



REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

**NATIONAL ASSESSMENT REPORT
ON
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

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*Sustainable development is
an economic development, which is socially responsible and fair,
environmentally acceptable,
relating on the basic postulates of civic society.*

FOREWORD

With the 2002 World Summit for Sustainable Development in Johannesburg approaching, Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning of the Republic of Macedonia commenced the elaboration of the Assessment of the progress of implementing targets and recommendations of Agenda 21.

Having in mind that the Assessment should reflect the positions of all relevant stakeholders and considering the Integration principle, the Government of the Republic of Macedonia has accepted the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning's proposal to form National Preparatory Committee for elaborating the Assessment. This Committee is constituted of representatives from: government and state institutions, international organizations, local authorities, economic sector, academic and educational institutions, non-governmental sector, professional associations, and others. Acting as a working group, Coordinating body has been formed, with experts in specific areas of the sustainable development, who were at the same time multi-stakeholder representatives. In order to process certain segments of the Assessment, experts and advisors outside the Committee were involved.

In the process of elaborating the Assessment, series of meetings and workshops were held, producing basic information about familiarity of the public with Agenda 21, as well as to the aspects of sustainability of the development. The conclusions were subjected to professional, statistical and scientific analysis, and then utilized in the Assessment. In order to produce the Assessment, various national, strategic and developmental documents, scientific and expert paper studies, reports and legislation were consulted.

The need to produce the Assessment originated from the United Nations documents and has been elaborated in accordance with the recommendations from “Guidelines for Rio + 10 Assessment”, elaborated by the “Earth Council”. This operation coincided with the country’s need to initiate elaboration of a National Strategy for Sustainable Development, and also, to identify the capabilities and potentials for executing the task and to carry it out.

The sole fact that the country did not produce National strategy for sustainable development yet does not imply total lack of vision for developing sustainability in the strategic documents. Many of the elements of the philosophy of sustainability can be detected in the way the natural resources are managed, having in mind the needs of future generations. They can be found in some development documents too, although without stressing the intention of putting into practice certain commitments, adequate to the strategy of sustainable development.

I. ASSESSMENT OF THE COUNTRY'S READINESS TO TAKE ON ELABORATION OF NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

1. CAPACITY OF THE COUNTRY

Republic of Macedonia is a country going through transitional period, in which the process of establishing state of law with parliamentary democracy is strengthening. At the same time, the policy of open market-oriented economy is consistently conducted, with inviolability of the private property, and liberalized price regime and foreign trade exchange. The signing of the Stabilization and Association Agreement between the RM and the EU has strengthened the processes of harmonizing the legislation and the economy with those of the European Union. In respect of the political system, democratic processes are being developed, while all the rights are exercised within the system's institutions, and the human rights and freedoms are the basis for the country's development. Economic and social development and the protection of the environment are taking place in conditions of inherited problems in the area of economy and unfavorable surrounding. The increased expenditures burdened the national budget and the problems affected the national economy.

Republic of Macedonia has no National Strategy for Sustainable Development created. The elaboration of one has been scheduled in the Macedonian Government's 2001 Working program but the planned activities have been postponed due to the political disturbances, i.e. violated security of the country, and consequently diminished budget resources. The activities resume this year.

Producing "Conceptual approach in creation and enlivening of national strategy for sustainable development" (published in the year of 2000, by the "Institute for Sociological, Political and Juridical Researches"), Republic of Macedonia has made the first step toward elaborating a National Strategy for Sustainable Development.

For planning and subsequently implementing the National Strategy for Sustainable Development, special attention should be paid to some of the operative features of the administrative apparatus. There is obvious lack of clarity in responsibilities and accountabilities assigned to different institutions and individuals. From the view point

of the administration's performance, it can be stated that up to 2000, explicit criteria concerning monitoring and evaluation of the state agencies, were absent. With the recent pass of the new legislation, and with the establishment of the Agency for government employees, those criteria are introduced.

The government institutions mainly establish co-operation with international institutions/organizations and scientific institutions (in spite of common absence of interlinked co-ordination and co-operation between Ministers), while on the level of local authority and non-government organizations, the co-operation exist on a lower scale. As to the co-operation with the business and industry sector, it is relatively scarce. Generally, the picture is rather vague, which is due to the:

- ❖ insufficient participation of the stakeholders in the decision - making process, envisaged in the regulatory legislation;
- ❖ certain degree of bureaucratic close up of the state agencies and institutions has been noted, and
- ❖ insufficient interest of the relevant stakeholders for such collaboration.

In the Ministries (as executive bodies of the central authority), with relatively well defined competencies (functions), professional human resources are insufficiently adequate for performing basic activities. There are two reasons for this: considerable, but still insufficient numbers of government personnel are included in educational upgrade programs, and second, high-level educational institution for public administration hasn't been established until now.

Collaboration between Ministers and Departments as a permanent practice, both in the state institutions and local authority is missing.

Republic of Macedonia has two global commitments, which are full integration in EU and NATO, and many particular strategic commitments, that include numerous priorities. Usually, practical effectuation of the priorities is missing, therefore high - level capability for strategic governance cannot be perceived. There is obviously a vast space for further improvements in this domain, which would result in positive influence in the strategic planning of development assignments in the public

administration bodies. The subsequent conclusion is that present political leadership is inadequate to the professional standards in creating and leading policy of sustainable development.

The human resources, knowledge, technological resources, access to literature and information supply, as well as finances are assessed as partly adequate for elaboration and implementation of a National Strategy for Sustainable Development. On the other hand, strategic documents on the specific areas, organizational structure, legislation and motivation for implementing the strategy are assessed as insufficient.

Systematic approach in funding the sustainable development is still absent. Within the budget and other resources, certain incentive elements can be identified. In that context, national budget envisages funds for restructuring the companies, for poverty reduction, as well as for the social and health care programs, improvement of the agricultural production, development of the economically undeveloped regions, et al.

At this point, the elements that could be associated with sustainable development are funded individually, through business sector investments, budgeting, domestic banks crediting, loans, direct investments, concessions, etc. In the future, different alternatives of funding the sustainable development such are funds, donations, tax benefits are to be detected. The assessment is that additional foreign inputs are necessary.

Public awareness in the Republic of Macedonia (in general, including large part of the political constituency) about the meaning of sustainable development is insufficient, but the political support on sustainable development orientation is to be expected, especially judging by the past verbal declarations and lack of confrontation to the process.

Considering the present (preparatory) stage of rendering National Strategy for Sustainable Development, it is obvious that the planning process could not have any deeper impact on:

- policy making
- decision making
- funding of sustainable development
- decentralization and strengthening of local authorities.

So far, not any of the different political constituents have had significant influence on the planning process for elaboration of the Strategy.

Republic of Macedonia has no National Council for Sustainable Development created, and the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning is national coordinator for implementation of targets and recommendations of Agenda 21. As a governance body, the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning is in full and direct communication with state agencies and other stakeholders, and the entire relevant constituency is under obligation to undertake concrete activities regarding decisions made within its competence. Furthermore, such disposition provides direct influence on the other state agencies, aimed towards observing the principles of sustainable development. This clearly shows the basic readiness and political will to accept the concept of sustainable development.

One of the shortcomings in this kind of coordinative mechanism is confusing the sustainable development with environment protection, overlooking the basic premise of the concept - sustainability of the entire development. Participation of the remaining stakeholder representatives is also missing.

Within the Ministry, individual Department for Sustainable Development is created, teamed up with highly educated professionals. Nevertheless, the Department has personnel weaknesses too: only few of the employees have training on sustainable development, the staff number doesn't correspond with the actual demands of the coordinative tasks, their motivation is disproportional.

There is a commitment to establish National Council for Sustainable Development, composed of multi-stakeholder representatives, thus providing qualified decision-making for sustainable development.

In order Council's functions to be effectuated, additional enlargement of the professional resources, directly involved in accomplishment of the sustainable development strategy will be necessary. In that sense, consolidation of the organizational and management system, and also human resources is needed, especially in the Sector for Sustainable Development attached to the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning.

The following specific targets, which could significantly contribute to the sustainable development of the country, can be identified as achievable within 5 - 10 years:

- Establishment of a National Strategy for Sustainable Development, as shared vision for the future of the country;
- Development of institutional and human capacities for orientation of the on-going and developmental strategies, in accordance with sustainable development benchmarks;
- Poverty reduction;
- Resuscitating the economy with GDP growth and reduction of unemployment;
- Development of professional, effective and efficient government administration, and transparent and liable political decision-making;
- Resumption of the decentralization process and local authority organizational capacity development, for efficient management of the habitation related problems, the citizens encounter;
- Development of Information system for the sustainable development needs.

Recommendations:

The following prerequisites for efficient rendering and implementation of a National strategy for Sustainable Development are to be fulfilled:

- ❖ *As to policymaking of state agencies:* strengthening of their strategic leadership, acknowledgement of the necessity to elaborate a National strategy for sustainable development, control mechanism for its implementation, permanent performance improvement, concrete

- responsibilities and accountabilities distinction, founding establishment with high-level public administration educational program (in progress);
- ❖ *As to decision-making:* pursuing forms, procedures and ways for effective coordination and equal participation in decision-making regarding strategic issues (above all, on the government agencies level);
 - ❖ *As to funding:* budgetary funds assignment for production of such Strategy, and requesting financial support of international organizations/funds, with precisely specified purpose;
 - ❖ *As to decentralization and local authority strengthening:* resuming the on-going process of transferring competences from state to local authorities, and providing solid resources to fund local self-governance, appropriate to the transferred competences. Beside that, it is important for sustainable development to draw up equalization schemes of the unequally developed local units. By all means, the participation of local community in the local self-governance activities is also important.

2. INTEGRATION AND PARTICIPATION

Republic Macedonia is determined to create, and acknowledges the value of politics for sustainable development on a national level. Although a National Strategy for Sustainable Development has not been developed yet, a series of strategic documents, as well as legal and regulatory acts, have been adopted, and the principles of sustainable development are recognisably implemented in them. An effort has been made for an assessment of the degree of implementation of the principles of sustainable development, and the principles of integration and participation during the creation and the implementation of the already adopted national strategic development documents.

The most important documents for strategic development containing aspects of integrated approach and sustainability are: The National Environmental Action Plan NEAP (1996); the National Strategy for Economic Development of the Republic of Macedonia (1997); the National Environmental Health Action Plan NEHAP (1999); the Agricultural Development Strategy in the Republic of Macedonia to 2005 (2001); the Spatial Plan of Republic of Macedonia (in the process of adoption in the Assembly); and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (being prepared). We should also mention the legal acts, especially the laws for managing natural resources, i.e. the forests, forestlands, waters, agricultural areas, mineral resources, and natural rarities.

When legal regulations are concerned, the mechanisms of control over their implementation are missing, which, in combination with an insufficiently efficient judicial system, results in laws that are not enforced, and sanctions that are not applied.

The Spatial Plan of the Republic of Macedonia, in which the assessments for the future development are based upon the basic recommendations from Agenda 21, as well as the planned spatial solutions ensure that the economic development will be in harmony with the environmental capacity, its constraints, its protection, and the social needs.

The National Environmental Action Plan and the National Environmental Health Action Plan have used an integral approach, with the participation of representatives of the national and local governments, the scientific and academic potentials, the non-governmental sector, and the economic subjects. At the same time, the economical, social, environmental and health criteria were taken into consideration. Although it is taken for granted that the strategies, the plans, the programs, and the laws define a series of goals compatible with the goals of the sustainable development, the objective evaluation of the document's scope of integral approach and the inclusion of the aspects of sustainable development is not so simple. Most of all, because the public, the state administration and the non-governmental sector are not acquainted very well with Agenda 21 and the principles of sustainable development. The social and the economic fields are considered integrally, but the aspects of the environment, at least in some of the documents, are not taken into consideration with that degree of integrality.

It is hard to pinpoint complex mechanisms, which would put into effect the declared commitments in the strategic documents in accordance with the spirit and the guidelines from Rio. Nevertheless, the solutions, which are incentive and integrate some of the economic instruments with a part of the social sphere, should be mentioned in this context. For example, the Government of the Republic of Macedonia has envisaged tax exemptions for the economic subjects which employ handicapped persons. We could mention some examples of integrated approach in using economical instruments for improvement of the environment quality: the importers of equipment for environmental protection are exempt from custom taxes; the amount of the tax on profit is reduced by the portion of the profit invested in the protection of the environment and nature; the vehicles registration tax is lower for the cars with devices for exhaustion fumes' purification, etc.

There are examples of public/private/civil partnership for enlivening of certain aspects of sustainability in the country's development. For example, several municipalities (financed by the Institute for Sustainable Communities) have already finalized their Local Environment Action Plans. The local governments (representing one of the forms of public government), the economic subjects (representing the

private sector), and non-governmental organizations (representing civil associations) have participated in their creation and realization.

The activities for implementation of Agenda 21 recommendations on national level are not systematic enough, and they show that the sustainable development is known only to a few government bodies. The recommendations from Rio 1992 and Agenda 21 are gradually accepted in the activities of some of the Ministries. For example, the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning has a Department of Sustainable Development, which is responsible for implementation of the environment protection politics in accordance with the concept of sustainable development. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy has established a special Division of Organic Agricultural Production, with a basic purpose of research, usage and promotion of the principles and techniques of the sustainable agronomic practice and rural development. The Ministry of Economy has several departments working on the implementation of the principles of sustainable development in its special areas (i.e. energy efficiency).

It is assumed that the necessary positive conditions for participation of the public in the acceptance and implementation of the politics of sustainable development are already present.

There are several impediments for the implementation of the recommendations of Agenda 21: the executive authorities are not coordinated enough; insufficient informing about sustainable development; the state administration lacks training, etc.

Part of the NGOs thinks that the influence of the stakeholders on the more important decisions is diminutive, which can also be a problem for the implementation of the sustainable development concept. The NGOs feel that there is a great political impediment against the implementation of Agenda 21, that the political parties that are in power do not realize the importance and the need for sustainable development, and furthermore, there are partisan interests which are different, even opposed to Agenda 21 recommendations, and there is the lack of informing and the absence of consensus about sustainable development between the political parties

in power. Consequently, the logistic incapability for implementation of the declarations is evident.

Recommendations:

The need for elaborating of a National Sustainable Development Strategy is acknowledged and is one of the priorities for the Republic of Macedonia. The elaboration of such a strategy and the wide acceptance of the principles of Agenda 21 and the politics of sustainable development need:

- Providing conditions for elaboration of a National Strategy for Sustainable Development and promoting of Agenda 21 and the principles of sustainable development;
- Including of representatives of all stakeholders (from the scientific and economic sectors, from the local governments, from the educational institutions, NGOs etc) in the elaboration of the Strategy;
- Providing of integrity and coherence of all the government bodies and stakeholders in order to create mechanisms for collaboration between the Departments and the Ministries.
- Developing of appropriate experts' and logistics' capacity;
- Providing of integrity in the approach and in the creation of politics, planned solutions and projects; and
- Creating of mechanisms for management and control over the actions already taken.

II. NATIONAL KEY ISSUES

It is estimated that during the conception, elaboration and implementation of the National Strategy for Sustainable Development several critical areas need special attention on national level. The resolution of inter-ethnic relations, the respect for the law, the institutional capacity of the competent national and local structures, the quality of education, the demographic dynamics, civic responsibility, and proactive public awareness, determine the resolution of all present social, economic, and environmental problems, as well as all the other issues and conditions, that form the reality of our life. The sustainability of development of the Republic of Macedonia depends mostly on them. Their solution needs coordination of the development guidelines, creation of suitable mechanisms for collaboration, and providing of appropriate financial support.

The work on the estimation of the capacity and the readiness of the state to prepare and adopt the National Strategy crystallized three key national issues. Each of them contains several components, and focuses on the present problem in its integrity. The following critical questions have been established:

1. Poverty reduction;
2. Sustainable economic and energy resources and capacities; and
3. Improvement of environmental laws and practices

1. POVERTY REDUCTION

In this developmental period, Republic of Macedonia is faced with a relatively high level of poverty because of the insufficient economic development and the rise of unemployment. We can illustrate this with the facts that more than 30% of the active working population is unemployed, and more than 15% of the households receive welfare. The poverty category includes the unemployed, the persons with lower levels of education, old persons, inhabitants of the hill and mountain rural areas, and some of the employed who either do not receive any salary, or they are very small.

The solution for the poverty problem is a political task and a legal determination of the Republic of Macedonia; it is also in accordance with several international documents, especially the Copenhagen Declaration, Agenda 21, the Millennium Declaration, etc.

The state is making efforts towards reducing of poverty with a wide spectrum of measures: beginning with laws, to subsequent concrete activities. The legal regulations determine clear criteria for welfare eligibility. For example, welfare is granted to households, which are 57% below the poverty limit (which is determined at 60 euros per household of four). Furthermore, the poor persons have the advantage of state-sponsored free primary and secondary education, health protection without or with minimal participation, children's allowances, and free care for pre-school children, free qualification and supplemental education for adults, etc.

The institutions in charge of resolving of different aspects of poverty have clear obligations, but no clear professional responsibilities. Namely, there are no criteria for evaluation of the professional results yet, neither for the programs and the politics for reduction of poverty. There is a relatively good collaboration between the international factor and the governmental institutions, but the collaboration with the local government, business sector and the NGOs is non-existent or very small. The lack of finances and the lack of planned approach (i.e. defined programs for implementation) are important limiting factors for the solution of this issue.

There are no political impediments for poverty reduction because the political constituency and a larger portion of the population are informed and guided towards the resolution of the problems of the poor.

Some appeasement of poverty is achieved through timely payment of welfare, education of the unemployed with low or inadequate qualifications, education of personnel working on social programs etc.

But, there have been some failures in the implementation of the activities, such as: insufficient employment opportunities, employers avoiding the payment of social contributions for the employees (the pension and health care insurance, etc.); there are no conditions for granting higher welfare, etc.

There is a public consensus about the factors that contribute to the failure of implementation of measures towards reducing of poverty: inadequate coordination within the Government; insufficient motivation of the professional personnel; no sanctions for unprofessional work; insufficient involvement of NGOs, etc.

The most important lesson that has been learnt by the governmental structures is the one about the task of reducing poverty, that it should be a complex, wholesome and well organized activity in many areas of the social life, including social and health care, economy, education et al.

The most important lesson that has been learnt by a part of the population is the one that they should activate themselves on the labor market, and not wait passively for the state to do that for them.

Recommendations

The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (in the process of elaboration) changes and adopts a course towards more efficient solution of problems. In the near future, concrete steps in the following areas should be taken: Economy (rise in investments); Health Care (reducing of prices of drugs for the poor); Education (greater involvement of the poor in the educational process); Social Care (establishing of Funds for Social Investments); Infrastructure (better quality and

availability of the social services); Labor Market, rural and regional development, et al.

It is accepted that reducing of poverty is possible with economic restructuring guided by the principles of market economy, on the basis of the sustainable development principles, elaboration of criteria (in the government bodies) for increasing motivation and responsibility; creating partnership of the government structures with all the factors in the civil society for the support of the politics and programs for reducing of poverty, as well as harmonizing of the legal regulations with the international standards.

2. SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC AND ENERGY RESOURCES AND CAPACITIES

As a result from the low level of economic development, the need of generating a faster growth of the GDP, the high rate of unemployment, and the unbalanced budget, a great number of categories and parts of the society are affected. Basically, it applies to every citizen, but also to the economy as a whole. Namely, the unemployed are more affected, as well as the urban population, but the state health and education systems also.

The analyses of the situation in the energy sector, from the aspect of the existing reserves and the pollution, they being the fundament of sustainability, show that providing energy is one of the key aspects for achieving sustainable development in the country.

As a result of the activities for resolving of economic problems so far, there have been some results, among which the following: keeping of a low level inflation; stable exchange rates of the national currency (the Macedonian denar); a tolerant and sustainable level of public debt; the growth of the unemployment rate being stopped; and reforming the bank system. Preparing of state macroeconomic policy in accordance with the economic conditions; implementation of modern methodology for preparation of the payment balance; and reforming of budget policy in accordance with the current world trends are all practical results that demonstrate lessons learnt by the bearers of macroeconomic policy.

But, the measures for solution of economic problems taken so far seem insufficient. A relatively small number of state institutions think they have taken enough measures. The greatest failures may be located in the still unchanged production structure of the Macedonian economy, the low level of investment activity, keeping of a high level of unemployment, and no continuous positive GDP rates of growth.

The solution of the key economic problems met with a series of limiting factors - inadequate management system, and a lack of adequate financial resources, among others. The state institutions have a relatively well-qualified staff in this area, which

indicates that the human resources are not a limiting factor of greater value. There is a certain non-identification of the national strategic interests. The legislative in the area of economic processing is a relatively small problem.

Government institutions, in cooperation with the international organizations and institutions have the key role in the solution of the main economic problems. The cooperation between the government institutions and the science and business sectors in the country is truly good. But the level of cooperation with the local governments, i.e. the municipalities, is quite low. The participation of NGOs is relatively good, although these are complex problems, which need a high level of expert knowledge in economics. Part of the relevant NGOs in Macedonia has done some projects in connection with the economic problems mentioned above. They feel that their contribution to the resolution of those problems is not so great, but it is a contribution, nonetheless.

The reasons for the relatively unsuccessful solution of the main economic problems may be located in the following: absence of adequate financial scope; insufficient coordination on the governance level, insufficient efficiency of the key institutions, and lack of motivation with the expert staff in the state institutions.

The NGOs believe that the lack of finances in their sector is the main impediment for contributing more significantly to the solution of the economic problems. The NGOs emphasize the problem of lack of collaboration with the government bodies, as well as the deficient accessibility of the data and information for coping with the problems.

The energy resources in the country are most directly connected with the critical economic problems, and they might appear as a new significant generator of economic problems, as well as a difficulty for the realization of Agenda 21 aims, and the concept of sustainable development. Therefore, the government needs a complex and universal approach and action towards the solution of the key economic and energy problems.

The renewable sources of energy in the country are water, geothermal springs and woods. The solar energy, despite the relatively high potential, and the wind energy, which is not a researched enough source, is not included in the energy balance of the country yet. But, even if the potentials of the renewable energy resources were used to the maximum, they can satisfy only 20% of the energy consumption. The fossil fuels are represented only with coal, and its reserves might last for another 10 or 15 years, while there are no domestic resources of liquid and gas sources of energy. The share of coal in primary power is 50%, while in the production of electricity it is 75%. The introduction of bio energy has been elaborated with the *Study for Defining of the Bio-potential in Macedonia, and Possibilities for its Exploitation*; while the pilot-project for using of biomass in agriculture is in its completion phase. Although it is not so dominant, there is an interest for more intensive usage of geothermal energy, and a basic study about it, including pilot-projects, has already been created.

The available data indicate that the energy sector contributes the most to the pollution in Republic of Macedonia, and this is most obvious from the equivalent emissions of greenhouse gasses, because all the other pollutants have similar proportions. Namely, the energy sector, with its 70% share in the emissions, is the most intensive source of pollution. Within the frames of the sector, the emissions are mostly from the production of electricity (a 73% share), then heat production (17%), and transport (10%).

Despite the great potential for problems with the exhaustion of domestic resources and the pollution of the environment, the Government has not adopted a strategy for the development of the energy sector so far. There are some partial energy strategies developed with foreign partners, and financed by international funds, including two projections for reducing of emissions from the electricity production systems to 2020, on the bases of more efficient use of the water potential, using of mixed fuel in the thermal power plants, which should reduce the yearly amount of emissions and save the domestic coal reserves. The introduction of natural gas into the energy balance with the import from the Russian Federation is a long-term energy and environmental solution, and there is an adequate Economical and Financial Study and Program, but its realization is conditioned with organizational

and financial activities beforehand. Although it is not so dominant, there is an interest for more intensive usage of geothermal energy, and a basic study about it, including pilot-projects, has already been prepared.

The Department of Energy in the Ministry of Economy takes some partial actions, but there is no official national strategy for energy efficiency. The Government Program for Efficient Exploitation of Energy to the year 2020 provides for a development of such strategy, together with laying the legislative and administrative basis for subsidies, establishing a Fund for Energy Efficiency, and activities for training and public awareness raising.

The inclusion of ethics and transparency in the realization of strategies for sustainable development in the energy sector is crucial, especially for an efficient and timely restructuring and privatizing of the energy sector.

Recommendations

- Enactment of the strategic development vision, with measures and activities, which will contribute to the solution of the main economic and energy problems;
- Providing additional finances for that purpose and improvement of the existing regulations;
- Increasing of efficiency of the key state institutions through greater involvement of scientists and professionals in them, as well as further education of the employees in the government institutions.
- A more emphasized role of the international community for the solution of these problems might be crucial, but it calls for greater knowledge and understanding of the economic and energy problems, which are specific to Macedonia, as well as understanding the need for greater involvement of the domestic scientific and professional staff in the quest for solutions.
- Building of mechanisms for stabilization of the political situation, and ways for stopping the emigration of the highly educated professionals.
- The strengthening of civil society control mechanism could prove useful for the solution of the key economic problems.

- Securing of financial and other material conditions are necessary in the relations with the immediate and wider neighborhood. This support might and should be expected from the IMF and the World Bank, but also from UNDP, the EBRD, as well as the World Trade Organization (WTO).

3. IMPROVEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS AND PRACTICES

In this transitional period of adopting the market economy, the need for integration of the environment problems in the political and development processes in the economy and the social sphere has been realized in Macedonia. The National Environmental Action Plan has been prepared with that aim in mind, and on that basis. Because of the complexity of this area, in spite of the significant activities and results, there is a clear need for betterment and improvement of the regulations, strengthening of institutions and securing a financial support for solution of the problems in this area. The programs for environment protection and improvement realized so far, in spite of their positive effects, indicate a need of establishing an efficient environment management system through further building and implementation of the legislations, as well as strengthening of the system institutions.

Despite the reduction in production, the industry sector is still the main polluter in the country. The primary reasons for industrial pollution are: the old, inefficient technologies, inadequate control of waste, and the insufficient equipment for environment protection. The most serious problems in the country are: the quality of air in Veles, Bitola, and Skopje; the pollution of surface waters (as a result of discharging untreated waste waters); and the inadequate treatment of the solid and hazardous waste.

The Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia establishes the organizing and humanization of the living space and the improvement of environment and nature as basic values. The adoption of the Law on Environment and Nature Protection and Promotion in 1996 was an important step towards the realization of the constitutional right to live in a healthy environment, and at the same time, it recognized the need for solution of the problems in this area.

An important step towards securing more efficient environmental protection was made in 1998 with the establishment of a separate Ministry of Environment, which was renamed Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning (in the year 2000), along with the Agency of Environment, Spatial Information System and the State

Environment Inspectorate. The monitoring of environment is a responsibility of several institutions, while the presentation of the data from the environment monitoring is a responsibility of the Macedonian Environmental Information Center, which functions within the Ministry.

Synchronizing of the national legislation and adopting of the EU standards, those are the main priorities of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia. On the basis of this on-going process, and, at the same time, in coordination with the PHARE Project COP 99, which is being realized in the Ministry, new legislation concerning several areas of the environment is being drafted, mainly because the enforcement of the present legislation causes institutional difficulties, since the government bodies were recently reorganized.

Republic of Macedonia has ratified the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters. Its implementation is on the way, mainly through the transparency of the environmental data, and the raising of public awareness about all the questions considering the environment.

Republic of Macedonia has also ratified the Convention on Environment Impact Assessment in a trans-boundary context and is currently implementing it through adopting a separate Law on Environment Impact Assessment. The number of subjects authorized and specialized for evaluation of the impact on the environment has risen in the last few years, but the EIA techniques and procedures are not sufficiently developed.

International cooperation has a special and important place in the improvement of politics and realization of environment protection. Macedonia is a member state of the Convention on Long-range Trans-boundary Air Pollution, the UN Framework Convention on Climatic Changes, Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer, the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, etc. The membership in these international bodies has a special significance because of the opportunity for exchanging of information, experience and knowledge, but also the

accessibility of different funds for support of the environmental development and protection.

The activities for environment improvement and protection are financed from different sources: through the Environment Fund, from the budget, and from donations and loans. The most important activities that have been financed so far concern the protection of the Dojran, Ohrid, and Prespa Lakes; building of water supplying systems; development of a sanitary landfill for the capital, the biggest city in the country, Skopje; preparation of local action plans, etc. But, some of the key problems, which need greatest investments, have not been solved yet.

A top priority for the environment in the past 10 years, and the main problem to be solved, is the quality of air in several localities in the country. The reasons for this condition are many, and the more important among them are: lack of finance and inadequate institutional and legislative starting point. Coping with the increased air pollution, needs urgent corrective activities, but also, enactment of the regulations, as well as adequate management. The top priority in the field of environmental problems is the quality of air in Veles. In Veles, as well as in the other critical zones, Bitola and Skopje, nearly half of the urban population in the country feels the consequences of the air pollution, which originates from the industrial capacities and the motor vehicles. The big industrial polluters are well known.

The following items were identified as activities and measures for improving of the situation that have the greatest priority: introducing of an automatic system for monitoring of the air quality; adopting of a new Law on Air Quality (followed by adequate regulations, compatible with the EU, SMO and SZO regulations and standards); as well as introducing of the "polluter pays" principle. Some measures and activities for improving of the air quality have already been taken, but there are no adequate technical and technological endeavours. The lack of finances is the main reason for the situation. The sanctions against the big polluters have been opposed with social unrest among the employees and the families that secure their livelihood with those economic entities.

The preparations of new legislative concerning the air, with approximation with the legislative EU norms and standards, have begun in 2001. There is political will for these activities. The revision of the laws has to ensure introduction of stricter norms, to enable a universal and efficient regime for issuing permits and inspection, and to provide coordination of the local and the state programs for monitoring and management. This will mean more obligations for the state and local institutions, for the industry sector and for the citizens.

There are some positive experiences, and the awareness about the consequences of the pollution is greater, and that is followed by a change of attitude of the polluters, who are trying to reduce the pollution originating from the industrial capacities.

Recommendations

The integration of the environment in the department politics has a special importance for improving of environment quality, and especially for the main priority, the quality of air. Acceptance of the attitude that the environment is a development and economic category will present a step further towards thorough implementation of the principles of sustainable development. This emphasizes the need for institutionalizing of the inter-department collaboration on national and local level, and also between the government institutions, NGOs, and the industry.

In order to establish an efficient system for environment management, a full implementation of the regulation and strengthening of the institutions on central and local levels is needed, as well as abiding to the legal regulations, coordination between the state programs for environment protection monitoring and management. The second condition that must be established in order to implement the future politics is engaging properly trained human resources.

Developing of programs for air control management is necessary, especially in the bigger urban areas.

The need for development and exploitation of the economic instruments in order to stimulate the economic subjects towards environmental protection is clear. The main

activities will be aimed towards constant researches, monitoring, taking measures for improvement, and improving of the conditions in the present environmentally critical areas in the country. The development will originate from the installment of new and environmentally sound technologies, which need a new source of investments that are simply lacking at the present moment.

The international community, including the UN, will have to pay attention to financial assistance exactly because of this. It will mean that the donations have to transform from technical to financial assistance, i.e., more investment for realization of projects for environment protection, especially in the area of air quality.

III. EDUCATION, TRAINING AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

In the Republic of Macedonia, everyone is granted the right to educate oneself under equal conditions. Elementary education is compulsory, and secondary schools likewise, tuition free. Certain aspects of the environment and development are studied in the elementary and secondary schools. In these levels, students are also involved in international projects and programs, as part of the supplemental activities within the protection of environment curriculum.

But based on the available results of the scientific researches, inclusion of themes related to environment protection in elementary education is insufficient. As a consequence, students are not going to be able to put acquired knowledge into practice, i.e. their orientation toward sustainable development education will not take place accordingly. The qualitative analysis of ecological contents in the text books shows that environment is not treated in its totality. The general impression is that “ecological” contents are insufficiently and ineffectively present; moreover they suggest “ecological” education inadequate to the objectives of education on sustainable development.

In certain faculties of universities “Sveti Kiril i Metodi” in Skopje and “Sveti Kliment Ohridski” in Bitola, knowledge on environment protection and sustainable development is acquired. Although in many different faculties subjects and themes related to the sustainable development issues are included, the approach of an integral studying, knowledge and skills acquirement and training for efficient handling of complex problems of balanced development is missing.

As yet, no readiness exists for introduction of particular contents related to sustainable development in educational and research programs. The actual positive results in this regard emerge from the personal endeavors of the educators. Important role in the education of the staff working on environment protection played Interdisciplinary studies for environment engineering.

Attached to the Macedonian Academy of Science and Arts, Research Institute for Energy, Informatics and Materials applies the sustainable development concept in advanced academic studies.

The obligation to educate and acquire knowledge emerges from the regulations, too. Thus, in accordance with the Law on Environment and Nature Protection and Promotion, public establishments for education (starting with pre-school and elementary education), upbringing, health, informing, culture and science are liable to envisage activities aimed to develop active attitude toward protection and improvement of the environment and nature.

In the educational programs, the aspects of sustainable development are not present in appropriate extent, but this can be corrected in the forthcoming period.

The Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Science is responsible for the activities related to implementation of the GLOBE Program (Global Learning to Observe the Benefit of Environment), which aims to raise the awareness for the environment and to contribute to the scientific comprehension of the Planet Earth. In several schools ecological workshops were held, in collaboration with the local authorities and NGOs. Also, the Ministry is competent for constant initiation of ecological issues and inclusion of adequate projects and activities in the government programs. For the National Strategy for Protection of Children's Rights (elaboration is in progress), the Ministry created operating program for continued education on environment of children.

To provide transparency and to raise public awareness, the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning established Macedonian Information Center, and also Public Communication Office, to provide access to information regarding environment.

The Office enables the citizens to inform themselves and comment on the decisions that have been made, which an obligation is emerging from the Aarhus Convention. The Office collaborates with Medias, citizens, NGOs, scientific and educational institutions at al, on regular basis.

The contribution of the Macedonian NGOs to the environmental issues and awareness rising is significant. The environmental NGOs contribution in establishing the Ministry of Environment (as an independent governance body), and moreover, in the adoption of the Law on Environment and Nature Protection and Promotion, also known as Eco - Constitution (adopted with consensus), was also great. In the process of adoption, the extent of the Macedonian NGOs participation was unprecedented large. The sole representative of the Republic of Macedonia on the World Summit in Rio was an NGO activist.

In 1995, the NGO Environmentalists Movement of Macedonia, in collaboration with the Friends of the Earth and scientists from Macedonia, announced the first non-governmental report "Sustainable Development of the Republic of Macedonia". This was the first document that promoted the concept of sustainable development of the Republic of Macedonia in the language and with stands of the non-governmental organizations.

Foundations like REC (Regional Environmental Center) and ISC (Institute for Sustainable Communities) achieved a great deal of positive results in proclamation and promotion of the principles of sustainable development through NGOs activities, such as drawing up Local Environmental Action Plans, resolution of the environmental problems in the economic life and in the local infrastructure and affirmation of the Aarhus Convention. Furthermore, they helped in forming the environmental NGOs and in training the activists.

The support of UNDP in the area of environment protection encompasses activities for institutional strengthening, operational activities, organizing training for improving the governance with environment and pilot-projects (with social and environmental dimension) carried out by the local authorities, in collaboration with local stakeholders, etc.

Moreover, the NGO Pronatura from Switzerland, supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation is working on the project for protection of nature on the mountain Pelister (this project shows that co-operation between non-governmental sector and government agencies can be constructive). USAID

financially supported some of the projects of the Found for Environment, which serves as an instrument for funding small-range and middle-range projects in the environmental area. Numerous NGOs, without or with international support, actively participated in promotion of the principles of sustainable development in the Republic of Macedonia. The Stability Pact supporting countries from Southeastern Europe has helped creating a network of environmental NGOs from southeastern Europe (SEEENN). This network has positively influenced the governments, actualizing environment problems as region's priorities. UNEP has developed broad-based activity, helping the local authorities to resolve the critical problems concerning betterment of the environment quality through engagement of the unemployed and the local population. These examples are part of positive process of raising public awareness in Macedonia, and improved education in the past 10 years.

Education and training should be part of the National Strategy for Sustainable Development, because that is the only way to raise public awareness for resolving the environmental problems of the country.

The principles of sustainable development are not sufficiently implemented in both the public and the education, because the Strategy for Sustainable Development is not adopted yet. Only some of the NGO, scientific institutions and governance bodies are making efforts toward acceptance of the sustainability in all areas of the development, which is why their role should be systematically reinforced.

Recommendations

The elaboration of the National Strategy for Sustainable Development will stimulate rapid changes and betterment of the education, with principles of sustainability of the development and integrality of the programs implemented. Undoubtedly, it means affirming the methodology of unified programming of the education for sustainable development, through introduction of contents, which explains and reflects the very philosophy of the sustainable development, in each curriculum, on all levels. Practical utilization of the acquired knowledge is particularly important, especially because it is a prerequisite for employment and self-employment, as well as for taking advantage of the economical possibilities and incentive economic course, and finally, for proper basis for reduction of poverty.

IV THE WAY AHEAD

As the Concept for elaboration of National Strategy for Sustainable Development suggests, the sustainability principle has to be a foundation of all the development efforts, of everything that is planned, and of everything that is or will be evaluated. The country is facing numerous problems, which already affect, or will affect the citizens. Of course, many of those problems neither stop on the borders of our country, nor are products of its way of life. However, the chances to resolve them are determined by the following:

- Inclusion of the Republic of Macedonia in the European and world integration processes;
- Assuming the elaboration of scientifically based National Strategy for Sustainable Development;
- Creating controlling mechanism for implementation of the Strategy for Sustainable Development;
- Developing of civil identity which will lead towards relaxation of the inter-ethnic relations;
- Rising of public awareness about the responsibility of the citizens for their own fate, and the importance of proactive thinking and acting;
- Improving of the capacity of the adequate state and local structures', as civic services;
- In the creation of policy by the state agencies - strengthening the strategic leadership;
- Finding of forms, procedures, and ways of effective coordination and common resolution of the strategic issues (most of all, on the government bodies' level);
- Affirmation of the law and ethics;
- Improving the quality of education for sustainable development.

We feel that our expectations from the international community, especially from the UN, for providing assistance to the Republic of Macedonia for elaboration of its National Strategy for Sustainable Development, through financial support and expert services, are justified.

V. STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RIO CONVENTIONS

1. The Convention on Biological Diversity

Republic of Macedonia has ratified this convention with a special law adopted in the Assembly of RM on October 14th 1997 (it was published in the Official Gazette of RM No. 54/97). The Convention is effective from March 2nd 1998. The Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning is responsible for the coordination of activities concerning the protection of biodiversity, and for the implementation of the Convention as well.

By a suggestion of the Convention's Standing Committee, the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning initialized the formation of a National Committee for Biological Diversity (NCBD), in cooperation with Government and Assembly commissions, and the Ministry of External Affairs. NCBD is composed of representatives from the academic sector, professional associations and NGOs. In accordance with its authority, the Government of RM has brought a Decision for forming of the Committee (published in the Official Gazette of RM No. 36/99). This body consists of a President, deputy President, and 18 members. The main role of the Committee is to give assistance to the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, as an expert body, for the different questions concerning the protection of biodiversity, especially in the field of implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

In 1999, with the purpose of preparing a National Strategy and an Action Plan for protection of biological diversity, the Ministry has proposed a draft project to GEF. GEF has accepted the proposed draft project and the World Bank have been appointed as an implementing agency for the project. The activities for implementation of the project have started in 2001, and they are conveyed by the Ministry in cooperation with the Committee. The implementation of the project is Republic of Macedonia's obligation, resulting from the Convention. By recommendations of the World Bank and GEF, the draft project was supplemented with the preparation of the First National Report for the implementation of the Rio

Convention in the Republic of Macedonia, and the development of a Clearing House Mechanism.

Republic of Macedonia has signed the Cartage Protocol for Bio Safety on July 26th, 2000 and with that, RM has joined the countries that show seriousness in the approach, and strict control of the cross-border transport of all live genetically modified organisms, which should be introduced in every country. At the moment, RM is considering the possibility of ratification of this Protocol. In 2002, with the purpose of defining of the bio safety framework, the Ministry has taken activities for proposing a project within the Development of National Bio Safety Framework in 100 countries (a GEF/UNDP program). This project is scheduled to begin in August 2002.

2. UN Framework Convention on Climate Changes

The activities about the implementation of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Changes (UNFCCC) are within the "Enabling Republic of Macedonia to prepare its First National Communication in response to its commitments to the UNFCCC" project. RM has ratified the UNFCCC on December 4th 1997. The project is a step towards the increasing of public awareness about the problems of global warming and the climate changes issues on national level. The implementing agency of the project is the UN Development Program (UNDP), and the executive body - Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning. The activities on the project have begun in January 2000, and the completion of the National Communication is expected by the end of 2002. The project consists of three thematic areas, with expert groups working on each of them.

The first thematic area concerns preparation of an Inventory of Greenhouse Gas Emissions, as well as their absorbents in the period from 1990 to 1998, namely the basic greenhouse gasses: carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), and nitrous oxide (NO_x).

The second thematic area concerns the Vulnerability Assessment of the areas most affected by the climatic changes, and the measures and strategies for adaptation. The evaluation of the future climate changes effects demands the first priority to be the establishing of the influence on human health, and then of the potentially most affected sectors, namely agriculture, forestry, biodiversity, water resources, etc. Afterwards, when the possible negative consequences from climate changes are defined, with an expert evaluation in every area, some possibilities, programs or measures which, when implemented, should reduce and alleviate the consequences of those unavoidable climate changes, will be suggested.

The third thematic area is focused on the Analyses of Abatement of Greenhouse Gas Emissions and strategy for accomplishing reduced emissions. The purpose is finding of possibilities for action on national level, which could lead to reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, leading to reducing the risk of climate changes. Considering that the greatest part of the emissions originate from the energy sector,

the greatest part of the measures are focused exactly on this sector, including electricity production, heat production and mechanical energy for transport. The monitoring and supervision of national politics and programs on climate changes and the implementation of UNFCCC on national level is a responsibility of the multidisciplinary inter-governmental body National Committee for Climate Changes, with representatives from the relevant Ministries, the academic and private sectors, and the NGOs.

During the implementation of the project there were no noticeable problems in terms of technical capacities or how much were the institutions prepared for inclusion in the process. A bilateral collaboration with the Croatian team working on the same project was established, with participation of their experts in the workshops organized in RM in each thematic area, which contributed a great deal for exchange of experiences. Representatives of RM that are included in the project participated in the regional workshops organized by the National Communication Support Program for all the areas that are subject of this project. Several thematic workshops were organized within the project, which had the purpose of presentation of methodology, and later of the results, on which the representatives of the stakeholders participated. Considering the attractiveness of the theme, the press coverage of the project activities and the amount of information about global warming in the media is increasing. The experts working on the project and representatives of the project team are frequent guests in the electronic media, which provides the public with information about the topic, which, on the other hand, contributes to the raising of public awareness.

For more detailed information about the project activities, climate changes, global warming and similar themes, the public can access the project web site on <http://www.unfccc.org.mk>.

3. Convention to Combat Desertification

Republic of Macedonia has ratified the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in the countries faced with serious draughts and/or desertification, especially in Africa (UNCCD) with a Ratification Law published in the Official Gazette of RM No. 13/2002). The Convention is effective from June 2002.

Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning initialised the start of the project called "Self-evaluation of the National Capacity for Implementation of the Resolutions from the Three Rio Conventions". The project would be financed by GEF, while UNDP is the identified implementation agency. Within this project, which is expected to begin in October 2002, the capacity for implementation of the Conventions on Biodiversity, Climate Changes and Desertification will be evaluated on national level.

VI. ID OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

LOCATION	Southeastern Europe	
POPULATION	2 026 350	(2000)
AREA	25 713 km²	
TERRAIN	Mountainous	4/5
	Planes	1/5
CLIMATE	Mediterranean	
	Continental	
	Mountainous	
SOCIO-POLITICAL FEATURES		
Republic of Macedonia is a parliamentary, multi-party, Unitarian Republic		
STATE GOVERNENCE ORGANIZATION		
	Assembly of RM	
	President of RM	
	Government of RM	
	Judicial system	
	Public prosecutor	
TERITORIAL DIVISION	123 municipalities and the city of Skopje	
ETHNIC GROUPS	(1994)	
	Macedonians	66,6%
	Albanians	22,7%
	Turks	4,0%
	Gypsies	2,2%
	Serbs	2,1%
	Aromanies	0,4%
	Others	2,0%

LANGUAGES

The official language is Macedonian. In the municipalities where ethnicities comprise more than 20% of the population where besides Macedonian, official language is the one of the referred ethnicity.

GDP per capita	1813 USA \$	(2001)
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INFLATION	3,7%	(2001)
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UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	30, 5%	(2001)
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POVERTY RATE (official)	22 %	(2000)
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ACTIVE WORKING POPULATION	64,1%	(1994)
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NATURAL GROWTH	0,59%	(2000)
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LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH	72,68 years	(2000)
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LAND STRUCTURE

Agricultural land	48,1%	(2000)
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Forestland	37,0%	(2000)
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Waters	1,9%	(2000)
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Sterile land	13,0%	(2000)
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NATIONAL PARKS AND PROTECTED AREAS	4,2%	(2000)
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ACTIVITIES (GDP portion rates)

Services	55,1%	(2000)
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Industry	27,2%	(2000)
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Agriculture	11,8%	(2000)
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Other	5,9%	(2000)
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INFRASTRUCTURAL CAPACITIES

Railway	699 km	(2001)
Local roads and regional highways	8 684 km	(1997)
International airports	2	(2002)

EDUCATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE POPULATION (population listing 1994)

Total population above 15 years of age	1 454 082	100%
No education		6,59%
Incomplete elementary education		18,39%
Elementary education		33,43%
Secondary education		32,72%
College education		3,44%
High education		5,27%
Unknown		0,16%

Coordinator of the activities for preparation of the National Assessment Report on Sustainable Development in the Republic of Macedonia: MSc. Matlievska Margarita, Sustainable Development Department, Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning Republic of Macedonia

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