



Doc. 2

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH CITIZEN'S PARTICIPATION

The concept of sustainable development is not new. The need for sustainable forest management practices was recognized in Europe in the eighteenth century; sustainable development existed in the conservation philosophy of the Theodore Roosevelt Administration in the United States (1901-1909) and in its concern for rational use of natural resources. More recently, the United Nations has endorsed the Sustainable Development Goals to transform the world by 2030, encompassing economic development, social development, and environmental protection. Development is the goal of any policy. This is the concern of all governments, especially since it is now considered a fundamental human right.

But development is not reduced to the growth or progression of economic indicators; it is a global, economic, social, political and cultural process that tends to improve the well-being and quality of life of the entire population and the self-fulfilment of the individual. The basis of the participation of all citizens in the development effort and the fair and equitable sharing of the resulting benefits.

A-CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION:

Sustainable development is everyone's business. It is essential that the citizen is aware of the issues and sees himself as a full participant in this process. To be able to play this role, it must be trained - from an early age within the framework of our education system - and informed, that it must become aware of the importance of the interactions between the economic, social and economic domains, the impact of his daily actions. Its participation in decision-making processes concerning it must be strengthened, notably through public debate, to better understand the concepts we will begin first with sustainable development and then with citizenship.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Sustainable development aims to bring together social aspects, environmental, economic and cultural aspects of development as a cross-cutting principle democracy and stakeholder participation. It refers to key societal and political issues: debate, democratically develop and implement a new model of development and therefore society, we will determine the definition of sustainable development.

DEFINITION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

"Sustainable development meets the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". This is the definition given to this concept in the *Brundtland* Report in 1987. As the Swiss Sustainable Development Council *SSDC* (1997) points out, this consideration of needs' is based on an ethical basis only. What is a need? Or rather, where does the superfluous stop and where does the need begin? The question is delicate and leaves a clear ambiguity. It even implies another question, namely, which has the right to decide what a need is.

To this concept a definition that summarizes its aims: "Rethinking the new foundations of a planetary society that can guarantee our survival and our historical reproduction in a framework of harmony and reciprocity with the environment". This definition shows that it is not enough to integrate the ecological aspect in the context of economic production, but that it is a question of rethinking the essential foundations of our society. In effect, individualistic values

are lost in favour of historical reproduction, in other words, the survival of the human race. The planetary society project implies a global, systemic, non-geocentric view, which forces us to rethink notions such as solidarity, equity, sharing. Harmony and reciprocity with the environment require the inclusion of ecological values in economic performance.

CITIZENSHIP AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Citizen participation is closely linked to the concepts of sustainable development and democratic governance. The concept of good governance in itself bears the democratic essence through the mechanism of institutionalized citizen participation. The concept of "citizen participation" has gone through changing contexts, bringing different visions of citizen participation into different spaces of participation. Three components make consensus: political citizen participation in the electoral process, democratic debates in the public and social and civic space through action in social movements or associations.

DEFINITION OF CITIZENSHIP AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

The notion of citizenship traditionally refers to the membership of an individual in a political community defined in relation to the context of the nation-state. This citizenship implies both a sense of belonging to a national political community and a form of action with implications in terms of rights, duties, and responsibilities. This being so, the notion of national citizenship is often controversial, with different interpretations, not only in divided societies but also in the case of the relationship of indigenous peoples and other cultural minorities with the state. In addition, citizenship rights are often denied to migrants, especially refugees. Any attempt to transpose the notion of citizenship at the global level is therefore problematic, in both its legal and psychosocial dimensions.

Citizenship is the state or the quality of citizen. It allows an individual to be recognized as a member of a society, a city in ancient times, or a state today, and to participate in political life.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AS A MECHANISM FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: MODALITIES AND CHALLENGES

There is no sustainable development without citizen participation. The participation and engagement of citizens and their stakeholders is necessary to define a shared vision of sustainable development and ensure its environmental, social and economic sustainability.

The challenge of a development model aimed at harmonizing the economy with social and environmental needs requires the active participation of citizens in public issues. Public participation in development decisions is essential for achieving sustainable and possible solutions. The modern democratic life requires an active role of the population and requires the participation of the members of the community. It should no longer be true that those who are governed act only to elect, and, regardless of the outcome, they are governed without the possibility of interaction with their representatives. It is time to add the idea of participation to the concept of representative democracy.

The basic principles of the Rio Declaration outline some basic building blocks that must be present in all participatory democracies. Therefore, to participate effectively, people must have:
A) Access to decision-making B) Access to public information C) Access to justice.

A. ACCESS TO DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES

Democracy is indirect when people decide exclusively through their representatives in government bodies; whereas direct democracy is when all citizens are assembled to decide. This kind of democracy existed in some cities of ancient Greece.

Nowadays, as an important tool of democracy, we are confronted with the development of the concept of active citizenship and public participation in the decision-making process. That's why it's so important to work with citizens to be active in everyday life and to participate in governance. On the other hand, governments must be aware of sharing their responsibilities with citizens and inviting them to make decisions. Decision-making processes will likely lead to failure if citizen participation is not guaranteed.

There are different forms and institutional mechanisms of participation. Each mechanism has its particular characteristics, strengths and weaknesses. It is difficult to say whether some forms of participation are better than others; in general, the viability and effectiveness of any

form or mechanism depends on the political, social, economic and cultural context in which they are developed. In summary, some of the mechanisms for participation are: 1) public hearings, 2) participatory budget processes, 3) referendums.

A-1. PUBLIC AUDIENCE

The purpose of the public hearing is to promote and facilitate communication between government authorities and the public. Thus, the authorities take into account the information, opinions or objections expressed by the public at the time of the decision making, thus reinforcing the decision. From a legal point of view, public hearings are not binding. Comments and remarks expressed by the public do not oblige the authorities to act in a specific way. In some cases, the authorities are obliged to justify their decisions and provide an explanation if they do not follow public opinion. Usually, a public hearing is a formal meeting between citizens and government authorities to discuss a particular topic or any other type of decision to be made by the government. These meetings take place during the decision-making process. In general, public hearings are held at the legislative and executive levels.

A-2. PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PROCESSES

One of the revolutionary processes of public participation is its participatory budget, which guarantees a public accountability instrument allowing citizens to participate in the development and control of the state budget used quite often in Europe, mainly at the municipal level. . Normally, in town halls of municipalities, authorities and the public meet to reach an agreement on how to transfer public priorities into public policy agendas .A participatory budget provides citizens with a mechanism to control or influence the government's use of public resources. Some of the key criteria identified for the implementation of the public participation tool are:

- Citizen participation must be guaranteed, without the need to belong to a particular organization or association.
- The process of participation must be open and deal with general issues, ranging from how the state spends financial resources to different forms of financing expenditure.
- Public participation should also include management control and accountability.
- In principle, the opinions given in the participatory budget process are not binding.

A-3. REFERENDUM

This type of public participation has a binding effect. Civil servants must be forced if citizens demand that the problem be solved by majority vote through a broad process of participation in decision-making Government authorities must accept and implement citizens' decisions. A referendum is a widespread form of semi-direct democracy. Citizens vote for or against a proposal to establish a new standard or to amend or revoke an existing standard. It is important to distinguish this type of participation from those that are not binding, such as public hearings .Countries that use referendums establish the legal criteria, forms and subjects that may be involved in this type of participation on a case-by-case basis.

B. ACCESS TO PUBLIC INFORMATION

The public should have access to meetings at the community level and notifications should be posted in accordance with the law before meetings. It is important to give citizens the opportunity to give their opinion on local decisions before they enter into force. Citizens need access to information to choose the most viable mechanism to deal with the problem. For this reason, most modern democracies have institutionalized mechanisms related to specific ways of accessing information.

The effectiveness of public participation is directly related to the information available. In many cases, public officials have deliberately neglected to engage the public by not informing the public about the decision-making process. Lack of information or misinformation greatly affects the quality of public participation. The existence of tools for public participation and citizen control is not enough, citizens inquire about issues related to a problem to be solved, a project or a policy.

C. ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Access to justice is one of the ways in which citizens can enforce legislation. Although participation has social, cultural and other effects, we will only discuss the legal effects of

public participation. Citizens are required to use all areas of law to increase their participation to the extent that public opinion on important issues increases the transparency necessary to ensure the exercise of a balanced power directed towards civic concerns.

In this way, individuals can take legal action or initiate an administrative procedure to defend their right. Legal capacity is the ability of a person to demonstrate a sufficient legal interest in a case to enable him to take the case to court. When defending individual rights, such as the right to life, dignity, liberty, property, etc., the individual must prove that his or her value or good (life, dignity, freedom, property, etc.) is threatened or damaged. In this sense, the individual is considered to have a just and sufficient reason to defend his right.

C-1. ACTION OF PUBLIC INTEREST

An action of public interest is a type of legal action that legally recognizes all residents of the state defending certain rights or collective interests, such as the protection of the environment, the protection of the national heritage, etc. In this way, it is necessary to: prove that personal and direct interests in the property are exempted from the application for legal protection. Legislation in different countries presents various methods of public interest action for the legal protection of the rights of the common good.

C-2. LEGAL STATUS OF GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Traditionally, the state assumed the role of defending and protecting the broader interests of society through public servants, such as the long-time attorney general and, more recently, the mediator. At present, legislation in different countries has broadened the scope of powers and responsibilities of these sectors to protect the public good, such as the right to a healthy environment, consumer rights, and so on.

C-3. LEGAL STATUS OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGOs)

A several number of States recognize the right of action of non-governmental organizations or associations whose objectives are to protect and conserve the environment. In some cases, the legislation differs with respect to formal requests from NGOs to act as authorized applicants. Argentina, Spain, Brazil, Germany and others are among the states that recognize the legality of organizations defending collective rights. As mentioned briefly above, these judicial mechanisms differ from country to country. Many different countries have defined the legal status of individuals and NGOs with respect to the right to a clean and healthy environment.

CONCLUSION

As briefly discussed in this paper, it is important to ensure public participation as an important tool for promoting sustainable development. The three main components were mentioned as important for enhancing citizen participation, such as access to decision-making, information and justice. It is important to develop and support the institutional structures, policies and procedures that promote and facilitate, within all levels of government and civil society, the interaction in sustainable development decisions and encourage change within communities. Existing institutions in order to lay the groundwork for a direct dialogue with long innovative solutions.

Efforts should be made to give mass communications an effective role in communication between governments and all sectors of civil society. Meaningful public participation in sustainable development decision-making depends on laws and regulations that ensure timely access to relevant information, decision-making and the justice system. That is why it is so important to ensure the implementation of legal and regulatory frameworks that ensure the participation of citizens in decisions on sustainable development.

To ensure public participation, it is also important to create, strengthen and support formal and informal public participation opportunities and mechanisms in which sustainable development activities are discussed and decided upon. These mechanisms should also ensure that the results of the participatory process are communicated to all stakeholders.

QUESTIONS:

- TRANSLATE THE UNDERLINED TERMS INTO ARABIC.
- GIVE AN ABSTRACT (IN ARABIC) TO THE TOPIC.