SUSTAINABLE INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT

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Draft abstract

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On June 20-22 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development, the so called Rio+20 Conference was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil resulting in the lengthy declaration under the title “The Future We Want”. 20 years passed since the first Rio Conference when all countries met once again to discuss problems of sustainable development, fight against poverty, “green” economy.

Although Russian input into the Rio+20 Conference was arguable (we all still remember stance taken in the speech of Dmitri Medvedev), it is clear that all countries, Russia included, were set to elaborate measures to implement Rio+20 decisions. Importance of the Conference for Russia, according to head of the Russian working group Bedritskii, was to allow it to work out more comprehensive and cohesive understanding of the problem and strive to adopt unified strategy of sustainable development.

It was yet in Johannesburg in 2002 that countries agreed to elaborate national sustainable development strategies to start implementing after 2005. Since then international progress can rather be seen as enormous setback – over 300 million hectares of woods were exterminated, global emissions grew by 50%, population increased by 30% with around one sixths of that 7 billion people being undernourished.

Everyone realized urgent need for the new conference to be held, while its results are generally viewed in the spectrum between total failure and unsatisfactory moderate progress. What was important is that Rio+20 meeting started process of mapping out Sustainable development goals to replace MDGs after 2015. A new high level sustainable development forum was created within the UN GA framework – thus such Task force of the open composition was
created and consists currently of representatives of 30 countries. Also participants also turned to the UN Statistical Agency to think of the new indicators of sustainable development to complement GDP indexes.

**Russia’s role in global sustainable development**

Russia is radically different from many other countries on structure and relative capacity of national wealth. In advanced economies share of natural capital in national wealth usually doesn’t go over 10%, while for Russia this figure goes to 83-88%. Country's resource availability is unique, but main problem was and remains in low efficiency of natural resources use, which leads in turn to low efficiency of economy, traditionally oriented at “unlimited” national resource base. Energy efficiency remains very low, while investments continue concentrating in hydrocarbon sector and transport. While a lot of talks can be heard on modernization of economy, it is clear that the country (which is common to BRICS in this case) has lost favorable opportunities for structural reform of its economy. Environmental degradations was key to the country during high economic growth times, while absence of necessary reforms led to continuing pace of degradation along with frozen growth.

In this situation a number of experts single out priority themes for economic changes in order to save the situation and allow for environmentally friendly development:

- Balanced environmentally friendly restructuring of economy, innovative development;
- Managing socio-economic tasks based on principles of “green” economy;
- Rethinking system of taxes and subsidies for industries;
- Investment politics towards environmentally friendly development;
- Clear definition of property rights for resources, privatization mechanisms and pricing reform;
• Innovative forms of environmental financing – environmental banks, funds and insurance agencies

• Change in export policies and the role of commodities

Russia’s policy on sustainable development and the world

On the national level a number of steps were taken to work out needed strategy. While not much was achieved since then, the whole concept was well connected to already existing documents of Russia in those areas: Concept of Russia’s transition to sustainable development (signed by the President in 1996), Russian Sustainable Development Strategy (approved by Russian government), Environmental Doctrine (discussed during the Rio Summit and approved on August 31st 2002. While latest documents were adopted in the run up to the Rio+20 meeting and consist of “Fundamental principles of state policy in the area of environmental development of Russian Federation till 2030” (April 30, 2012) and Plan of Action of state policy in the area of environmental development of Russian Federation till 2030 that followed on December 18, 2012.

While main document in this area, reflecting national development goals remains the one adopted in 2008 – Concept of long-term socio-economic development of Russian Federation till 2020, which states as its primary goal necessity for “sustainable growth of welfare of Russian citizens, national security, dynamic economic development, strengthening Russian positions in the world community”.

It is believed today that Russia is eager to come out together with other BRICS countries as a leader for global sustainable development.

Moscow is leading its national politics on several directions to ensure itself being integral part of the general efforts for sustainable development:
• Ensuring environmentally friendly economic development of the country (while it is to be argued that notwithstanding documental basis for such policies not enough is being done to allow environmental concerns take primary attention)

• Science and education for sustainable development (with ecological education being of primary importance, not only within the framework of secondary and higher education, but LLL and the whole of the society)

• Health (human potential and formation of integrated system of health protection, technological advances and R&D)

• New “green” economy (modernization of current structure, with share of innovative production reaching 25-35%) and energy efficiency (remaining problems of higher energy intensity as opposed to advanced economies; as well as Energy Efficiency law of 2009 and its realization, Russian energy agency)

• Climate change and human development (extreme temperatures and their influence on population health, spreading of infectious diseases due to climate change; federal programs on carbon emissions; alternative energy; Sochi 2014 and carbon neutrality)

Today a lot of work is being done in order to consolidate global society around new goals, while a number of questions remain for its members. Russian government believes that most logical way would be to create a “menu” of different aims adapted to needs of least developed countries. According to Russia those goals should take into account regional and national conditions and peculiarities allowing for countries dwelling on their proper sets of aims and indicators. While a number of positions of Bank Ki Moon report prove unacceptable to Russia, among those move toward expanding the concept of sustainable development to include the so called “fourth dimension”, introducing political aspects of peace and security into the concept as its integral part.