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Sustainable Development Goals Implementation in Russia

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Abstract: The article presents an analysis of the UN sustainable development goals implementation, which in recent years have become the basic model for human development. They are an integral part of the modern world, their implementation will contribute to economic, social and political stability in the 21st century, this is the relevance of the study. The work also notes the problems and prospects for achieving the SDGs in Russia. The purpose of the work is to identify the features of the activities of the Russian Federation, which is necessary to understand the systematic approach of the country in the sustainable development goals implementation.

Keywords: Sustainable Development Goals, Russia, Poverty, Quality Education, Gender Equality, Economic Growth

1 Introduction

In 2015, the United Nations adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development under Resolution 70/1 "Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" [1] (September 25, 2015). The programme is a 17-goal plan to eradicate poverty, conserve the planet's resources and ensure well-being:

1. No poverty;
2. Zero hunger;
3. Good health and well-being;
4. Quality education;
5. Gender equality;
6. Clean water and sanitation;
7. Affordable and clean energy;
8. Decent work and economic growth;
9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure;
10. Reduced inequalities;
11. Sustainable cities and communities;
12. Responsible consumption and production;
13. Climate action;



- 14. Life below water;
- 15. Life on land;
- 16. Peace, justice and strong institutions;
- 17. Partnerships for the goals [2].

Each goal contains a set of indicators to be achieved within 15 years. To achieve them joint efforts of governments, civil society and business are required.

The implementation of each SDG is important for the modern world community for the transition of mankind to a new stage of development and the elimination of global problems of our time, which have become an integral part of the social, economic and political life of society. In the 21st century, the world needs them more than ever.

It is important to pay attention to the fact that the concept of sustainable development, which is being implemented in a number of states, is one of the most widespread and supported in the world.

The Russian legislation contains a section "The Concept of the Transition of the Russian Federation to Sustainable Development" [3].

In recent years, the Russian Federation has demonstrated tangible progress on each of the SDGs. But against the background of countries that lead positions in the ranking of sustainable development, such as Sweden, Denmark and Finland (Figure 1), Russia's results do not seem significant. In 2020, Russia ranks 57th in the sustainable development rating, gaining 71.92 points. First, it is necessary to identify the reasons for the slow progress of our country in the implementation of the SDGs.

Rank	Country	Score	Performance by SDG
1	Sweden	84.72	
2	Denmark	84.56	
3	Finland	83.77	

Figure 1

Rankings: The overall performance of all 193 UN Member States (2020) [4]

Experts include among the most successfully implemented SDGs in Russia by 2020: SDG 1 "No poverty", SDG 4 "Quality education" and SDG 8 "Decent work and economic growth". Positive dynamics can be traced in the implementation of the goal, designed to improve social indicators: SDG 5 "Gender Equality" [4].

The development of social factors contributes to the improvement of economic, political and environmental indicators of sustainable development, they are the basis for a favorable life in society, quality education and, subsequently, economic sustainability, which the Russian Federation is striving for.



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Further in the article, we will take turns examining the most successfully implemented SDGs in Russia.

2 Implementation of SDG 1 "No Poverty"

In realizing human capital, the Russian Federation has made progress in SDG 1 “No poverty”.

In terms of basic parameters, Russia has achieved the goal of eliminating extreme poverty. The effective policy in the field of combating poverty that is being pursued in the country envisages reducing the national poverty level by at least two times by 2024 (in 2018, the share of the poor with incomes below the subsistence level was 12.6%) [5].

Since a large group of the poor in Russia consists of families with children, the emphasis in the work to reduce the level of poverty is made, including on the withdrawal from poverty of families of this category. In recent decades, positive trends have been observed in Russia in the field of social protection of certain groups of the population and the creation of new support mechanisms for these purposes, such as a "social contract", which provides social support to citizens when implementing the latest measures for social adaptation.

Thus, for 2018:

- 104.3 thousand social contracts were signed, including 62.6 thousand (60%) with low-income families;
- 308.8 thousand people received state aid on the basis of the social contract, including 40% - urban residents and 60% - rural residents;
- 19.5 thousand people (33.3%) overcame a difficult life situation on the basis of a social contract;
- 103 thousand people (35.1%) of low-income citizens improved their financial situation, overcame poverty on the basis of a social contract [5].

According to the voluntary national report of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 500,000 people were lifted out of poverty in a year. According to preliminary data for the 1st quarter of 2019, the population with cash incomes below the subsistence level was 18.1 million people or 12.3% of the total population [6].

Despite the fact that, on the whole, Russia has managed to achieve the most important goal of sustainable development - the elimination of extreme poverty (there is practically no population in Russia with an average disposable income of less than US \$ 1.9 per day), the problem of poverty for the Russian Federation remains urgent. If in 2018 the number of the poor (that is, the population with incomes below the subsistence level) amounted to 12.6% of the total population,



then by the second quarter of 2019, according to Russian Federal Agency of State Statistics, it amounted to 18.6 million people, or 12.7% of the total population, and also increased in comparison with the 1st quarter of 2019 (18.1 million people, or 12.3%). This is due to the fact that the cost of living in the second quarter of 2019 increased by 7.1% compared to the same period last year, while inflation in annual terms was 5%, and the growth of average per capita money income of the population was 5,6% [7].

The number of Russians with incomes below the subsistence level in the second quarter of 2020 increased by 1.3 million people compared to the same period last year and amounted to 20 million. According to Russian Federal Agency of State Statistics, only 13.5% of the country's inhabitants were below the poverty line. And this is 0.8% more than in the first quarter of the year. The growth in the number of the poor was facilitated by the decrease in real incomes of the population due to the drop in business activity during the pandemic [8]. Nevertheless, despite the fact that Russia has achieved the goal of eliminating poverty, there are still significant social problems in the country that directly depend on poverty indicators.

The problem of social inequality remains relevant for the Russian Federation. The share of the population with an average per capita money income was below the average per capita level of money income, and remained stable in 2015–2018. At the same time, the share of the population with incomes below the subsistence level slightly decreased in 2017–2018.

In accordance with Decree 204 [9] one of the national development goals of Russia is to ensure sustainable growth in real incomes of citizens, as well as an increase in the level of pension provision above the inflation rate. With regard to the material support of citizens of the older generation, from January 1, 2010, in order to bring the material support of non-working pensioners to the level of the pensioner's subsistence minimum, established in the constituent entity of the Russian Federation, social supplements are provided for pensions.

At the same time, the current pension payments for people over working age are still insufficient. This may be evidenced by the prevalence of work among people over working age. According to the Pension Fund of the Russian Federation, as of January 1, 2019, the total number of pensioners is about 43.9 million people, of which about 9.7 million people are employed. The share of working pensioners in the total number of pensioners registered in the Pension Fund of the Russian Federation has slightly decreased and amounted to 20.4% as of January 1, 2019 (21.1% as of January 1, 2018). After retirement, every fifth pensioner continues to work [10].



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3 Implementation of SDG 4 "Quality education"

The goal of the Russian Federation is to ensure that students acquire the knowledge and skills they need to promote sustainable development.

Education in Russia is a priority for national policy. The Constitution of the Russian Federation guarantees the right of everyone to education and determines the compulsory nature of general education for all.

At the end of 2018, 47 Russian universities were represented in institutional, industry and subject rankings, including 19 participants in the program to improve the competitiveness of the leading universities of the Russian Federation. The number of Russian universities in the TOP-200 of the world's leading universities has reached 18. By the end of 2019, 48 domestic universities are included in the top 500 world rankings.

The total number of students enrolled in higher education programs in 2018 was 4.2 million, in 2019 - 4.1 million. The share of women among students in 2012-2018 averaged 54%, in 2019 - 53% (in 2010-2011 - 56-57%) [5].

To expand the coverage of the population with additional education by the national project "Education", adopted in 2018, it is planned to create a platform for continuous education (vocational training and additional education), introduce grant support programs for higher education organizations, and train relevant scientific and pedagogical workers. This project includes 10 federal projects:

- "Modern school";
- "The success of every child";
- "Support for families with children";
- "Digital educational environment";
- "Teacher of the future";
- "Young professionals";
- "New opportunities for everyone";
- "Social activity";
- "Export of education";
- "Social elevators for everyone" [11].

4 Implementation of SDG 5 "Gender Equality"

At the moment, the issue of gender equality in Russia is not so acute, because equality of men and women is guaranteed by Russian legislation.



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In 2019, the participation rate of women in the labor force was 55.4% (men - 70.6%), the employment rate - 52.9% (men - 67.3%), the unemployment rate - 4.4% (men - 4,8%) [12].

For gender equality, Russia is implementing the National Strategy for Action for Women 2017-2022 [13].

This strategy is aimed, among other things, at reducing the gender pay gap (in 2019, the ratio of women's wages to men's wages was 72.1%).

In 2018, the index of women's entrepreneurial activity increased (up to 69%), the number of socially significant projects implemented by women, as well as the number of women volunteers and charitable organizations, increased. [14]

One of the forms of implementation of women's social activity is women's public organizations, such as:

- *The Eurasian Women's Forum* is a major international platform for discussing the role of women in modern society. The organizers of the forum are the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation and the Interparliamentary Assembly of the CIS member states. In September 2018, the Second Eurasian Women's Forum was held on the theme "Women for Global Security and Sustainable Development". Within the framework of the forum, for the first time, new formats of discussions were organized, such as a meeting of the International Discussion Club of Women Governors, a summit of women diplomats, a presentation of the BRICS Women's Business Alliance. The issues of improving the economic status of women, promoting and supporting women's entrepreneurship in the digital economy, preserving women's health, women's participation in the development of agriculture, science and sports are considered. Third Eurasian Women's Forum will be held in 2021 [15].

- *The BEST project (Business Efficiency and Success Target)* has been carried out annually since 2016 within the framework of the APEC forum, by the Ministry of Economic Development of Russia in conjunction with the OPORA Russia Committee for Supporting Women's Entrepreneurship. The project selects the most effective projects of women's entrepreneurship from the constituent entities of the Russian Federation, which can compete on international platforms and in the future can scale as the best experience of Russia and the most successful business models [16].



5 Implementation of SDG 8 "Decent Work and Economic Growth"

The main problem in realizing this goal for the country is stagnation in the Russian economy, which depends on raw materials exports, and therefore on oil prices, which are ruled by the international market. At the same time, the world is undergoing an energy revolution and it is very likely that by 2030 oil and gas will no longer be the most important sources of energy.

Another problem for Russia is labor productivity, which is 2.5 times lower than in developed countries. In addition to improving the qualifications of employees, increasing the number of high-performing jobs requires tools to improve labor efficiency, such as informatization, automation and computerization [17].

To address this problem, the Russian economy has undertaken a number of structural reforms. They included such components as:

- transition to a floating exchange rate;
- introduction of the inflation targeting regime;
- maintaining a responsible budget policy (introducing new “budget rules” in relation to oil and gas revenues) [5].

As a result of these reforms, in recent years, the country has seen positive changes in the economy, such as an acceleration in GDP growth rates (from 0.3% in 2016 to 2.3% in 2018) and household incomes (growth in real average monthly wages workers' wages increased from 0.7% in 2016 to 6.8% in 2018). At the same time, there was also a decrease in unemployment (from 5.5% in 2016 to 4.8% in 2018 among the population aged 15 to 72). The development of the Russian economy stimulates the creation of new jobs. For 2008-2018 about 1.4 million additional jobs were created in Russia.

A separate area of government policy and development is to stimulate productivity growth in the Russian economy. The share of highly skilled workers in the total number of skilled workers in recent years has remained above 30% (in 2018 - 32.3%). In turn, the index of changes in labor productivity shows a positive trend - for 2016-2018 it grew from 0.2% to 2.3% [5].

Another positive factor in the conduct of social policy in Russia is the effective practice of developing employment and professional growth for different strata and groups of the population (adherence to the principle of “leaving no one behind”) [18]. For example, Russia has established the practice of assisting in employment and developing the availability of financial services for persons with disabilities. Thus, quotas for hiring people with special needs are established: for employers with more than 100 employees - from 2% to 4% of the average number of employees, and for employers with 35 to 100 employees - 3%. Also, support for



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persons with disabilities is carried out by business and on an initiative basis - in Russia there is a "Business Council on Disability Issues" [20] (includes more than 40 companies), whose goal is to highlight the problem of disability, assist in the employment of people with disabilities and support in adaptation to the workplace.

Conclusions

Based on the results of studies of the sustainable development goals presented in the article, it can be concluded that Russia has made significant progress in the areas of economic growth and the provision of employment and employment for various groups and strata of the population, gender equality, the quality of education and poverty elimination.

As the indicators of human potential improve, namely: the elimination of poverty, social inequality, the opportunity for the entire population to receive a quality education, Russia every year strengthens its position in the United Nations SDG rating.

The range of social issues is the basis for the further development of economic, political and environmental indicators in the country.

However, despite the fact that the Russian legislation contains a section "Concept of the Russian Federation's Transition to Sustainable Development", this is not enough to successfully further implement the SDGs in the Russian Federation. The authors believe that it is necessary to develop detailed documentation for each of the goals.

In conclusion, it should be emphasized that in order for Russia to achieve success in the implementation of all sustainable development goals, it is necessary that all spheres of public life in the country prioritize the SDGs and focus on the leading countries in this matter.

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