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REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA



COUNTRY PROFILE



UNITED NATIONS

INTRODUCTION - 2002 COUNTRY PROFILES SERIES

Agenda 21, adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, underscored the important role that States play in the implementation of the Agenda at the national level. It recommended that States consider preparing national reports and communicating the information therein to the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) including, activities they undertake to implement Agenda 21, the obstacles and challenges they confront, and other environment and development issues they find relevant.

As a result, in 1993 governments began preparing national reports for submission to the CSD. After two years of following this practice, the CSD decided that a summarized version of national reports submitted thus far would be useful. Subsequently, the CSD Secretariat published the first Country Profiles series in 1997 on the occasion of the five-year review of the Earth Summit (Rio + 5). The series summarized, on a country-by-country basis, all the national reports submitted between 1994 and 1996. Each Profile covered the status of all Agenda 21 chapters.

The purpose of Country Profiles is to:

- Help countries monitor their own progress;
- Share experiences and information with others; and,
- Serve as institutional memory to track and record national actions undertaken to implement Agenda 21.

A second series of Country Profiles is being published on the occasion of the World Summit on Sustainable Development being held in Johannesburg from August 26 to September 4, 2002. Each profile covers all 40 chapters of Agenda 21, as well as those issues that have been separately addressed by the CSD since 1997, including trade, energy, transport, sustainable tourism and industry.

The 2002 Country Profiles series provides the most comprehensive overview to date of the status of implementation of Agenda 21 at the national level. Each Country Profile is based on information updated from that contained in the national reports submitted annually by governments.

Preparing national reports is often a challenging exercise. It can also be a productive and rewarding one in terms of taking stock of what has been achieved and by increasing communication, coordination and cooperation among a range of national agencies, institutions and groups. Hopefully, the information contained in this series of Country Profiles will serve as a useful tool for learning from the experience and knowledge gained by each country in its pursuit of sustainable development.

NOTE TO READERS

The 2002 Country Profiles Series provides information on the implementation of Agenda 21 on a country-by-country and chapter-by-chapter basis (with the exception of chapters 1 and 23, which are preambles). Since Rio 1992, the Commission on Sustainable Development has specifically addressed other topics not included as separate chapters in Agenda 21. These issues of trade, industry, energy, transport and sustainable tourism are, therefore, treated as distinct sections in the Country Profiles. In instances where several Agenda 21 chapters are closely related, for example, chapters 20 to 22 which cover environmentally sound management of hazardous, solid and radioactive wastes, and chapters 24 to 32 which refer to strengthening of major groups, the information appears under a single heading in the Country Profile Series. Lastly, chapters 16 and 34, which deal with environmentally sound management of biotechnology, and transfer of environmentally sound technology, cooperation, capacity-building respectively, are presented together under one heading in those Country Profiles where information is relatively scarce.

At the release of this publication, the Republic of Moldova had not submitted its Country Profile in the standard format requested by the Secretariat. Due to the fact that the format differs from that utilized by most countries, inconsistencies could arise when including the information in the database currently under development. For this reason, we appeal to countries to present their Country Profiles in the standard format provided by the Secretariat which has been made available in this CD-Rom for ease of reference. Once the Country Profile has been properly formatted and submitted to the Secretariat, it will appear on our web page: <http://www.un.org/esa/agenda21/natlinfo>

**National Report on the Implementation of Agenda 21 in Moldova
(Brief version to be presented at the Summit)**

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List of persons and institutions who contributed to the formulation of the report

This Report was coordinated and formulated under the aegis of the National Preparatory Committee for the Johannesburg Summit (created through the decision No. 967 of 10.09.2001) based on the information provided by the ministries and departments, national strategic documents, scientific reports, etc.

General information

1.1. Physic and geographic conditions

The Republic of Moldova is situated in the south-east of Europe, between the northern latitudes of 45° and 48° and eastern longitude of 26° and 30° on an area of 33.8 thousand km². It had direct access to lower Danube and borders in the west and in the north with Romania and with Ukraine in the east and south. The territory of the country is mainly hilly, slowly slanted from the north-west to south-east. There is a wide range of soils, chernozyoms prevailing.

The hydrographic network of the country consists of 3,260 rivers and small rivers with a total length of over 16,000 km. The main rivers are Danube, Put and Nistru, rivers Raut, Bic and Botna, located in the Black sea basin. There are also 3,532 lakes and basins with a total area of 333 km.

The Republic of Moldova has temperate continental climate. Average temperatures constitute -3.5°C in January and +21.4°C in July. The climate is characterized by a relatively big number of warm and sunny days – 160-190 per year. The atmospheric flows are characterized by the transition of cold air flows from the Atlantic to the east and warm and wet air from the Mediterranean Sea. Sometimes, cold and dry air flows come from the north.

Most of the risks related to the meteorological regime for human activities are temperature fluctuations and frequent droughts. Annual average rains are lower from the north-west to south-east, decreasing from 620 to 450 mm/per year.

Moldova has a population of 4.293 million people out of which 45% live in urban areas and 55% live in rural areas. The population density constitutes 127 person/km².

The territory of the country is exposed to unfavorable natural processes and phenomena: erosion, landslides, earthquakes, draughts, storms, floods, ice storms, freeze, etc.

1.2. Natural and climate resources

Natural resources represent an essential component of the national heritage. Its exploration determines to a great extent the environment status: the volume and degree of resource utilization as well as of quality factors of environment. In the context of economic security, the Republic of Moldova has enough pedo-climate resources that constitute a valuable recycling potential for the sustainable development of a good agriculture. As far as recyclable natural resources as concerned, such as construction materials or raw materials for its production, these with few exceptions have a local importance. The absence of energy resources and ore limits the variety of economic and consumption activities which implies an adequate economic policy.

Water resources. The average multi-annual stock of the rivers in the Republic of Moldova is estimated at 13.2 billion m³ with a non-uniform distribution in time and space. This is the average theoretic resource of shallow waters. The Nistru River covers 77-80% of these resources. The reserve of underground waters is estimated at 2.8 billion m³. The conclusion is that the theoretical water potential constitutes about 16 billion m³, which means 3, 700 m³/inhabitant per year. The existing potential constitutes about 1,100 m³/inhabitant per year, which ranks the Republic of Moldova among the countries with relatively water resources.

Water management in the Republic of Moldova is still complicated and unbalanced and does not meet the new requirements for resource allocation and increasing efficiency of the protection services of the water ecosystems. The water supply systems with potable, domestic and irrigation purposes are continuously deteriorating everywhere, which generates big losses of water in the distribution process.

Water used to be considered an unlimited source and without economic value. Efforts were made to find and use sources but not also for ensuring the quantitative and qualitative regeneration of waters. The maintenance of the sustainable regeneration capacity of water reserves requires a different approach to the respective management. Thus, the Basic Treaty of the

EU stipulates the integral management of water resources (shallow and underground) on hydrographic pools. In the Republic of Moldova these principles are not applied yet. The legislation in the field is not adjusted to the international norms. Judicial cooperation with the neighbor countries is not finalized. Economic tools are old and inefficient for the motivational reshaping of the consumers' behavior.

Land and soil resources are as important as water resources. The area of the land fund of the Republic of Moldova constituted 33.8 thousand km² at the end of 1998 with the following structure per utilization categories: agricultural land – 75.5%, forests and other forestry plantations – 12.5%, other categories of lands – 12%. Perennial plantations – mainly vineyards and fruit gardens that are regularly processed and undergo chemical treatment – constitute 14.5% of agricultural land. Thus areas under intensive processing constitute 2/3 of the total areas of the country and 85.3% of the area of agricultural lands. Pastures and hay fields constitute 14.7% of the agricultural lands.

During the transition to the market economy, as a result of the reforms, the distribution of the land fund among landowners essentially changed.

It is known that the reduction of the agricultural areas, in particular of those arable, represents a global threat. At the same time, the exaggerated extension of arable areas in the detriment of other categories of biocoenosis (ex. Forests), accompanied by old technologies causes the degradation of soils. According to estimations, ensuring “minimum” of food to a person requires 0.6 ha of arable land. Under EU conditions, to ensure a food security there is a need of 0.15 ha of arable area per inhabitant. In the Republic of Moldova, 0.41 ha of arable area amounts to each inhabitant.

Reproductive capacity of fertility and ecological quality of soils were seriously affected by big agricultural exploitations based on intensive technologies with excessive use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides.

The economic and energy crisis, the implementation of the agricultural reforms with the emerging of many owners without equipment and knowledge, old technological schemes with the substantial reduction of the quantity of fertilizers (organic and mineral), old irrigation systems led to a dramatic decrease of the output and to the degradation of soils.

The recovery of the regenerating potential of soils is possible as practices of some developed countries show. A new approach in agriculture based on the development of adequate technologies for the environment can ensure a sustainable use and reduce the productions costs.

Forests. Forests are an inestimable source with many benefits. Except the fact that wood processing and forest products contribute to the national economy development, the forestry fund constitutes a key factor in the maintenance of the ecological balance. Forests create a microclimate conducive to the reduction of the impact of negative factors. Forests play an important role in the continuous stability of phreatic strata and maintenance of water resources, of the flow balance of carbon dioxide, nitrogen and oxygen.

The capacity of Moldovan forests to absorb the carbon dioxide from the atmosphere constitutes about 2, 230 tons per year. In Moldova's conditions, with considerable temperature alternations, frequent draughts, lack of water, landslides and the reduction of soil fertility up to 40-50% through the intensification of erosion processes, the protective role of forests is of vital importance.

The multitude of benefits generated by the existence of forests is not inexhaustible. Wrong attitude towards the forest composition of the ecological balance may cause serious damages with an impact on the welfare of the society and to a greater extent on future generations. Therefore, sustainable management of forests and forest vegetation became a major concern of each country and of the world community.

According to the land cadastre, the area of forest fund in Moldova constitutes 394 thousand ha, including forests – 325,4 thousand ha, the forestation level of the country being 9.6%. Forests are represented by 800 forest types with areas varying between 5 and 1,500 ha, uniformly spread all over the country. According to the law, forests are owned by the state. About 89% of the forests fund is owned by the State Forestry Agency “Moldsilva”. The rest of forests are managed by local public administration as well as by economic entities from agriculture, transport, industry. These forests are spread on small sectors, the major species being acacia.

Biodiversity and protected areas. Being situated in the confluence zone of three floristic regions – forest east-European, steppe east-European, forest steppe Mediterranean and of the fauna of transition from Asian continental steppe and European forest steppe, the Republic of Moldova has a rich biodiversity but vulnerable. It is estimated that natural ecosystems cover not more than 20% of the territory and are very fragmented and deteriorated. The vital potential of

forestry ecosystems is weak, including 172 species of terrestrial vertebrates and 859 flora species, out of which 40% come from other regions. From the steppe ecosystems only small fragments preserved where 55 floristic species and 109 species vertebrate animals exist. Natural meadow ecosystems cover 1.5% of the territory but have a relatively richer diversity. The Red Book of the Republic of Moldova contains 241 of fauna and flora species. Specialists believe that the number of rare species that should be included in the Red Book constitute 600.

The area of protected land constitutes 1.97% of the country's territory, being one of the smallest in the European countries (Ukraine – 3%, France – 7%, Germany – 13%, Austria – 25%, etc.). The National network includes 12 categories of protected areas: 5 scientific reserves (19.4 thousand ha), 130 natural monuments, 63 natural reserves, 41 landscape reserves, many geological, paleontological and hydrological monuments and many others.

Climate resources. The geographical position determines the radiation and thermal resources, the peculiarities of the air flows, atmosphere processes and the climate complex in general. Solar irradiation has a real duration of 5-55% and varies between 2,060 hours in the north and 2,330 hours in the south. The Republic of Moldova is a sunny place in the warm period of the year and dull with an unstable weather in the cold season, November-March.

Climate resources are generated by the atmosphere flow created in the baric centers at a long distance from the territory of the country. The major peculiarities of the air flow regime are mainly anti-cyclone with a relatively weak activity of atmosphere processes, with a diversity expressed in the seasonal flow changes.

The wind regime is formed under the influence of baric gradients having a direct reflection on the air flow, strongly influenced by the active strata of the surface in changing the speed, direction and duration of winds. Winds from west, north, and north-west with lower frequency from south and south-east are prevailing.

Rains, in particular those liquid abundant (80%) are characterized by an essential variability in time and space.

The determination of the average temperature of 10°C per day-night takes place in April: in the north – 18-23 April, in the south – 15-19 April. The active vegetation period lasts 165-195 days. The duration is influenced by the relief (exposure, altitude), water basin, and forests.

Climate resources in the context of energy transformations have often a negative impact on the economy of the Republic of Moldova, causing serious damages.

Heavy rains, draughts, desertification, strong winds, ice storms, freeze in spring and autumn are negative phenomena often met on the territory of our country.

1.3 The Republic of Moldova in the context of sustainable development

A decade ago, the Republic of Moldova proclaimed its independence and stepped on the path of radical changes that led to the formation of a market economy in the mid 90s while changes became irreversible. As a result of the reforms, the Republic of Moldova achieved some progress: reform of the property structure, introduction of the national currency, reform of the banking-financial system, agricultural reform, and the creation of the legal and institutional framework to ensure the functioning of the market economy.

After 10 years of transition, GDP has dramatically reduced, constituting in 1999 only 34% of the 1990 level. In 2000 this negative evolution stopped, the economy having clear trends of stability and social-economic revival – GDP increased this year by 2.1% as compared to the last year and the industrial output – by 7.7%.

The Republic of Moldova through its participation together with over 140 world states, various international and intergovernmental organizations to the UN Conference for Environment and Development, committed itself to the transition to sustainable development, elaboration and implementation of the strategies and action plans adequate to this option.

In 2001 the Government of the Republic of Moldova approved the short-term Strategy for social-economic development of the Republic of Moldova (until 2005) – a document related to the economic policy of the country, which sets the priorities, objectives and measures for its implementation aimed at creating a competitive market economy, in accordance with the principles, norms, mechanisms and institutions of developed countries.

The achievement of the social objectives is possible through ensuring of a sustainable economic growth which will require the involvement into the financial and human structures and flows at the regional, European and global level as well as the creation of a coherent and stable legislative framework, harmonized with the international one and focused on the creation of a beneficial entrepreneurial and investment environment.

In order to ensure the competitiveness of the national economy on the global market, the positive aspects of globalization and the advantages of the adherence to the World Trade Organization and the Stability Pact for the South-Eastern Europe will be efficiently used.

The economic situation of the Republic of Moldova during the last 2 years registered an increase in the economic output. There are trends of achieving social-economic stability thus the major objectives, outlined in the Action Plan of the Government “Economic revival – country revival”, being achieved.

The improvement of the economic growth manifested mainly through the increase of GDP in 2001 by 6.1% as compared to 2.1% in 2000. 75% of GDP comes from the private sector, which shows the expansion trend of the sector.

The inflation rate constituted 6.3% at the end of 2001 as compared to December 2000.

The exchange rate of the Moldovan Leu was mainly stable, registering a slight depreciation by 6%. Stability of the exchange rate of the national currency was mainly determined by the increase of exports, increase of the industrial output and relative stability of prices.

According to preliminary data, the share of the income of the budget was achieved at 90% as compared to annual expectations. As compared to 2000, incomes increased by 5.3%. Taking into account the incomes and available funding resources, costs worth 89.5% of annual plans were funded from the budget.

The external debt administered by the Government at the end of 2001 constituted 699.8 million USD, GDP constituting 47.4%.

At the same time, it is worth mentioning that alongside with these economic progresses, poverty is a serious problem in the Republic of Moldova, which is caused by both internal and external factors. Moldova is affected by the lack of its own energy resources and the increase of their prices up to the global standards, the Transnistrian conflict in 1992 as well as a number of natural disasters that led to the halving of GDP. Floods of 1992 and 1994 and the draughts in 2000 should be mentioned in this context as well.

Environmental problems in Moldova are related to the excessive use of the recyclable natural resources, on one hand – by the global deterioration of the quality of environment. The reduction of the recycling capacities of the resources and the environment pollution affects human security.

1.4. International cooperation

The priorities of international cooperation of the Republic of Moldova in the field of environment include:

- Strengthening the institutional capacity through the participation to the bilateral and multilateral agreements on environment;
- Harmonization of the national legislation on environment with the international conventions, in particular with the EU legislation, in view of Moldova 's integration into the EU as a major objective; and
- Attraction of technical and financial assistance for the implementation of the environment protection policies.

Currently, the Republic of Moldova is part of the majority of the conventions on environment protection and it promotes a consequent policy in the framework of multilateral international cooperation. Thus, Moldova ratified, among others, the following conventions: the UN Convention-framework on Climate Change, the Convention on Biodiversity, the Vienna Convention on the Protection of the Ozone Layer and the Montreal Protocol on Substances Destroying the Ozone Layer, the Convention for Combating Desertification in the Countries seriously affected by draughts and/or desertification, the Basel Convention on the Control of the Transportation outside borders of the dangerous wastes and on its liquidation, the Protocol on the Pollution with organic substances and the Protocol on heavy metals of the Convention on trans-boundary air pollution at long distances, the Aarhus Convention on access to information, justice and public participation in decision making in environment area.

International cooperation of Moldova – based on the international conventions, including the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with the EU – has become a major component of the national and regional environmental projects. In view of the implementation of some programmes, the Republic of Moldova benefits from technical and financial assistance from the international organizations and donor countries. Among others, projects with the support of UNDP, WB, GEF, TACIS programme, OECD and well as of the Danish Government were worked out and implemented.

At the same time, Moldova signed a number of bilateral agreements and efficiently cooperates in the field of environment with the neighboring countries- Romania and Ukraine. As a consequence, the following agreements have been signed: the Agreement of Collaboration between the Department for Environment Protection of the Republic of Moldova and Ministry of

Waters, Forests and Environment Protection of Romania in the field of environment protection and sustainable use of natural resources, the Agreement between the Ministry of Environment and Territorial Development of the Republic of Moldova, Ministry of Waters, Forests and Environment Protection of Romania and Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of Ukraine on the cooperation in the zone of protected natural areas of Danube delta and Lower Prut, the Protocol on the Collaboration between the State Department of the Republic of Moldova for Environment Protection and Natural Resources and the Ministry of Environment Protection of Ukraine and the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Moldova and the Government of Ukraine on the common use and protection of border waters.

II. Actions and outcomes

2.1. National Strategy for Sustainable Development

The National Strategy for Sustainable Development – “Moldova 21” for the next 20 years was launched in November 2000 with the UNDP financial and logistic support.

The Strategy for Sustainable Development of the Republic of Moldova in the 21 century reaffirms the commitment to sustainable development and represents the first complex and long-term programme for the social-economic development of the country based on new principles:

- Development of a market economy with a social focus, based on private and public property and engaged in free competition which implies the creation of a competitive economic system and adequate to the principles, standards, tools and institutions of developed countries.
- Creation of an open civil society based on democracy, decentralization of the public system and support to the civil society
- Development focus on the improvement of the life quality, investment in the human capital
- Promotion of a new security concept – economic, social, food and environmental.

In this context, the participation of the Republic of Moldova to the application of the sustainable development concepts, supported and promoted by the UN, provides new opportunities in the solution of various problems. The new approach of the world development in

the next millennium has the motto “think globally and act locally”. As a young state, situated in an unstable zone, between the influence poles of the member states and the states in the process of adherence to EU and those from the post-totalitarian area, the Republic of Moldova has to find out its own development priorities, social-economic strategic policies, and sustainable development being of the biggest challenges in this sense.

About 50 national experts from various fields, academic institutions, higher education institutions, people with vast experience, employees of ministries, and representatives of NGOs participated in the formulation of the Strategy. The draft Strategy was approved by the parliament as strategic paper of the country.

Local Agenda 21 in Moldova

The project “Local Agenda 21” in Moldova, coordinated by the State Chancellery of the Moldovan Government and implemented by UNDP Moldova, was launched in November 2001. This project is aimed at strengthening the results of the project “Moldova 21” and providing assistance to local communities in the elaboration and implementation of Local Agendas 21. The project is implemented through the Coordination Units of Local Agenda 21 in Soroca, Orhei, Lapusna, Cahul and the Resource and Assistance Center Local Agenda 21 Ungheni.

In the framework of Local Agenda 21, local long-term sustainable development plans are being developed and implemented on the basis of the consultations with the community and efficient partnerships between the community stakeholders.

The project “Local Agenda 21” has as major objectives the promotion of sustainable development principles in the Republic of Moldova, support the Government’s efforts in the preparation for the World Summit Rio+10, which will take place in August-September 2002 in Johannesburg, provide assistance to the municipalities of Cahul, Orhei, Soroca, Ungheni and village of Lapusna in the formulation and implementation of the Sustainable Development Strategies and Local Action Plans (Local Agenda 21), foster partnerships between the local authorities, non-governmental organizations, private sector and the inter-sectorial dialogue, the organization of public awareness campaigns and encourage the participation of the community groups in decision-making, of youth and women in the Local Agenda 21 process.

In the framework of the Local Agenda 21 in Moldova, 4 communities – municipalities of Cahul, Soroca, Orhei and the commune of Lapusna are in the process of the elaboration of Local Agenda 21. Local Agenda 21 is based on three key principles: the integration of the sustainable development values and tools in the policies and activities of the local authorities, the consultation and participation of citizens in the decision-making at the local level, and the promotion and development of partnerships among sectors.

Objectives:

- Creation of a competitive potential for the revival and stabilization of the economic growth and sustainable human development
- Social security system reform, achievement of a decent living standards
- Structural strengthening of the social-economic system on sustainable basis in accordance with the requirements of the integration into the EU
- Formation of the human capital in conformity with the scientific, technological, informational and moral needs.

Actions:

- Adopt the National Strategy for Sustainable Development by the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova as the key strategic paper of the country
- Create the National Council for Sustainable development in view of promoting the sustainable development principles in the Republic of Moldova and the coordination of the implementation of the National Strategy
- Overcome the general crisis of the social-economic and political system, maintenance of the economic growth, the improvement of the life quality, stability of the statehood
- Monitor and continuous adjustment of the development components to the economic, social and environmental performance

2.2. Poverty eradication

The brief analysis of the situation in the Republic of Moldova shows the complexity of poverty as a social and economic phenomena. To achieve a rapid and sustainable economic growth, the improvements of the living standards of the population and thus reducing the development gap between the Republic of Moldova and other European countries, in 2000 the Government agreed with the International Monetary Fund on 3-year Agreement in the framework

of the poverty reduction and economic growth programme. In December 2000, the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy of the Government of the Republic of Moldova was approved by the IMF and WB Executive Boards.

The next stage envisages the formulation of the full Poverty Reduction Strategy and its approval by the end of 2002. In view of strengthening the efficiency of the economic policies, the full Poverty Reduction Strategy will be formulated through a participatory process and close consultations with all actors of the process, including representatives of the Government, Parliament and civil society, donor institutions.

The Poverty reduction Strategy has three objectives: (i) sustainable and comprehensive economic growth which generates jobs for the population; (ii) human development policy based on the increased access to basic services (in particular, primary health care and basic education); and (iii) social protection for the vulnerable groups of the population. This Strategy is focused on the fair distribution of the benefits of the economic growth among all population, taking into account the existing social capital at the community level. Poverty reduction is a clear goal of the Government policy to formulate a strategy through a participatory process thus contributing to increasing its support. The Poverty Reduction programme is being formulated now, which is part of the Structural Adjustments Credit (SAC), funded by the World Bank.

In order to promote a wage policy, the establishment and revision of the minimal salary was adopted based on the Law No. 1432-XIV from 28 December 2000 which allowed setting starting with April 1 2001 a minimal salary in the country worth 100 lei per month. The salary for the 1st category of employees of the budgetary sphere constitutes 100 lei. Salaries for the other categories were increased by 50% as compared to the monthly wages as of January 1, 2000. The wage of the employees of the primary and general secondary education, medical staff of the primary health care and medical staff in the hospital service of emergency assistance increased by 20% as of September 1 2001. As a result of this action, the monthly average salary of the employees of the budgetary sector in 2001 increased by 39.2%, the average salary of a teacher constituting in December 2001 504.4 lei and of a medical employee – 559.2 lei (respectively on average per year – 428.7 lei and 463.9 lei).

During 2000, the possibilities of the Social Investment Fund, project funded by the World Bank and launched in 1999, which give the communities the opportunity to get small grants up to \$75,000 for the rehabilitation of schools, kindergartens, environment protection, creation of local

services for children and their families in difficult situation. The direct beneficiaries of this programme are already 2,925 children.

Following the decree No. 1254-11 of the President of the Republic of Moldova of December 14 1999 on the declaration of the Year of 2000 “The Year of the Child”, the Action Plan dedicated to the Year of the Child was approved through the decision No. 395 of the Government of the Republic of Moldova.

The promotion of the state policy in the implementation of the actions aimed at the social protection of the old people and the solution of the existing problems are effected by the Commission on problems of the elderly, a consultative entity under the Government.

In view of supporting the vulnerable groups of the population and in particular, the old people, invalids, in 2001, 381,139 material aid worth 16.5 million lei was provided to the poor from the Republican Fund and local funds for social assistance of the population.

Social benefits of the population are the major priorities and key elements of the social policy of the state. During 2001, a new methodology for the re-calculation of all pensions was worked out, established through the public social insurance system and starting with January 1 and July 1 2001; all pensions were recalculated in two stages, their increase constituting about 18.6%. Also starting with December 1, 2001, pensions were recalculated again, the increase constituting about 36%. As a result, during 2001, the pension quantum for the age limit increased by 61.4% as compared to the previous year. The pension constituted 135.83 lei at the end of 2001 and was 1.6 higher than in 2000.

According to the Law on public social insurance system, the National House of Social Insurance (NHSI) was created, taking over the respective functions from the Social Fund, the Department for Pensions and Social Assistance, the Center for the Calculation of Pensions and Allowances. NHSI accumulates and distributes funds paid by people with insurance and from the state social contributions.

In view of introducing the individual evidence of contributions in the state social insurance budget, the State Registry for individual evidence in the public system of state social insurance was elaborated and approved.

One of the most spread forms of social negotiations in the conditions of the market economy is the Social Partnership institution.

The Government supports the initiative of the social partners in the promotion of the Law on trade unions and Law on employers in order to achieve the stipulations of the Concept for the development of the social dialogue system.

Social policy is one of the key problems of human development. Sustainable human development will be impossible without a reformulation and definition of the objectives and tools of their implementation. The first and most important step in the elaboration of the social policy will be the adequate hierarchy of priorities and then the selection of the tools for the creation and efficient use of the necessary resources for the gradual solution of all social problems.

A Strategy on job creation in the Republic of Moldova was worked out in accordance with the stipulations of the European Strategy on job creation to improve the situation on the job market. This strategy includes actions which implementation will allow increasing the employment rate of the active population as well as reducing the unemployment level. The major objectives of the Strategy are:

- Promotion of the structural reform of labor, production and capital
- Improvement of the employment capacity through the development of human resources
- Encourage the capacity to adapt to market conditions of the enterprises and employees
- Support entrepreneurship and the development of small and medium enterprises
- Support employment, professional training of youth, unemployed and job creation
- Reform the fiscal and social allocations system to stimulate employment and job creation
- Organization of continuous professional training
- Elaborate projects that promote equal opportunities and combat inequality in the field of employment (youth, women with small children, invalids).

The implementation of the Strategy on job creation in the Republic of Moldova will contribute to increasing the real incomes of the population and the registration of efficient progress on the improvement of the living standards and poverty reduction.

Objectives:

- eradicate extreme poverty, stop the impoverishment process and its reduction to the acceptable social-economic and political level
- Promotion of a stable and viable macro-economic policy

- Increase the welfare of the population, access to education and health protection, employment, increase of the real income and a fair social protection.

Actions:

- Reorganize the administration system of social benefits and assistance
- Monitor and evaluate employment with the institutional improvement of the labor market necessary for the participation to the European coordination of the employment policies
- Extend the training, retraining activities with a focus on quality of training
- Support economic entities for the creation of new jobs, create economic and legal conditions for the development of individual and family entrepreneurship

2.3. Health and Environment

It is impossible to talk about sustainable development without evaluating the health status of the population. The main indicators that describe the population's health are among the lowest in Europe. The average life expectancy is 66 years. The mortality rate constitutes 11.3 per 1,000 inhabitants and is on average 50% higher than in the developed countries of Europe while the infant mortality rate is 3 times higher than the European average. Every second child who died before getting one-year old suffered of malnutrition.

To solve of the problems faced by the health care system, the draft Laws on the accreditation of the medical-sanitary and pharmaceutical institutions, on establishing the prices for the homologation of the medicines and other pharmaceutical products and medical equipment, on the strengthening of the food products, on the rights and responsibilities of the patient and on exerting the medical doctor's job and many other documents were submitted for discussion.

The implementation of the adequate measures will initially ensure a stability of the health indicators, which will change after the first five years. Furthermore, there will be conditions that will contribute to the improvement of the population's health, initially of children and then of all demographic indicators.

In accordance with the European Action Plan on Environment Hygiene, the Ministry of Health formulated the *National Action Plan on Health and Environment* (NACHE), approved by the decision No. 287 of the Government of the Republic of Moldova on June 19, 2001. This Plan gives details of the concept on the measures required for health in relation with environment. Priorities include the stage aimed at achieving medical and environmental stability, stopping the

deterioration of the environment and health. The adjustment of the legal, methodological and organization framework is also important, which should create new conditions, aimed at fostering the activity in the health and environment protection.

Objectives:

- Ensure the fundamental rights to a healthy life and environment
- Increase life expectancy with 1-2 years and provide equitable access to health services
- Improve the quality of life and environment, decrease the morbidity rate of the population caused by life, professional and ecological factors

Actions:

- Coordinate efficiently the activities in the field of health care and environment protection, elaborate tools for inter-sector cooperation
- Speed up the implementation of the health care reforms, focus the health care towards primary health care
- Promote a healthy life and protection of mother's and child's health
- Implement at the national and local level projects and programmes in key areas of the health in relation with environment

2.4. National and local environmental action plans

The National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP, 1995) envisages the goals and priorities of the environmental policy of the country for a short and medium term. The successful implementation of the NEAP depends mainly on the capacity of the public administration to transform the general policy principles in concrete local actions. According to this Plan, during 1999-2000 local environmental action plans were formulated and approved by the judet councils of Edinet, Balti, Cahul and Ungheni. With the NGO support, local plans for communes in several judets of the country were formulated as well.

These plans contain major environmental concerns on the administrated territory and ways of its improvement aimed at promoting a sustainable development of communities – getting closer to the civilized life standards based on the capacity to support the environment without exhausting its resources.

In view of implementing the envisaged actions in the field of environment and efficient use of natural resources, during 2001 an inventory was conducted for green areas from the

administered localities and environmental campaigns were organized. To coordinate the activities in this field, special committees were created in each judet, consisting of representatives of environment protection and natural resource management sections as well.

In view of reviving the national traditions, the permanent bureaus of the judet councils supported the idea of their participation in the organization of the competition “The greenest, the cleanest and the most developed community”, during which the cleaning activities of the communities continued.

While conducting the inventory of the green areas, deteriorated lands were identified which will be transmitted to the forest farms for forestation. To stop the deterioration of land in some communities, improvement actions were taken alongside with the planting of trees with the support of the Social Investment Fund in Moldova.

In view of achieving the LEAP, some counties formulated county programmes for the reduction of the air pollution with harming emissions from fix and mobile sources (PTRPA). To implement these programmes, measures to observe the established regime for fuel use at the heating stations and asphalt plants were taken and a special mechanism for retaining the dust was installed at the asphalt plant in Hincesti.

The public was informed through mass media, radio and TV about the activities taking place in the field and was involved in decision making on environment for their successful implementation. Also, brochures, newspapers, leaflets were produced which contributed to informing the public about the existing problems and its solution.

The promotion of the National and Local Environmental Action Plans is envisaged by the Concept of the Environmental Policy of the Republic of Moldova, adopted by the parliament on 2 November 2001.

Objectives:

- prevent and reduce the negative impact of the economic activity on the environmental factors, natural resources and populations' health in the context of the sustainable development of the country.
- Ensure the ecological security of the country
- Strengthen the institutional and managerial potential in the field, including the harmonization of the national legal framework with the respective documents of the EU

Actions:

- restore and maintain the environment quality, stop the deterioration of its components
- ensure the sustainable use of natural resources, avoid losses, create and educate a new culture in using goods, consumption and life style
- implement environmental management at enterprises and ecological certification
- intensify the fight against poaching, illegal cutting of trees, restore the forestry, synergetic and piscicultural funds
- strengthen the international collaboration in the field through the implementation of the Conventions and sign new bilateral, multilateral agreements with the international financial and donor organizations

2.5. National territory management

For the Republic of Moldova, the approval of the sustainable development policy is the only path towards short and long term prosperity in line with the national interests and requirements of the international cooperation.

In Moldova the priority of territorial planning as a tool for ensuring a balanced development of territories and localities, efficient use of resources, technical redesign and equipment of the areas in line with the economic achievements, social features and area peculiarities.

Thus, the variety of problems discussed to improve the implementation level of goals, undertaken by the society through the distribution and balance of the increasing number of territorial elements provides territorial development a synthesis character while the social-economic condition implies the unity of the concept and action for the integral and harmonious territorial development. In this context, the territorial organization system gives the possibility to discuss problems from general to particular aspects in various territorial structures, from the territorial and community development to territorial organization within economic entities and ending with the placement of various investment assets.

The most important category of documentation for territorial development is the National Territory Development Plan (NTDP), which has to be structured and outlined in the context of the supply of data for the regional, zone, district territorial development plans, national and local sector programmes as well as the recipient of the data for it update.

The key objectives of NTDP focus on the implementation of a programme of public works, which determine and support the transition to market economy.

NTDP explains and make forecasts for the following areas:

- Development of the community network, placement of the labor force
- Key network of communications and transport infrastructure as a support to territorial development
- National economy sectors
- Protection and rehabilitation of the environment, efficient use of natural resources
- Identification of the entertainment zones, tourism development, protection of patrimony built
- Conservation of biodiversity and landscape
- Reduction of natural and technical risks
- Efficient management of water resources
- Evaluation of the major demographic structures and of their development ways: their impact on the labor market, on the required number of dwellings and public services
- Adjustment of the territorial development needs to observing the country security

The elaboration of NTDP started immediately after the adoption of the Law on Principles of Urbanism and Territorial Development. After the approval of the decision No. 75 of the Government of the Republic of Moldova of January 22, 1998 on some efficient actions to solve the major problems in the national territorial development, 320 thousand lei was allocated from the state budget which allowed continuing the elaboration of NTDP in 1999.

Given the lack of funds but also due to misunderstanding the role of these documents in increasing the efficiency of the community and territorial development, the funding of the elaboration of NTDP from the state budget was stopped for a period of 2 years.

Given the awareness of the importance of NTDP by the leadership of the country and its further support to funding the elaboration of these documents for the sustainable development of the country, the National Institute for Research and Projecting “Urbanpoiect”, the main author of NTDP, has the possibility to continue the above-mentioned works.

According to the state programme for the equipment of communities and territories with territorial development plans and master urban plans, NTDP will be elaborated during 2002-2003 on the condition of ensuring a stable funding as well as the reglementation of the free supply of the necessary information for the implementation of works.

Objectives:

- Coordination of the economic, social, cultural and environmental policy in line with the fundamental values of the whole society in view of implementing a natural and harmonious framework which will contribute to the social and cultural life of the country
- Stress the economic potential of the territory and outline the strategic areas of its exploration

Actions:

- Identify and approve the National Territory Development Plan as an important instrument for the country development
- Formulate the territorial development plans of judets
- Formulate Urban Plans and the identification of the modality to use areas from the point of view of construction regime and urban role

2.6. Water supply

Approved by the decision No. 519 of April 23, 2002 of the Government of the Republic of Moldova, the Water Supply and Sewage Programme of the localities in the Republic of Moldova until 2006 highlights the major objectives that will ensure the stable functioning of this field. Starting with the criteria “Water is health”, the programme makes part of a set of actions aimed at improving the water supply and increasing the technical and sanitary viability of the water supply and sewage systems, reflected in the Complex Scheme for water supply and evacuation of used water in the Republic of Moldova.

The programme develops and identifies the ways to solve the problems related to water supply and sewage until 2006, including 43 localities (municipalities and towns) with a population of 1 million 500 thousand inhabitants.

Taking into consideration the economic situation in the Republic of Moldova, the works for the modernization and development of the water supply and sewage will be conducted in three stages:

- Works with small costs for the renovation of the existing systems
- Modernization and development until 2006
- Modernization and development until 2010

The major goals of the programme are:

- Improve the hygienic conditions and strengthening of the health care of the population

- Environment protection

For the implementation of the water supply and sewage system during 2002-2006, investments are needed for:

- Municipalities and towns – 1 billion 42 million 371 thousand lei
- Rural communities – 200 million 852 thousand lei

The funding sources of the programme are envisaged worth 600 million lei from the credits of the international financial organization.

The construction of the inter-district water connections and of its major assets such as purifying stations will be funded from the state budget with the attraction of the local and extra budgetary funding, the construction of the water distribution and collection networks – from the budget of the local public administration and economic entities active in the field and of the connection and adjustment of the evacuation networks – from the contributions of the economic entities and population.

A problem that needs immediate solution is the construction of an evacuation- purifying station on the territory of the Republic of Moldova in Soroca. To build this station, there is a need of 2 million 500 thousand USD, and its construction can be achieved only through the attraction of foreign investments. The 2002 budget envisages investments for the above station worth \$ 200 thousand, half of which will be used to replace the collector under pressure, located on the territory of Ukraine.

The Ministry of Ecology, Construction and Territorial Development in cooperation with the local public administration will continue undertaking steps to attract foreign and local investments for the construction of the purifying stations in Soroca, Soldanesti, Telenesti, Rezina, Criuleni, and Cantemir for the further improvement of the water supply of the population according to the established norms.

Water supply of the population in the country is a stringent problem, caused by the uniformly distribution of the underground waters on the territory of the country. The quality of water in the majority of the localities does not correspond to the norms given the high composition of nitrogen, sulphate, sodium, mineralization and increased hardness. That is why shallow waters remain major sources for supply (rivers of Nistru and Prut) which constitute 30% of the total volume of potable water.

81% of urban population has access to potable water supply through centralized systems and only 17% of the inhabitants in the rural areas have access to it. The other consumers use for this purpose about 150 wells and springs as non-centralized water supply sources. Joint water supply systems are functioning in only 43 urban localities (excluding Transnistria, municipalities and cities) and 207 rural communities (out of 832 built). The average consumption of water in the country per person constitutes 2,20l/24h although this index varies from 50 to 300l/24 h for various localities. Some localities where the situation of networks is very bad are supplied with water only 1-2 hours per day, usually only 2-3 days per week according to schedules approved by the local public administration. Centralized water supply systems in urban localities are managed by specialized municipal enterprises.

General and potable water distribution networks in the majority of communities are used for 35-40 years without being reconstructed or repaired and therefore, their usage level exceeds 50%, which caused big losses of water and unsatisfactory supply to the consumers.

The general reparation and development of the water supply systems is not effected adequately due to the lack of funds of the enterprises providing services as well from the extremely small allocations from the state budget and local budgets. During the last 5 years, only 1.5 million lei was allocated from the state budget for the maintenance of the water supply systems, the minimum required being 20 million per year.

During 2001 projects for funding from the National Ecological Fund worth 620 thousand lei were submitted for approval aimed at the rehabilitation of the water supply systems and sewage of the localities in the country, out of which projects worth 496 thousand lei were approved and funded.

During the last years the central authorities of the Republic of Moldova undertook a number of concrete steps to attract capital investments under various forms: grants, credits, technical assistance, etc.

Thus, they succeeded to rehabilitate over 100 km of network in Chisinau, funded by EBRD through a credit of \$30 million; the situation of the water supply in Comrat was improved due to the credit of \$15 million (1st tranche), provided by the Government of Turkey for the implementation of the programme for potable water supply of the localities from the southern part of the country.

In the framework of the implementation of the Danish programme of cooperation in the field of environment in the Eastern Europe signed by the Ministry of Ecology, Construction and Territorial Development and the Ministry of Environment of Denmark, problems pertaining to the water supply of the village of Borceag of the Cahul judet were solved, and similar projects are ongoing in the villages of Chircaesti of the Tighina judet, Stauceni of the municipality of Chisinau and a project on saving electric power at the water pipe Prut-Edinet.

Another funding source for the rehabilitation of the water supply systems in the rural communities is the pilot project “Development of the sustainable sources of incomes in the rural areas”, funded by the British Government through the Department for International Cooperation.

Objectives:

- Meet the water supply needs of the population and national economy
- Ensure access to qualitative potable water
- Prevent and reduce the water pollution, increase the efficiency of water consumption in the national economy and agricultural activities, efficient purifying of residual waters

Actions:

- Renovate and modernize the existing water supply systems and sewage
- Improve the evidence of the water consumption and water monitoring
- Apply new standards for water quality and for residual waters, increase the efficiency of the application of economic tools and price policy in the field

2.7. Biodiversity conservation

Biodiversity is a specific peculiarity of our planet, which ensures the efficient functioning of ecosystems, the existence and development of the biosphere in general. Lately, the issue of biodiversity at the level of ecosystems, species, populations and genes is becoming more and more important given the intensification of the human impact on the biosphere. In this context, the maintenance of biodiversity is necessary not only for sustaining the present life but also the life of future generations because it keeps the regional and global environmental balance, guarantees the regeneration of the biologic resources and maintenance of the quality of the environment for a society.

The issue of biodiversity conservation exceeds the limits of scientific problems and is among the major concerns of the countries and international institutions, objectives aimed at

ensuring favorable conditions to the population. One of the important documents, which regulate this activity, is the Convention on biodiversity (Rio de Janeiro, 1992).

The Republic of Moldova ratified the above Convention in 1995. According to its stipulations, the Ministry of Ecology, Construction and Territorial Development in collaboration with the specialists from other ministries, various institutions and organizations, worked out the Strategy and Action Plan on Biodiversity Conservation in the Republic of Moldova in 2001.

The major goal of the Strategy on biodiversity conservation is the conservation, rehabilitation, reconstruction and efficient use of the biodiversity and landscape to ensure the sustainable social-economic development of the Republic of Moldova. The objectives of the Strategy can be achieved through consequent well-targeted actions, establishing deadlines and funding amount.

The Biodiversity Office and the Inter-Ministerial Council on Biodiversity Conservation monitor the implementation of the Strategy.

The Concept of the National Environmental Network (NEN) of the Republic of Moldova was formulated in 2001 to implement the Convention on Biodiversity and in the framework of the Pan-European Environmental Network. NEN represents the overall natural habitats, linked physically and functionally, natural and historical landscapes, natural and historic monuments which constitute landscape monuments. NEN also includes artificial artificial landscapes and its elements with a special value for the conservation of biodiversity, maintenance of the geosystemic balance from the biological, scientific and esthetic point of view. The network represents an information, coordinating and legal mechanism to ensure the conservation of its physical components and establishes accountability at the national and international level of the country, civil society, and economic entities in the field of biodiversity.

The NEN map was worked out and printed (scale 1:500 000) which reflects the map-drawing integration of the environmental network at the national level and serves as a basis for the regional and local projecting.

NEN will become an important component of the National Territorial Development Plan and will serve as a model for the use of the sustainable development principles in the field of biodiversity conservation.

Objectives:

- *In-situ* and *ex-situ* conservation of biodiversity

- Identification and social-economic evaluation of the biological resources and their sustainable use
- Reestablishment and maintenance of the genetic fund, ensure the bio security of the country

Actions:

- Implement the Strategy and master Action Plan on biodiversity conservation
- Create the national Environmental Network as a component for the integration of the protection measures of the biodiversity and landscape

2.8. Forestry fund development

The issue of the sustainable management of forests in the Republic of Moldova can be successfully solved through the promotion of an adequate forestry policy in line with the new requirement.

In this context, a new system of vision on the sector implies the need to create a new forestry mentality, the implementation of the stipulations of the international conventions signed by the Republic of Moldova, the organization of the efficient use of the forestry products in the framework of ensuring the continuity of the forests as a structure and functions in relation with the conditions for the development and maintenance of the multifunctional potential of the forests. The forestry management has to serve sustainable national interests focused on the national traditions and objectives of forestry sector and based on environmental principles. The issue of sustainable protection and development of forests is inseparable from the ensuring of a healthy life to the country's population.

Recently, the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova approved the Strategy for Sustainable Development of the Forestry Fund of the Republic of Moldova. The objectives of this Strategy are:

- Strengthening of the vital potential of the existing natural forests
- Conservation of the forestry biodiversity
- Extension of the forest areas
- Increase the efficiency of the guarding and protection measures of the forestry fund

The Strategy highlights that the eco-protective impact of the forest has a permanent character only through exceeding the 15% line for area forestation. In this sense, at least 130 thousand ha has to be planted and forested:

- New areas of forest and the extension of the existing ones
- Green islands of trees and bushes
- Inter-related corridors of forested areas
- Protection bands of waters, roads and industrial assets

In line with the Strategy, the State programme on the regeneration and forestation of areas within the forestry fund for 2002-2020 was worked out and envisages:

- Plant trees on an area of 24,655 ha
- Facilitate the natural regeneration on an area of 39,036 ha
- Natural regeneration on an area of 31,927 ha

The regeneration and forestation works in the forestry fund until 2020 will be conducted on an area of 95,618 ha. The execution of this volume of work will need expenses worth 600,276 thousand lei or 31,593.5 thousand lei per year.

The Law on the improvement of deteriorated areas through forestation, adopted by the Parliament in November 2000, will contribute to the extension of the forestry fund as well.

Objectives:

- Maintenance and regeneration of the existing forestry fund
- Extension of the forestry fund on an area of at least 15% of the country territory

Actions:

- Implement the principles of the sustainable management of the forestry fund, the use of its protection and regeneration potential
- Mobilize internal funding and attract external financial support for the regeneration and extension of the forestry fund

2.9. Soil protection

According to its natural composition and fertility, the soils of the Republic of Moldova make part of the most valuable soils, characterized by a remarkable diversity, related to the local vertical and horizontal zone differences, covering 75% of the land fund area. The big diversity of

soils with limited areas represents favorable environmental niches for some crops such as vineyards, fruit trees, vegetables, etc. The average level of fertility of arable land constitutes 68 points. 84.8% out of agricultural lands have a good and very good fertility rate, 9.9%- average and 5.3% - low fertility.

From the economic point of view, soils are the most valuable composition of the natural resources. Taking into account the global trends in the depreciation and losses of agricultural land as well as the development of agriculture, the issue of preserving agricultural lands has to become a strategic concern of national security for our country.

The *deterioration of the productive capacity of soils* as a result of agricultural over-use of the last 50 years manifested through erosions, landslides, lack of humus, lack of mobile phosphor, salinization, areas with a periodical excess of humidity, clogging of deposits of less humid soils, taking away of fertile strata, etc.

Erosion covers 33% of agricultural lands. The area of eroded soils increases by 0.5-1.0% annually which will lead to the loss of the fertile strata by 20-40% in the next 50 years. Annual losses are equal with 2,000 ha of chernozyoms with all components. The negative effects of erosion extent on other spheres as well: lakes and other pools, soil pollution from deposits and phreatic waters with pesticides and mineral fertilizers, washed from the slopes, the destruction of the communications networks and hydrotechnic constructions, etc.

The *excavations of the soil* while exploiting quarry before 1990 were not accompanied by replanting of areas; 5,000 ha of agricultural land with the average fertility rate of 50 points was destroyed. During the last 20-25 years, the soil losses (damaged, destroyed by ravines, landslides and excavations) constitute 78.8 thousand ha or 3% of agricultural land.

The *small and very small reserve of humus is a key problem in the development of the ecological agriculture*. Soils with a lack of humus constitute 40.6% of the agricultural lands. There is a risk that in the next decades, the composition of humus on arable land will reduce by 10-25 %, which will considerably affect the physic qualities and micro biodiversity of soils. The annual losses are estimated at 10% of harvest.

Only phosphate fertilizers can cover *the exhaustion of the mobile phosphor reserves in the soil*. Soils with phosphor deficit cover 30% of the agricultural land. The lack of fertilizers leads to the increase of the categories of this type of land and losses of crops.

Soil cleaning on an area of 546 thousand ha (21% of the agricultural land) for the fruit and vineyards plantation led to the disturbance of the natural stratification of the genetic horizons and getting out to the surface of the less humid layers with a high composition of carbons. The fertility of these areas, used for crops, is 10-20% lower as compared to that of uncleaned similar soils.

The *pollution of agricultural lands* exists although the use of chemicals per hectare reduced by 4.3 times during 1991-1998.

The rate of soil biological pollution increased by 2 times due to the lack of systems to clean and use the livestock and agricultural wastes.

The protection, improvement and sustainable use programmes of the soil resources can be achieved only through multifunctional environmental development tools of the territory at the national level taking into account all the aspects of the natural and anthropic capital. The cost of a similar work for 2000-2020 is estimated at \$ 363 million or over \$18 million per year.

Objectives:

- Conservation and regeneration of soil, stop the deterioration process
- Maintenance and increase the soil fertility

Actions:

- Conduct agricultural works with a low impact on environment, use economic tools for the prevention of soil deterioration
- Foster the rehabilitation of forests for the protection and use of anti-erosion measures, clear definition of responsibilities of economic entities for the rehabilitation of fertility
- Regulation of the use of pastures.

2.10. Agriculture and food security

The major objective of the agricultural activities of the last 50 years was the property reform, the creation of the adequate institutional and economic conditions for the creation of the production and functioning structures of the economic entities in the agro-industrial sector, the diversification of the economic relations under the market economy conditions, restructuring of the services system, provision of information, advisory assistance and the improvement of knowledge of the new producers of the agro-industrial sector.

The Strategy on the development of the agricultural and food sector for 2002-2010 is being worked out now. 8 projects of technical assistance and one project of crediting are ongoing

in the field of agriculture and food industry which are focused on the development of education, provide post-privatization assistance, strengthen the production sector of milk, potato, composts and mushrooms, the use of environmentally friendly technologies in the wine-making industry, the use of modern farming equipment in the agricultural sector. The potential donors of the technical assistance projects are TACIS, USAID, DFID, the Dutch Government, the Government of Japan and the IFAD.

During this period, except the projects implemented in the agricultural sector, other projects of technical assistance were completed:

- “Agro-inform” (TACIS) which contributed to the creation of the Agro-inform federation and of 10 Information Centers, the organization of seminars and provision of consulting on various themes, publication of manuals and brochures, etc.
- “Development of horticulture in Moldova” which contributed to the creation of a services and assistance center in the organization of the viable services for the horticultural products as well as the dissemination of the gained experience
- “Development of the vegetables growing in Moldova” which contributed to the creation of a modern center for the production of seedlings based on the Dutch experience
- “Launch of the production of the potato-seedling in the Republic of Moldova” which contributed to the organization of activities pertaining to the production, preservation of seedlings, its sale as well as the dissemination of the gained experience
- Credit projects “First Agricultural Project” and “Rural Finance Project”

In 2001, FAO funded the implementation of the project “Procurement and distribution of the vegetable seedlings and corn seeds to the farmers affected by the 2000 draught”. The major purpose of the project was to provide needed post-disaster assistance for the resumption of the agricultural output. The budget of the project constituted \$ 392,000 and its implementation period was March-September 2001. The beneficiaries of the project were small private farmers from the judets of Cahul, Tighina, Taraclia, Orhei who received assistance in corn seeds and vegetable seedlings.

The main objectives of the agricultural and food policy in view of integration into the EU market are the considerable increase of the efficiency and productivity of labor in this economic sector and the adjustment of the requirements for the quality of food products to the European standards with the solution of the following problems:

- Ensure food security of the population
- Increase the efficiency of the labor force
- Increase the favorable conditions for the economic, social and ethnic-cultural development of the rural population
- Efficient use and conservation of natural resources and environment protection

The above objectives will be achieved through structural changes in agriculture, technological modernization and reorganization, the promotion of the assimilation of innovations and scientific knowledge, considerable reduction of the production costs, increase of the competitiveness of the domestic agricultural and food products through the improvement of their quality, extension of the number of agricultural enterprises.

Agriculture has a significant importance for the republic of Moldova given that:

- The productive sector of national economy will have a agricultural and food character and more than half of the population of the country has directly or indirectly the agro-industrial activity as the major source of existence
- Agricultural and food output constitutes 70% of the structure of the exports and the export to the EU countries considerably increased during the last years (in particular after the financial crisis in Russia in 1998)
- In the rural areas there are attractive natural and cultural and historic landscapes for a modern agro tourism, which will be developed to be transformed into an important economic sector.

Taking into account the need to considerable increase the economic efficiency for the use of agricultural lands, the production volume and occupancy rate, the following agricultural and food branches will be developed: viticulture – wine industry, tobacco-tobacco industry, fruits and vegetables – cans industry, sugar beet – sugar industry.

An evidence system of the natural resources with agricultural purposes and a monitoring system of the use of the natural agricultural resources will be created to implement an efficient tool for the sustainable management of agricultural resources. Comprehensive programmes for fighting erosion, stabilization of the soil fertility as well as development of rural communities will be formulated and adopted.

To avoid the gaps of the income level of various regions as well as in view of reducing the unemployment among the rural population, legal, economic and organizational measures will be

worked out and implemented, including through the attraction of fund from the international organizations (EU Funds for pre-accession).

Objectives:

- Create a competitive, efficient and sustainable agro-food sector which through the productive use of resources will ensure the food security of the population
- Create favorable conditions for the economic, social and ethic-cultural development of the rural population
- Specialize the agriculture of the Republic of Moldova in environmental products and practice organic agriculture

Actions:

- Speed up and complete the land reform with the creation and functioning of the land market, foster the association, cooperation and integration processes of the economic entities from the agro-food sector
- Restructure, modernize, increase the economic and ecological efficiency of the agricultural exploitation, re-placement of the agricultural land according to the ecological principles
- Promote local products on the external markets
- Create adequate tools for funding agricultural activities, financial-credit support and foster investments

2.11. Energy conservation

The production of electric power in 2000 constituted 904 million kWh. The share of the electric power produced in the country constituted only 26.8% of the overall volume of electric power of 3379 million kWh supplied in the network.

The production of the heating constituted 3057 thousand Gcal, thus registering a lower level as compared to the previous years. These reductions were caused by the lack of fuel as well as by the longer period of warm season of year and the incapacity of the population to pay for the consumption of the electricity and heating.

The import of energy sources for natural gas constituted 1044.1 million m³, decreasing by 32.1% as compared to the previous year. The import of coal reduced by 19.5% and of black oil

with 42.2%. The imports of petrol increased by 0.8%, of the electric power with 0.4% and diesel with 20.4%/

Privatization and restructuring of the power sector. The privatization of the power enterprises started in 2000 as a result of which 3 out of 5 power distribution networks were privatized. A tender for the other power distribution networks was organized as well, the winner being the company Union Fenosa but given the natural disasters the negotiation process of the procurement contract was postponed for a later period. S.A. CET-1, S.A. CET-2, S.A. “Termocom” were not privatized although a tender for their privatization was announced as well.

In 2000 the reorganization of the A.R.P. “Termocomenergo” with the transfer of its fix funds in the property of local authorities took place and the state enterprise “Moldtranselectro” was restructured into 4 state enterprises: “Moldelectrica”, “Nodul Hidroenergetic Costesti”, “Moldtranselectro” and “Autoelectrotrans”.

Power security of the state. A new Strategy on electric power of the Republic of Moldova and an action plan until 2010 were formulated and adopted to ensure the energy security of the state and the viable and qualitative supply of the energy consumers. The law on energy conservation as well as laws on the restructuring of energy enterprises was formulated and the action plan on the use of regenerating energy sources was approved.

Recently the indicative programme for gas supply of the Republic of Moldova until 2005 was formulated and stipulates the construction of gas pipes and networks, the creation of the evidence system of the imported and transited natural gas. It is worth mentioning that a grant was provided for the station for measuring gas “TOCUZ” in Causeni, the negotiations with the World Bank for the allocation of a grant for the construction of other 5 stations for measuring.

Programmes and projects. Except the individual programmes and projects for the privatization of the power sector enterprises, supported financially by the state budget, starting with 1996 a number of studies and investigations supported by the international financial organizations (TACIS, Power project –1 and Power Project-2), the Technical Assistance and Investment project, etc.) aimed at the improvement of the enterprise management form the power sector.

International cooperation is effected in the framework of the common power system and cooperation in the field of gas of the CIS member-states, in particular, with Ukraine and Russia

(import and transit of the natural gas and electric power) as well as on the basis of bilateral agreements with Romania.

Objectives:

- Restructure the power sector, complete the privatization of enterprises and create a competitive power market, aligned to the European standards and norms
- Increase the power efficiency through the promotion of a consequent policy of energy conservation, including the use of regenerating resources
- Ensure the power security of the country through meeting the power and power resources demands in the required quantity

Actions:

- Power efficiency of output, transport, distribution and power supply
- Renovate and increase the competitive capacities for the production of the electric power, equipment of the transport network with modern evidence systems
- Increase the power efficiency of consumers, train consumers in energy conservation at all levels
- Diversify the import sources of energy sources

2.12. Sustainable development of transport

The activity of enterprises in this field is aimed at increasing the economic stability and efficiency of the transport and road management, creating and regulating the transport services market.

In relation with the territorial-administrative reorganization, the passengers' traffic was revised. 14 international routes, 32 inter-city and 34 sub-urban routes were opened. At the same time, given the lack of demand for a long period of time, 22 international routes, 66 inter-urban and 117 sub-urban routes were closed and the restructuring plan of the Moldovan railways is ongoing. The bridge over the Nistru river from the village of Gura Bicului was almost completed given a grant provided by the European Community.

One of the major future objectives is the adherence of the Republic of Moldova to the European transport system. The 9th European corridor will cross the territory of the country which will link the Scandinavian countries with the Balkan ones thus contributing to the

integration of Moldova into the European Union and creating a favorable environment for economy and job creation for the population.

The legislative framework for the funding system and reorganization of the road management sector will be reviews and completed to improve and increase the efficiency in the traffic field.

To ensure the correspondence with the European railway system, a series of actions were undertaken in the field of development and modernization of the railway transport:

- Organization division of the Moldovan railway into independent subdivisions for the management of the railway infrastructure and use of the transport service through the creation of voyage and goods companies
- Privatization of the adjacent enterprises of the Moldovan railways
- Establish the access to railway infrastructure for the transport operators, including the introduction of the payment for its use
- Privatization of a share of the railway infrastructure
- Renew the train park in accordance with the transportation requirements
- Create the coordination body in the railway transport
- Build the railway Ungheni-Chisinau according to the European standards

The fact that Moldova is transited by 6 air corridors from the Middle East to the Northern Europe is a prerequisite of the future efficient activity of both the main airport and civil aviation. At the same time, the increase of the demands on the European market of the air services as well as Moldova's adherence to a number of international organizations which set up standards and procedures in the field of civil aviation (OACI, CEAC, JAA, Eurocontrol) imply the need to continuously increase the level of services in the airplanes.

To achieve these goals, there is a need to carry out the following objectives:

- Integrate the coordination system of the air traffic of Moldova into the European system
- Renovate and modernize the air navigation equipment, the meteorological assistance systems and air telecommunications
- Integrate into the Eurocontrol system, obtain the statute of a full-rights member of the United Air Authorities and the adjustment of the specific national regulations with the security standards of the flights set up by these organizations

- Initiate negotiations for the participation in the European Joint Aviation Zone
- Adjust the national legislation to the stipulations of the legal framework of the European Union

Long-term actions:

- Electrification of the railway
- Renovation of the transport means
- Reconstruct the main streets of Chisinau, create a special road to avoid the city for the transit transport
- Rebuild the road of state importance according to the European standards with the creation of the respective infrastructure.

Naval transport. The exploitation length of the internal navigable routes on the Nistru and Prut rivers constitutes 558 km. The naval transport constitutes less than 0.1% in the total volume of goods transportation. Given the low depth of their riverbed the navigation and the use of ships is limited. Also the lack of a canal lock at the dam of the hydro energetic station in Dubasari impedes the direct navigation on the Nistru river.

The navigation of ships of the type river-sea is possible at the distance of 1 km from the delta of the Prut river. After the equipment of the landing place in Giurgiulesti on Danube the regular use of these ships will be possible.

The participation of the Republic of Moldova to various international organizations will allow to solve the issue of interaction and elaboration of a joint policy in the field of transport of the CIC member states and EC and the coordination of the activity to ensure the functioning and development of the transport system of each country on free principles, mutual coordination and equal rights.

Objectives:

- Integration of transport into the European area, their homogenization and connection to pan-European corridors
- Provide transport services to meet the needs of the economy of the country and improve the services for the population

Actions:

- Technical, technological and managerial modernization of transport and infrastructure
- Restructure, reconstruct and reequip transport

- Implement technical standards, technical homologation of vehicles for the traffic security, use of qualitative fuel and the reduction of environment pollution
- Reconstruct and build roads and railways according to European standards

2.13. Development of industry

At the beginning of the 90s, Moldova was considered an industrial and agricultural country. Industry constituted 60% of the social output in 1989 and 90% in the exports.

According to the Concept on industry policy, adopted in 1996, the industrial enterprises were involved in the restructuring, reprofiling and conversion process. But due to general crisis, during 1990-2001 the majority of the enterprises reduced their output level and others went bankrupted. The existence of industry as a sector was in danger. The causes were the reduction of the demand, the destruction of the technological and production relations established in the previous years, the increase of prices to power resources, raw material and spare parts, stopping of the preferential crediting by the state, acute lack of financial means for the completion of spare parts, lack of investments for the modernization of the production capacities.

The key problem in the restructuring and development of industry are the financial sources coming from investments. The public budget will be distributed for the selective support by the state – first of all, of the programmes and projects approved by the Parliament and Government.

The main areas of industry are focused on the reestablishment of the viability of enterprises, the creation of favorable conditions for stopping the output decline and fostering its increase.

At the same time, the volume of the industrial output reduced in electric engineering – by 31%, in medical industry – with 45%, milling, groats and combined fodder – with 53%, tobacco – with 6%, meat – 4% - bread industry – 3%. About 1/3 of the enterprises have a reduced work schedule with their financial situation being complicated. The debt burden leads to a permanent increase of the credit and debit debts which constitute 5.9 billion lei and respectively 2 billion lei as of 1 October 2000 in the whole industrial sector. The share of food industry in the industrial output constituted like in previous years 48%.

The bankruptcy process was initiated for 144 economic entities out of which 40 are big industrial enterprises and 104 – economic entities in agriculture to increase the efficient

management of the enterprises generating losses. At the same time, 100 enterprises were declared bankrupt.

The Concept on the replacement of the import goods was recently approved to ensure the internal market with a wide range of qualitative goods, which stipulates a series of stimulating measures for the local economic entities, the elaboration of concrete programmes for the replacement of the import goods. The Trade House “Belmoldintegratia” was opened in Chisinau and the Trade House “Moldova-M” was opened in Moscow to promote the mutual cooperation relations and sale of goods.

Objectives:

- create industrial branches, producing competitive and high-quality goods which will ensure a stable economic growth and increase the income of the population
- revive the industry based on restructuring, reorganization and reprofiling of industrial enterprises

Actions:

- promote and support the industries focused on export, its contribution to the economic growth, saving of resources
- support the investments process, the technological transfer and knowledge sharing
- implement the quality insurance system, reform of the management and marketing reform
- promote the environmentally friendly products with the use of the non-polluting technologies

2.14. Science for sustainable development

The negative processes caused by the lack of funding of the scientific research and technological transfer existed during the entire period. The amount of budget allocations envisaged for the scientific research is lower each year, constituting in 1996 – 2.1 and in 2000 – 0.87% of GDP. Besides that, the low collection of incomes to the state budget does not allow the full allocation even of this amount. In 2000 costs worth 27.6 million lei or 94% of the needs were funded.

To improve the situation, the sector reform was initiated through the approval of the respective concept and the adoption of the Law on state policy in this field, according to which

the High Council for Science and Technological Development was under the Government which major functions is to elaborate and implement the state policy in this field.

The legal framework for the regulation of the research-development area was worked out and priorities were identified, funded from the state budget for 2000-2002. A tender for the research-development projects for 2001 was organized to introduce the competition system for funding. Out of 486 projects, 81 projects with a budget worth 3 million lei or 10% of the total volume of the budget allocations for scientific research in 2001.

In the framework of the international technical-scientific collaboration, the adherence process of the Republic of Moldova to the Inter-state Exchange Agreement on technical-scientific information within CIS was initiated as well as to the Scientific-Technological Center in Ukraine, created and funded by the United States, Canada and EU. Also, proposals for collaboration with the research-development institutions in the Republic of Moldova were selected and submitted to the respective parties: 114 projects for research with similar institutions from the Russian Federation and 30 projects with the Republic of Belarus.

Objectives:

- integrate science in all areas of social-economic development as a fundamental means of economic growth, population's welfare and ecological security
- increase the efficiency of the management of the research-development sector, internationalization of the research and development

Actions:

- reform the scientific-technological system of the country, finalize the major areas and the allocation of funds based on tenders
- introduce tools for technological transfer, sharing of knowledge and sale of the results of the scientific-technological activities
- adjust the academic science to the branch and university one

2.15. Education – the priority of the country

The process of the stabilization of the situation in the education field and of the economic reforms is ongoing. The structure and the network of all types of educational establishments were improved. Based on the secondary schools, 30 lyceums and 24 gymnasiums were created as educational institutions focused on the world advanced educational standards. The number of

secondary schools is still high (35%) which cause unjustified budget costs given the impossibility to create groups with reduced terms of studying in the higher education.

The staff training system in the country has 4 more universities and 3 colleges. The number of university students is 79 thousand people and of the colleges – 20 thousand. 75% of students are studying in state institutions, the number of students studying on a contract basis in universities constituting 48% and in colleges – 26%. The state plan for the registration in the educational institutions with funding from the budget was reduced at the specialties that are most popular among youth on a contractual basis (economy, law, modern languages, IT, etc.). The admittance of the students to high schools was reduced by 840 persons.

During 1999-2000 about 7843 young people from the Republic of Moldova studies abroad, out of which 3130 in the pre-university institutions, 4046 – universities, 645 – post university studies.

Concrete steps were undertaken to improve the material situation of the teachers, the scholarships of students and pupils were increased and the teachers' wages were increased by 50%. The educational establishments were allowed to use up to 50% of the extra budgetary funds for the remuneration of the staff. Efforts were made to improve the legal and normative framework.

The Concept on training staff for the national economy and the list of the priority professions for teaching staff in the secondary professional education were worked out.

Programmes for the development of education at the judet level, the mechanism for the functioning of the pre-school institutions and the plan-framework for the short-term higher education are in the process of implementation. The academic evaluation and accreditation of the higher education institutions has begun.

The private education sector is developing fast with 37 universities and 16 colleges in the higher education now. The number of students at the private universities constitutes 23 % of the overall number of students and in colleges about 20%.

Taking into account the number of the population of the country, we have 26 times more private universities than in Russia and this shows that the quality of their activity is not controlled and the mechanism for issuing licenses has to be improved.

The schooling of the children of 7-16 year-old children is a difficult problem. During this academic year, about 7 thousand children did not go to school (128% as compared to 1999). The

biggest number of children not attending the school is the judets of Lapusna, Cahul and Orhei. There is no efficient mechanism for the employment of young people. Out of 7.6 thousand graduates of the state universities with funding from the state budget, only 1.3 thousand (17%) were engaged.

The deepening of the internal economic and social reforms and the strategic option of the integration into the EU imply the promotion of a global education reform. Since education is the most important and the key investment in the human capital, the policy of Moldova in the field of education is a national priority and is focused towards providing equal opportunities to education for all categories of population, the observance of the human rights and freedom and the adjustment of the specialties proposed by the educational establishments to the labor market needs. In line with this, the following actions are taken:

- estimation of the number of specialists per specialties necessary for the national economy
- improvement of education through the optimization of the network and structure of the educational establishments notwithstanding their level and type
- completion of the manuals fund and the promotion of a sustainable mechanism for funding the process of the elaboration of manuals and the supply of student and pupils with manuals
- strengthening of the teaching staff by revising the statute and duties of teachers and their continuous training in the implementation of the new educational standards
- elaboration and implementation of the state educational standards which will lie at the basis of the national system for the evaluation of education at all levels of training and the qualification level of teachers
- finalization of the transmission of the secondary education institutions under the subordination of the local public administration
- Improvement of the social protection mechanism of pupils and students which envisages the finalization of the funding modality of students, of the provision of merit and social scholarships and of the facilities system (provide accommodation, food, manuals, etc.)

Environmental education. Higher education establishments are involved in the training of specialists in the field (the State University, the technical University, the Institute of Real Sciences, the Ecological University, and the Ecologic College). The graduates of these

institutions are not provided with jobs according to their specialty and about 75% of them have to look for a job in other areas.

Each year on September 1 the “ecological hour” is organized in schools and classes dedicated to the World Environment Day are organized throughout the year. This is not enough and there is a need for a more active participation of specialists and teachers for its organization.

The draft Law on environmental education is in the process of formulation which envisages the introduction of ecology as a separate subject in schools and the environmental training of the pupils and population. The printing of manuals and guidelines for all schools in the country will be one of the most important actions. The implementation of these stipulations will require the allocation of funds from the state budget or other sources, without which its implementation will be impossible.

At this stage, there is a need to undertake actions for the modification and finalization of the legislation which will ensure the access of the civil society to the information about environment, decision-making in the field at all levels, national issues and environmental security in the country. Environmental education and awareness of citizens is important, in particular of children and teenagers, of officials and their effective involvement in the promotion of the environmental policy at the national and local level. The mobilization and allocation of funds for these activities should be a priority.

Objectives:

- guarantee the access to education
- development of the individual and his/her skills – intellectual, physic, practical, creative, formation of the personality

Actions:

- strengthen the legal framework on education development
- increase the budget costs through the identification of the priorities of financial insurance, organization of trainings on contractual basis
- improve the mechanism for the employment of the young specialists, correlation of the demand and offer with the labor market opportunities
- create favorable conditions for the development of the private education
- initiate environmental education at all educational levels

2.16. Public awareness and participation

In the Republic of Moldova environmental NGOs started to be created in the beginning of the 90s due to an increased interest of some representatives of the civil society towards environment. The existing guarantee of the citizens' rights to free association and adoption of the legal documents in the field of public associations facilitated this process. Their number increased during 1998-2000 due to the democratic reforms and the support of the international organizations.

There are about 200 big and small environmental NGOs today in the country, some of them having a branch structure and branches in the field. Public organizations were created in judet centers, towns and communities. The creation and registration of environmental NGOs in Transnistria in 2000-2001 is a confirmation of the society democratization.

NGOs are engaged in environmental training activities, publication of books and booklets in the field, the organization of seminars, research and expeditions in the field and concrete actions for the protection and rehabilitation of the environment.

The Regional Environmental Center, created in 1998 (200 thousand EURO), the National Ecological Fund (150-250 thousand lei annually) and other international institutions and programmes in the field provide considerable support to these actions.

To involve them more actively in the environment protection process and decision-making, during 2000-2001, representatives of NGOs were invited to the national conferences and workshops with some of the draft national documents – policies, plans and strategies – being discussed during public debates. Experts of the environmental organizations are members of the working groups for the implementation of the international conventions and are involved in the preparation process of the Republic of Moldova for the World Summit for Sustainable Development in Johannesburg.

Environmental NGOs in Moldova conducted a number of meetings on the evaluation of the stipulations of the Agenda 21 in Moldova and formulated an alternative Report. They also took an active part in the preparation of the Republic of Moldova for the ratification of the Aarhus Convention, made an analysis of the existing legislation for the realization of the principles 10

and 15 from the Rio Declaration. NGO representatives are members of various governmental commissions.

Through their activities, NGOs are complementing the work effected by the state organizations. Public awareness of the respective issue is very important. Some NGOs organize training campaigns for the public, other – campaigns for planting trees, other organizations conduct water and soil research, biodiversity investigations and there are organizations active in various fields. Due to the contribution of some NGOs such as the Ecological Movement in Moldova, BIOTICA, BIOS, Terra Nostra, Agroeco, etc., the local public administration and landowners implement a series of activities for the conservation of soil, water, biodiversity, cleaning of areas in their communities.

NGOs promote the idea of European integration through a partnership with NGOs from other countries. For example, the NGO BIOD implemented together with the Foundation Avalon from the Netherlands the project “The promotion of organic agriculture in Moldova”, implements jointly with the Institute for Research in Pedology and Agro chemistry in Romania the projects “Support system of decision for increasing the efficiency of the agro physic management of soils from small and medium farms in Romania and Moldova” and “Vulnerability of agro systems and hydrologic resources from the Prut river basin to the climate changes”. As a member of the Climate Action Network in Central and Eastern Europe (CANCEE), it contributes to the elaboration and implementation of the regional strategies and policies in climate change.

The right to participate in decision-making in the field of environment has a special importance as it gives the possibility to formulate decisions that do not contravene the legislation, create a balance between the environmental and economic interests, ensure the environmental security of the population. In this context, the stipulations of the Law on environmental expertise and evaluation of the impact on environment have to be better applied which envisage the public environmental expertise of various projects and can contribute considerably to an “ecologization” of the social-economic life. Some of the existing laws stipulate the public control. NGOs can create with the approval of the Ministry of Ecology, Constructions and Territorial Development and local public authorities, public ecological inspectorates. Public organizations for consumers’ protection have the right to participate to the controls in the commerce and services area in connection with the consideration of the consumers’ complaints, to controls organized by the state organizations on observing the quality conditions of the products and services provided.

At the same time we have to mention that the authority of the majority of NGOs is relatively low and there is a need to strengthen their efforts for the achievement of their common goals. The potential of environmental NGOs is not fully used by the state organizations and the process of their involvement in decision-making of national or local importance is often at the incipient stage.

The general public, each member of the society, has an important contribution to the change of the quality of environment:

- As an individual, concerned with the personal health and of his/her predecessors, with the environment in general
- As a generator of pollution and of wastes at the work place, leisure or residence place
- As a consumer of goods and services which causes pressures on the economy, having an indirect impact on environment issues

One of the prerequisites of the active involvement of the members of the society in the solution of the environmental problems is public information. The active participation of the non-governmental and environmental organizations and consumers' associations, of trade unions and professional associations will have a special importance for the public information and education. At the same time, the information and education will not bring the expected results if the population will not have alternatives for the "antiecological" environment, for example a developed system of municipal transport as an alternative to the use of the personal transport, a system for the separate collection of wastes, which will allow their recycling, etc.

NGOs were the initiators of the cross-border cooperation in the field of environment improvement of the river Nistru and the creation of the International association of preserving the Nistru river "Eco TIRAS".

For a long period of time, the publication "Natura" was practically the only source of information and education reflecting the activities in the field. It considerably contributed to the formation of the environmental consciousness in the country. During the last years, a series of publications and information bulletins (Gutta, the newsletter of the territorial branch in Chisinau of the Environmental Movement in Moldova, the newsletter of the Ministry of Ecology, Constructions and Territorial Development "3rd Millennium", the bulletin of the NGO BIOS "BioSynopsis") and recently the magazine "Environment" of MECDT and National Ecology Institute was launched, columns were inserted in the magazines "Noi",

Alunelul, newspapers “Literatura si Arta” , “Faclia”, “Florile Dalbe”, “Moldova Suverana”, “Nezavisimaia Moldova”, “Noivoie Vremia”, etc. New radio and TV programmes on environmental issues are produced and the leadership and employees of the environmental organizations participate in round tables and press conferences on various environmental issues.

The Environment Information Center of the Ministry of Ecology, Constructions and Territorial Development and the Green Library of the REC Moldova and the Information Center of REC Moldova were opened recently. The environmental publications are distributed among educational establishments, libraries, and local public administration. The information is disseminated electronically, placed on Internet and are forwarded to news agencies on a weekly basis.

Public opinion becomes more concern about health and people realize that environment has a direct impact on this. To go from the concern for one’s own health to the concern for the environment quality, and in particular to concrete actions, there is a need to improve the environmental information system. The latter is underdeveloped now because the potential of media, educational institutions and NGOs is not fully used. The population has access to the programmes of the national TV and radio and local stations and channels. Unfortunately, the airtime of the national posts is on a continuous decrease. Another problem is the quality of the programmes of the new channels, which reflect mainly the political and economic, needs of the owners. With few exceptions, regional environmental issues are covered superficially. Printed press lost its importance given the living conditions and lack of trust of the majority of the population in media. There is no publication that will describe the situation in the field of environment on the territory of judets. The slow installation of Internet limits the access to information of the judets of the country.

Objectives:

- Create a modern, open and active civil society
- Create mechanisms for inter-sector cooperation on sustainable development issues
- Facilitate the access of the population to information and to decision-making in all Areas of social-economic development

Actions:

- Broad involvement of the public associations and of the population in decision-making in all areas of social-economic development and the activities of public interest
- Improve the national legislation for a more efficient implementation of the principle 10 of the Local Agenda 21
- Broad information of the population, information flow as a component of the cultural values, public awareness about sustainable development issues and needs
- Increase the role of the main groups of the population (women, children and youth), of the local public administration, business men, farmers in the promotion of sustainable development principles
- Promote the social dialogue and partnership, support by the state of the constructive initiatives
- Create inter-sector councils at the national, regional and local level for the solution of the territorial development, environment protection and efficient use of natural resources issues

III. Conclusions

For the Republic of Moldova, the acceptance of the sustainable development doctrine is not just one of the many possible options but represents the only path to the short and medium term strategic planning of the development in accordance with the national priorities and objectives of the international collaboration. This new development concept envisages the mandatory harmonization of the economic growth with other factors of major importance, such as the increase of the living standards of the population, environmental, food and energy security, environment protection and efficient use of natural resources.

Taking into account the social focus of economy, the state policy will be targeted towards the creation of favorable conditions for improving the life quality, social protection of the vulnerable groups of the population, towards the development of the social benefits system, creation of new jobs, ensure the access to qualitative medical aid, preserve and increase the cultural heritage, create a human capital through science and education development.

The achievement of the above mentioned social goals will be possible only through ensuring sustainable economic growth that will need the involvement in the social and human structures at the regional, European and global level as well as the creation of a coherent and stable legislative framework, adjusted to the international one and focused on the creation of a beneficial entrepreneurial and investment environment.

The promotion of the sustainable development principles will need the unification of the efforts of the central and local public administration, entrepreneurs, economic entities, education and research-development fields, the participation of all constructive forces of the society in this activity and the cooperation at internal levels and with the international organizations.

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