

## THE ENVIRONMENT - DEVELOPMENT AND ECOLOGICAL CRISIS RELATIONSHIP

Gheorghe IONAȘCU<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract.** *The modern world lives a phase when it realizes the importance of the environmental problems for the human development. The environment includes the entire matter, energy and information, the transformations which take place and the inter-relationships within the system we relate to. Therefore, the environment includes both the context and the bond of all that exists in the given system. The development, multidimensional concept, represents the way of the today world towards the tomorrow world, the unfolding and the evolution of natural and social processes and transformations in time. The sustainable development represents the development that has fulfilled today's generation needs, it doesn't interfere with the future generations in fulfilling their own options. The latest researches show that the development which is not anchored in the ecological context is destined to fail. For Romania, the sustainable development represents an economic, social and definitely political priority. The condition and quality of the environment depends on the development approach. The ecological crisis has become a real cultural system crisis of the contemporary civilization that has undertaken a wrong path.*

**Keywords:** environment, ambient, sustainable development, community development, the culture of the development, naturalness, culture, techno-sphere, ecological crisis

### 1. Introduction

The modern world lives a phase when it realizes the importance of the environmental problems for the human development. One even speaks about the inversion of the binomial development - environment into environment - development, situating the environment on the first canvas, its protection and quality condition the development sense, the objective of the development being essentially the superior quality of the life environment.

### 2. The environment

is an intuitive concept, representing both the hierarchy of the ecological systems and the entirety of environmental factors, such as:

1. soil,
2. water,
3. air,
4. vegetal and animal populations, and also the human populations along with
5. human settlements.

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<sup>1</sup> University Associate professor Ph.D. arch., Spiru Haret University, Bucharest.

The environment includes the entire matter, energy and information, the transformations that take place and the interrelationships within the related system. Therefore, the environment includes both the content and the bond of everything that exists in the given system.

The environment represents thus the whole that is made by parts, but it can not be annexed to the parts. Phrases such as the water and the environment are ill-suited, the parts can not be listed along with the whole. The former denomination of The Ministry of Water, Forests and Environment has generated a hilarious effect among the foreign experts. You can not annex the parts to the whole using a comma in between.

The environment is a global concept, hierarchically superior to the factors that compound it. Even the term “surrounding environment” seems unappropriated as it rises the problem: surrounding what?

Is it possible that a subject isn't part of the environment it surrounds? In this sense, it seems more appropriate the usage of the term *ambient*. **The ambient** represents the material and social environment surrounding man and human communities, i.e. all that surrounds us from the environment we live in. The ambient is the environment that has a direct contact with the human being, the environment close to man. Singularizing, the *urban ambient* represents the environment of the settlement, of the urban locality or the environment of an urban entirety or neighborhood, as the *rural ambient* refers to the environment of the village. The ambient is translated into Romanian as *ambiance*, but it is also used as the French original, taken over as neologism.

### 3. *The development*

Multidimensional concept, represents the path of today worlds towards the tomorrow world, the unfolding and the evolution of the natural and social processes and phenomena in time. In the natural systems, the development takes place according to the natural laws, being controlled by mechanisms with retroaction which maintain the ecological equilibrium. In the social systems, the development follows the imperfect laws of society, in alternative periods of evolution, florescence, depression, revolution, retrogression, transition and leaps, being an imperfect development (with no decisive retroactions to the derangement phenomena, same as the human societies).

Unfortunately, the humanity doesn't react optimally and decisively to the processes that derange the right course of development as it happens in the natural ecosystems. Contrariwise, the human societies interfere, sometimes brutally, in the running of the fragile and delicate mechanisms of the nature which they do not know well enough, acting similarly to the mentality of hunters and exploiters towards the environment.

Or, it is necessary a decisive transition from the hunter mentality to the one of *the wise partnership of man and nature that he is part of*.

**The development represents a fundamental right of man**, regarding the permanent amelioration of his life environment, including creating its own material infrastructures (developments and facilities). But the development should not be taken as growth which is something else. Within the limits imposed by the environment, the growth is a natural fair process. An excessive growth, however, can lead to getting beyond the capacity of ecological support or getting out of the scale. Thus, the main cause for the degradation of the urban environment seems to be, besides pollution, mainly the getting out of the human scale of some developments or even of the city which extends without any control into the peri-urban territory. The concept of development had till recently a strong quantitative shade, following the profit rush, the economic efficiency, the growth at any price, though the qualitative aspect wasn't missing. At the beginning of this century and millennium, the development suffered a transition in condition being conceived on long term and not from hand to mouth.

This new type of development is what we can call *the sustainable development*.

#### **4. The sustainable development**

Represents the development which fulfilling the needs of the current generation doesn't interfere with the future generations in fulfilling their own options. The English term sustainable development also represents the development that sustains itself in time, the self reproducible development. The sustainable development concurrently connotes the equitable allocation of resources among generations and the amenable management of the natural fund needful for the development. The latest researches show that the development with no anchor in the ecological context is destined to fail. The world in course of development and transition unfortunately doesn't pay the necessary attention to figuring out the incorporated model of the future development based on ecological science which can correct sensibly and healthy, both for nature and man, this important process.

The development has to aim not only the economic growth and maximizing the income per inhabitant but also to search simultaneously for the quality of the people's life and their ambient. We don't have to aim only the increase of the material goods but also the increase in man's happiness and satisfaction that is derived from those and from spiritual, ethic and aesthetic values. Therefore, the development should be defined as an incorporated process of the human societies and the territorial support which allows the fulfillment of human and natural potentials, in different natural ambients and socio-political conditions.

The sustainable development is based on insuring the necessary equilibrium in getting and using the resources among generations, on instituting the equity of using the resources from the human existence areas and on promoting non polluting clean alternative and as much as possible cyclic technologies. The sustainable development parameters should be integrated in any macro economical and social decision regarding the existence of human communities and the development of the human settlements themselves.

For Romania, the sustainable development represents an economic, social and of course political priority. It can determine *burning out some slow phases* already covered by the industrial states and the leap towards the tomorrow information society, adopting under way together with the restructuring, the privatizing and the social economic and of the technologies and infrastructures modernization which are viable from the ecological point of view. The option for sustainable development implicates getting to a society based on consumption and thus based on the necessity to produce larger quantities of goods, to a society where the material life conditions are not opulent but being optimum the qualitative aspects of people's life are raised at a higher level harmonizing man's organic relationship with his ambient environment. Not incidentally the world economic crisis has determined taking decisive attitudes which request restructuring the capitalism itself, towards a vision centered on man and his feasible needs and not on promoting the consumption society with maximizing the profit, exaggerated financial speculations done with virtual money and other aberrations meant to perpetuate the wealthy glamour of some and the systematical depletion of the majority of the population. Changing the consumption patterns and on this base changing the production models will be the desideratum of the establishment of the sustainable development. But this request implicates another condition even harder to fulfill, the changing of mentalities. The Romanian society transition towards the market economy and democracy must get an articulate direction and a major target – objective, valid on long term, concerted with the European Community and world objectives. This direction must target uncompromisingly - *the sustainable development*, durable, capable to sustain itself on long term. The elaboration and the adoption by governmental decree, issued in December 2008, of the National Strategy for Sustainable Development doesn't solve the problem.

**The sustainable development must be assumed through an organic law or even through the Romanian Constitution.** Otherwise, it is just a story.

The lack of political will in assuming at high level the sustainable development or at least the gradual transition towards such a development reveals the limitations of the political class, centered on its own interests rather than on people's needs.

## 5. The environment – development relationship

The sustainable development concept is interdependent with the environment concept. The adjective sustainable implies the desideratum of the environmental protection in the development process. It cannot be truly sustainable, durable, a development which doesn't insure simultaneously the protection of the environment and of the habitats. The relationship environment – development is profound, with philosophical significations. The condition and the quality of the environment depend on the development mode. The condition of the urban/rural environment depends on the way the human, the spacial, the territorial and the socio-economic development are governed and done, on the nature of the technologies used by man. The development which is exclusively economic, intensive, energy consuming, using polluting technologies that are not competitive leads to the degradation of the ecological equilibrium.

### **The environment condition depends on the development mode**

There is a fundamental relationship between the two large contemporary concepts. The inversion of the binomial phrase *development – environment* into **environment and development** represents that we are becoming aware that in the development process, the environment, its quality must be put foremost. The development cannot just be an objective, it should aim the permanent conservation, protection and amelioration of our life environment. Integrating the environment into development assumed operational outline through the document called *AGENDA XXI, the sustainable development agenda*, with programs and terms for all the areas. The development which insures simultaneously the protection of the environment is *sustainable*. *Man belongs equally to the biosphere, perfectly integrating himself into the circuit of substances and energy, but also to the society – a young system that rapidly evolves as a conscious form of matter movement. Man is thus a being biologically and socially conditioned* [2].

## 6. The development problems

In the anthropic ecosystems, meaning in the human settlements, are problems of community development, of the human communities themselves, realized by their leaders regarding the dynamic of the development process and the necessity to insure the economic, social, communication and cultural infrastructure, all in an optimum ecological context. The lack of awareness regarding a culture of the development, in some local communities, especially rural ones, may block them in an anachronic and archaic phase [5]. Also, the problem of the community development of towns and cities is defined usually in a negative manner by cuts on the construction and restoration lists to which we add the social assistance problems regarding the street children, the old age people and the challenged

persons and eventually the pollution problems. Or, development means much more, it includes all the components of the urban environment (natural, built-up and social). By improving the social environment, the community development is assumed by the entire community, becoming a participative development that implies a participative democracy [4].

*The naturalness culture* established initially on Earth has been perpetuated for millennia, self-insuring an ecological equilibrium through cybernetic retroactive feedback mechanisms. But the naturalness started to be penetrated gradually by a new phenomenon, that of the human culture with an increased speed comparing to the naturalness. *The human culture* should have penetrated the primordial *naturalness* without unbalancing it but improving it. But their different speeds didn't allow attunement.

The main characteristic of the relationship society – biosphere is the continuous and ascendant transformation of the natural environment by making it artificial and by making the biological geographical chemical circuits linear. But, the biosphere and the society are inter-conditioning through man. But man has created for himself a new sphere, the techno-sphere, which represents the entirety of technological processes and material technology created by the human communities for the needs of their own habitat. Unfortunately, multiple technologies created by man are linear, scrap producers, pollutant, non-competitive, energy consuming, operating below capacity and unbalancing the ecological equilibrium and the natural self-adjustment circuits.

The environmental crisis was determined by the development mode, the pollutant technologies used by people. The ecological crisis is the signal that the delicate polished bond between life and its ambient has started to crush down. The essence of the ecological crisis is due to the difference between the strategy of the natural ecosystems which in ecological consecution increase the energetic entries by increasing their diversity and stability [1] and man's strategy which generates the decrease of the biological productivity, the biodiversity being consumed by its components.

The world ecological crisis with its critical alert signals such as the climatic changes and the ozone layer depletion called forth awareness and the top meeting of the world elite for the first time in 1972, at Stockholm, then in 1992, at Rio de Janeiro, in Brazil, at the World Conference of the United Nations Organization for *Environment and development*. The latest reunion took place in Johannesburg in 2002 (Rio + 10). The consultants and the high level decision-making authorities of the world countries have issued a reference book, even since 1992, the XXI Agenda of the sustainable development which includes 40 chapters regarding the same number of action areas.

One may thus say that we know what we have to do to stop the dangerous course of the development, but the inertia is extraordinary. Not even UNO or other

organizations were able to determine the decisive transition towards a sustainable development. At the most, the countries, such as Romania, issue their documents regarding the National Strategy, but don't effectively put it into practice. In such conditions we observe how the world ecological crisis deepens instead of being stopped.

In fact, *the ecological crisis has become a real cultural crisis of the contemporary civilization system* which had taken a wrong path. The only solution to stop the ecological crisis is to decisively turn to the sustainable development. The imperative of the sustainable development is determined on one hand by the obligations assumed through international conventions and by the necessity to fulfill the demands of the integration in Europe and on the other hand, by the necessity to stop the dangerous course of the current development. This is a top priority task since the '90s, according to the requests issued by the world scientific community at the beginning of this decade.

Romania's chance is related to the fast turning to this type of development, decision which is essentially political. Thus the concrete future steps towards a better future may be set, Romania being able to achieve through human creativity a leap in time to get out of backwardness. The leap may be achieved through a modern political doctrine, which has to adopt *the ecological vision of the world and life and the firm option for sustainable development, scientifically and strategically oriented*. The elaboration of the National Strategy for sustainable development is only the first step. One must act to include the imperative of the sustainable development directly in the Fundamental Law of the country, in the Romanian Constitution.

The continual dynamic character and the essential relationship of the development with the environment must be clearly underlined and the direction, *the attraction factor* of the development, the target, which is *the environment*, its quality and life quality, insured through the sustainable development is not always understood profoundly. **The quality of life depends on the quality of the environment.** This is why I chose this subject for the Conference of the Romanian Academy of Scientists.

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