

SUSTAINABILITY, A MULTIFACETED CONCEPT.

The first definition in temporal order of sustainable development was the one contained in the Brundtland report in 1987 and later retaken from the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), according to which: "The development is sustainable if it meets the needs of the present generations without compromising the possibility of the future generations to meet their needs." The central element of this definition is the need to search a equity of an intergenerational type: the future generations have the same rights of the present ones. In the second analysis, can be also seen a infragenerational equity, i.e. people belonging to different political, economic, social and geographical realities within the same generation have the same rights. This statement introduces the theme of sustainability between production factors. The production of goods and services of a country is made possible by the use of physical (capital represented by machines), human (labour force) and environmental production factors. The proportions of these factors depend on many aspects: the availability of certain technology, the development level of the country, the costs of various factors. Within this optical the concept of substitutability takes place, about which we can consider four positions:

- Very weak sustainability (VWS) (position of abundance)
- Weak sustainability (WS) (accommodating position)
- Strong sustainability (SS) (community position)
- Very strong sustainability (VSS) (radical position)

If for the proponents of the weak sustainability a growth without limits is admissible weak and in general the growth itself is considered as a positive factor, for the supporters of the strong sustainability the economic growth is seen as an element to curb and control. There is a point beyond which the industrial activities, pollution and other human activities, if carried out in a non-responsible way, can cause not remediable damage not only to the environment that surrounds us, but to the entire ecosystem (carrying capacity). The policies oriented to an environmental and territorial improvement have been done by man for man, in a long term vision. Here is, therefore, the need to guarantee conditions of human welfare (security, health, education, etc.)