian governmental structures.

In general, activities of Armenian government aimed at provision of social justice and social integration has been carried out in accordance with the recommendations for developing countries, which dominate in the international practice. However, the problem is that not reduction but increase of the gap (practically by all the main indicators of human development) between the group of rich countries and the rest of the world became the result of these activities in the second half of the XX century.

Obviously, there is a necessity to reconsider the fundamental principles of spiritual, social and economic constitution of the contemporary world.

C.3. EMERGING CRITICAL ISSUES

GLOBALIZATION — REAL CHALLENGE

Globalization is an objective phenomenon, whose positive and negative consequences worry many countries of the world. The analysis of these consequences is also extremely important for Armenia, which has accepted the principles of open market economics and pursues this way. Instead of simply submitting to the processes of globalization it is necessary to forecast their possible development and taking into consideration the peculiarities of gained experience, current situation and strategic goals of Armenia, interfere and minimize the possible negative consequences.

Among already apparent, as well as expected alarming consequences of globalization the following ones can be mentioned:

1. Similar to many other post-soviet countries Armenia was also not ready to the abrupt transition to liberal market economics, did not have any conception of long-term development and its economic development is to considerable degree determined by the logic of standard programs of international organizations without taking into consideration their adequacy to local specificity and human factor. This devaluates the ideas of independence and liberal economics and reduces the responsibility of governmental structures concerning the destiny of the nation. Today in Armenia, which is in total confusion in the result of the transition period and still considerably depends on assistance of international financial structures, it is more than important ***to elaborate and implement a concept of economic development***, taking into consideration on one hand national interests and mentality and on the other — necessity of more effective integration into international economics.
2. Globalization modifies such concepts as country and state frontiers and tends to gather all nations and countries at one level. However, in interstate relations decisions of international structures are often ignored and the economical strength (especially that of superpowers) is used as means for political pressure. Application of blockades, embargoes, quotas, standards and other mechanisms, which limit the rights of weak and small countries and deprive them of the possibility to manage their own resources and property, is equivalent to their “conquest”. Briefly speaking, “the cold war” is transferred to the economical and intellectual field, where the gap between developed and developing countries, as well as the countries in transition, is especially wide. Thereby, ***by means of full participation in international structures*** it is mandatory to achieve initiation of their activities aimed at cessation of such phenomena and provision of more favorable possibilities for development of small and economically weak countries without setting preliminary political and economical conditions.
3. Armenia is directly involved into the problem of mutually exhausting opposition between developing countries and between new independent states, which together with geopolitical interests of superpowers prevents the processes of regional integration. In the result, globalization is frequently realized by means of starlike connections, in whose center are situated powerful developed countries. Here the international community should also actively tend to implement ***regional integration programs*** in the sphere of environmental protection, economics and education.
4. In the result of economical integration flows of resources have been activated, which promotes their more efficient use in global scale. However, the overall liberalization of commodity and capital markets is accompanied with partial, selective liberalization of labor markets. In the result, emigration of the intellectual elite characteristic of other countries in transition, as well, is especially significant in case of Armenia, because of existence of big diaspora. At the same time people with low qualification, who lost their jobs in the result of the “shockotherapy”, realized under influence of international financial-economic structures, are unable to find even short-term employment due to discriminatory-protectionist migration policy.

Reduction of national intellectual potential promotes decrease of control over and transparency of activities of governmental structures, growth of their bureaucratization and corruption (the latter already gains international scales, especially in processes of mass

privatization), estrangement between the people and the government and eventually leads to devaluation of the democracy, prevents the formation of civil society.

The way out of the current situation is not only through liberalization of labor markets, but (mainly) *through realization of programs aimed at restoration of human capital and acquirement of contemporary work skills in developing countries and countries in transition.*

5. Powerful tools of human development and integration, such as information technologies and computers, the Internet system, along with enlargement of information sources upto the international level, endanger the national uniqueness and intensively devalue national spiritual achievements. It is especially important for Armenian nation, who possesses exclusive ages-old cultural values. Introduction of information tools in the country, their “Armenization” and implementation of corresponding education programs are necessary in order to avoid the loss of national ideological and moral values. Thus, the “anti-national” character of globalization will be softened to some extent, the sense of weakness will be overcome and adaptation to new conditions will become easier. Besides, this way the world culture will be enriched by national ones.

Since contemporary technical means and technologies are still difficult of access for such economically weakened countries like Armenia, it is necessary to attain support of the international community in the process of formation of a modern information network in Armenia, as well.

6. It is obvious that national *culture and education*, which are influenced by the process of globalization, should become subjects of special care. Armenia should tend to introduce to the international community the historical-cultural specificity of the country, traditions and the social set-up, formed in the socialistic past, and show how important it is to take into consideration these factors when carrying out various programs of aid. In particular, such countries as Armenia, which have gone through the stage of industrial development, have concentrated significant scientific potential and before the disintegration of the Soviet Union achieved comparatively high living standards, at present are extremely in need for qualified education. Moreover, if we consider poverty one of the distresses of globalization, then when assessing the degree of poverty it is necessary to base not only on the accepted international criterion of the portion of the population “with daily income less than 1 dollar”, but also on proportion of those citizens, who are financially unable to receive desired education. It is specially important, since for such small countries as Armenia, broken by the transition period, education is the most effective tool, which would help to take the challenge of globalization and join the developed international community.

D. GLOBAL CRITICAL ISSUES: EDUCATION, TRAINING AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

Course “World Program of Sustainable Development”, which envelopes all aspects of *Concept of Sustainable Development / Agenda 21*, is delivered at Yerevan State University /YSU/ since 1994. Basing on the mentioned course in 1996 Association “For Sustainable Human Development” with sponsorship of UNDP elaborated and published textbook “Concept of Sustainable Human Development: theory and practice” for institutes of higher education.

At present a number of institutes of higher education of Armenia (Armenian Pedagogical University, Yerevan State Economical Institute, Yerevan State Medical University, Armenian Institute of Ecology, Economics and Law (private), Institute of Engineering, Giumri Pedagogical Institute, Hrazdan Humanitarian Institute (private)) use the above mentioned textbook, other publications of the Association “For SHD” and other corresponding literature for delivering lectures on Concept of Sustainable Development, Agreements of UNCED and subsequent world conferences of UN, Sustainable Development Indicators, Earth Charter, etc.

Diploma works on problems of sustainable development are prepared and defended at YSU, Yerevan State Economical Institute and Armenian Institute of Ecology, Economics and Law. Two theses for a Doctor’s degree, whose topic was directly connected with the concept of sustainable development at both global and local levels, were prepared and defended at YSU.

Staff of local authorities also gets acquainted with the background of Concept of Sustainable Development during advanced training courses at Armenian Higher School of Management.

Continuous environmental education is a constituent part of “Education for SD”. Formation of environmental ideology is indicated in currently in force “Act on Education” as one of the main principles of state policy in the sphere of education.

It can be stated that a system of continuous environmental education is established in Armenia. Ecologization of practically all natural school disciplines, especially courses of geography and biology, can be observed.

At that, the intensity of the process to a certain extent depends on schools. Thus, at present the system of school education bases on the following principle — subjects are subdivided into 2 groups: obligatory state (obligatory for all schools) and obligatory school subjects (at discretion of schools). Today, a course based on the textbook “Bases of Use of the Nature and Protection of Environment” (1996, developed by the personnel of YSU) is included into the first group in the block of geographic disciplines for the 9th form; other possible environmental disciplines are included into the 2nd group, i.e. enter the list of taught subjects at discretion of schools.

It should be mentioned that the indicated textbook, as well as the manual “The Environment” (1999) (NGO “Biurakn”) contain rather detailed information on UNCED and Concept of SD.

Center of Education Reforms of the Ministry of Science and Education of Armenia, together with NGO “Biurakn” organizes lessons with demonstration of 60 films on the topic of environmental protection (cast by TACIS program) at schools of Yerevan and regions of the country.

The small edition of the above mentioned textbook and manual, as well as absence of other necessary literature, are the main obstacles in the way to complete realization of the ecologization process of secondary education. The closing down of the State Museum of Nature, which has lost its territory for exposition, also exerts its negative influence. The museum together with its clubs played significant role at environmental education of children and teenagers.

Alternative concepts of continuous environmental education in Armenia are developed, the draft of Act on Environmental Education is in the process of elaboration. One of the main goals of the Act is promotion of sustainable development of the country. The draft of the Act envisages teaching of corresponding courses of ecology at the 9th forms of secondary schools, all institutes of higher education (at YSU these system is already in force) and secondary professional education institutes of Armenia, as well as training of specialists-ecologists of various profiles and attraction of all strata of the population into the system of environmental education.

Non-governmental organizations (such as Association “For SHD”, Armenian Geographic Society, Armenian Botanic Society, “Green Union”, “Biurakn”, Ecoclub “Tapan”, Environmental Public Advocacy Center (EPAC), “Association of Ecotourism”, “Ecoteam”, “Club of Animal Protection”, “Environmental Survival”, “Khazer”, “Meghvik (little bee)”, “Flora”, “Shogher”, as well as women organizations “Republican Council of Women”, Association of Women with University Education”, “The League of Armenian Women”, centers of civil society, society “Knowledge, etc.) with the support of international organizations actively promote the formation of environmental ideology in the country and *increase of public awareness on the ideology and principles of sustainable development.*

The activities undertaken on discussions of the Earth Charter, as well as annual national reports on Human Development (UNDP) and the work of UNDPI play significant role in the process of formation of the system “Education for SD”.

E. THE WAY AHEAD

THE MAIN CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The following conclusions can be made basing on the above mentioned analysis of the situation in the country:

1.1. Neither a NCSD has been created nor National Strategy on Sustainable Development has been elaborated in the country. National Environmental Action Program (NEAP) and Lake Sevan Action Program have been developed and confirmed, Poverty Reduction Strategy

Program and several other drafts are in the process of elaboration. However the necessary complex approach to problems of sustainable development and sufficient level of integration and participation are not provided.

In general it can be asserted that, despite definite theoretical elaborations, which could become a base for sustainable development, in practice within the period of transition the country has been “developing” in the direction in many aspects opposite to principles of SD: abrupt reduction of economical potential, constant growth of income polarization of the population, unemployment, unavailability of social services for a considerable part of the population, overuse of natural resources, emigration, etc.

1.2. Active work in the sphere of Framework Convention on Climate Change and Convention on Biological Diversity is done in Armenia. Both Conventions were ratified in 1993, corresponding national action programs and reports have been prepared.

The main obstacles in the way to their implementation are:

- a)** In the sphere of Convention on Biological Diversity severe social-economic situation in the country, where a significant part of the population is brought down to the level of surviving by means of overuse of natural resources, especially biodiversity. The situation is aggravated by uncontrolled exploitation of forest resources by the formed business sector. In these conditions the developed programs can not be realized, all the more the government is unable to finance their implementation.

Considerable losses of biodiversity are connected with the degradation processes of lake Sevan’s ecosystem and its basin. They have been especially intensified in the result of withdrawals of the lake’s waters for energetic purpose in the period of blockade and energetic crisis (1991-95)

The problem of GMO becomes important for the country. At the same time Armenia has not signed the protocol on biological safety.

- b)** In the sphere of Framework Convention on Climate Change the Republic of Armenia is classified as a non Annex 1 country, thereby it may stay out of cooperation defined only for developing countries within the framework of “mechanism of pure development”. In particular, Armenia might not have access to the forming adaptation fund of GEF.

1.3. Provision of social justice and social integration is considered to be in the number of national critical issues.

Besides the above-mentioned phenomena, the critical problem of disintegration of contemporary Armenian society is indicated in this part of the report, as well.

1.4. Globalization and its influence on Armenia are considered as an especially acute problem. This problem is closely connected with the above-considered ones, especially with the social-economic situation in the country.

It is obvious that implementation (according to recommendation of international financial structures) of standard programs and mechanisms of hasty liberalization of economics and the

market within the transition period, without taking into consideration the specificity of the country, has turned out to be destructive for Armenia.

The necessity of integration into international economics is comprehended by many, however it should be done not at the expense of complete loss of economical, and correspondingly, political sovereignty. (In some circles the antiglobalization approach is so strong that, for instance, “Green Union” in Armenia comes out against the ideas of SD, as one of the displays of globalization).

The most painful loss for the country is the emigration of the intellectual elite (“the brain drain”), which involves already the second generation, namely highly educated young people, who in particular perfectly master modern information technologies.

1.5. From the considered spheres “Education for SD” is maybe the most successful one. Textbook and manuals on Conception of SD have been published and are used in the majority of institutes of higher education of the country. A system of continuous environmental education is in the process of formation. Considerable work on increase of public awareness is done especially by NGOs.

2. Recommendations on improvement of the situation in the country and reorientation of development into the course of sustainability.

For that it is mandatory:

- to establish a “governmental sector” of NCSД and together with the already created “non-governmental sector” to get down to elaboration of National Concept and Strategy of Sustainable Development (National Agenda 21), which would provide maximal integration of economical, environmental and social priorities of development. Both long-term and short-term programs of social-economic development should be harmonized with this basic document.
- the NCSД should recommend corrections to the settled course of transformation, basing on the analysis of the most considerable omissions, made during the transition period.
- to raise the regulatory role of the government in the period of reforms and entering of the country into globalization processes with the aim of minimization of their negative consequences, use of optimal ways of adaptation, as well as restoration social accord in the society and maintenance of human capital in the country.
- at that special attention should be paid to implementation of sustainable models of production and consumption, as well as development of nonmaterial sphere of production, stimulating the process of commercialization of intellectual property and variety of production in the sphere of culture.
- to try to make use of the practice of “writing off overseas debts” in exchange for implementation of environmental programs, especially for solving the problems, which have been acknowledged by UN as prior in the 21st century.

3. Issues, which are to be brought up for discussion of the “Rio+10” assessment process at subregional, regional and global levels:

- elaboration of mechanisms for increase of the responsibility of countries on implementation of UNCED agreements;
- the problem of spreading genetically modified organisms and products especially in those countries, which are unprepared and therefore more vulnerable;
- mark out real and potential areas of environmental disaster in regions and undertake emergency measures aimed at their rehabilitation by efforts of the international community;
- reconsideration of the status of countries in transition in the spheres of cooperation, envisaged by Kyoto Protocol within the framework of “mechanisms of pure development”;
- the problem of influence of globalization processes on the countries in transition (and developing countries) in the light of Concept of SD;
- the variance between the real process of reformation in post-soviet countries, which is carried out according to recommendations of international financial structures, and the ideology and principles of SD; there is a need for considerable correction of the course of transformation;
- necessity of East-West consultations on improvement of cooperation in the environmental sphere with the aim of overcoming the crisis of implementation of jointly developed projects and programs;
- discussion and adoption of the Earth Charter.

The report has been prepared by Association “For Sustainable Human Development” with attraction of corresponding specialists — representatives of the scientific and social sectors, as well as a number of ministries of Armenia, with the support of the Earth Council.

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