

Environmental preservation or economic development?

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In the end of 20th century the mankind has faced serious global environmental problems. Ozone layer depletion, global warming, wildlife extinction are obviously caused by uncontrolled economic development. However, economic development has a different meaning for rich countries and those, which we usually call the 'Third world'. A farmer from Germany can destroy his crop because it is cheaper than to pay taxes. At the same time a Chinese farmer can not afford more than a cup of rice daily for himself. In this respect economic development is a question of survival for poor countries. The question is whether such development is possible without impact on environment.

From the beginning of industrial age in late 19th century economic growth was always causing pollution. Almost every new technology invented from automobile to nuclear power plant was followed by massive destruction of the nature. However, many modern technologies are more environmentally friendly. For example, computer software production does not need any natural resources (except the electric power) and cause no pollution at all. Informational technology production increases rapidly, though it does not cause an impact on the environment.

Natural resources exhaustion is one of the most important global problems of economic development. It is known that in the nearest fifty years almost all natural resources will be used to produce energy. Then further economic development will be impossible. Though the resources of fossil fuel are quite limited, there is still a way for producing energy from the so-called renewable sources such as wind or sun power. Another way to produce energy without fossil fuel is energy efficiency. For example in Ukraine, which has a transitional economy, it is possible to save up to sixty per cent of all consumed electricity by introducing more efficient technologies. Thus, development of more efficient technologies will help to preserve the environment and at the same time it will create more working places and thus lead to economic growth.

In the last decades we can see a new phenomenon in the economic structure of the world. Multi-national corporations have aggressively invaded the international market. Their main policies are very aggressive advertising aimed at consumption raising and a careless attitude towards the environment. Multinationals are often using environmentally 'dirty' technologies. Though these corporations cannot be banned, it is possible to fight with them with their own weapon – take the economic measures to protect the environment. Introduction of special taxes could be a good solution. Several years ago such taxes were introduced in Lviv region, Ukraine, to recycle the plastic package which was mostly produced by Coca-Cola. As a result, local authorities limited the single-use package production and instead encourage the production of more environmental friendly package that can be used several times. Though it is not possible to prohibit the activity of the multinationals, the policies of these corporations can be changed by local communities.

Though most big ecological disasters have happened in well-developed countries, a country in transition can hardly protect itself from the consequences of such a disaster. In the last year the case with the Tysa river pollution we can see that neither Romania which caused the catastrophe nor the neighboring countries of the region could effectively solve the problem. For the nearest years the Tysa will stay lifeless. Aside from environmental pollution the so-called 'third world' countries are facing numerous other problems like famine or massive disease outbreaks. Of course, the international community always tries to deliver humanitarian aid and medicine to suffering regions but this is only a temporary solution. The best way to help the poor countries to survive is to develop their economies. This will be the most effective solution to prevent famine and epidemics.

Countries in transition need further economic development. This is the question of survival for them. However, the uncontrolled economy growth may cause massive pollution and even global ecological disasters. Thus, the development of industry in future should be followed by certain measures like special taxes aimed to protect the environment. The development of modern environmentally friendly technologies and renewable energy production can help to avoid global problems in future. In fact, the future of the world depends on a way of economic growth that will be chosen by developing countries.