

## A WORD FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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A series of strategies and concepts that emphasize the process of economic growth, a process that is considered the basis of progress in all areas have been developed over time, with the aim to diminish the various contrasts and to ensure a balanced global development. If the traditional economic growth models were oriented towards the development and amplification of created wealth so as to provide the premises for raising living standards or, in other words, they had a predominantly quantitative orientation, the new approaches to growth are predominantly qualitative, which means that the growth process must predominantly serve the human, social and environmental dimensions.

Sustainable development is a new way of development that sustains human progress not only in a few places and for a few years, but for the population of the entire planet and in a long-term future. But sustainability becomes a model of development only if countries, economic sectors, firms and citizens are appropriating and using its principles. Any development process must have a human aim, if not it will be doomed to failure. Thus, development must lead to the improvement of the quality of people's lives and the expansion of their skills to shape their own future. Since economic and social development is achieved through people, human potential must be created and refined based on investment in human resources, namely education, culture, vocational training and health.

Sustainable human development has become an operative concept in the world since 1990, when the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) began to promote human development as an alternative paradigm against the economic conception on development. The UNDP's Human Development Index (HDI) has successfully served as an alternative method of assessing development, completing economic indicators. It has captured human progress, combining information on people's health, education and income in just one number.

The Annual Human Development Reports prepared by UNDP offer effective recommendations both at national and international level. The 2018 Update reflects human development progress over 1990–2017 in terms of Human Development Index (HDI) values and the number of people in the four human development categories. The cover reflects that even though the global population increased from 5 billion to 7.5 billion between 1990 and 2017, the number of people in low human development fell from 60 percent of the global population to 12 percent and that the number of people in high and very high human development more than tripled, from 24 percent of the global population to 51 percent. The level of human development is not balanced. For example, every Norwegian citizen has a life expectancy of 82 years and 18 years of education, but in Niger, these values are 60 years and 5 years. Some key discoveries rise up out of the 2018 Report, as presented below.

Most individuals today live more, are increasingly educated and have more access to goods and services than any other time before. But the quality of human development reveals extensive deficits. Living longer does not consequently mean more years spent enjoying life. Being in school longer does not consequently convert into equivalent capacities and skills. So moving the focus towards the quality of human improvement will be essential in checking future progress.

Gender inequality represents one of the greatest barriers to human development. The average HDI for women is 6 percent lower than that of men, with nations in the low development classification enduring the greatest gaps. Given current rates of progress it could take over 200 years to close the economic gender gap across the planet.

Environmental degradation puts human development gains in danger, as evident from carbon dioxide emissions, deforestation, fresh water withdrawals and so on.

In the case of Romania, the Human Development Index (HDI) is 0.811, which allows the country to be included in the group of "very high human development" (52<sup>nd</sup> place), along with other countries in the region such as Bulgaria (51) Hungary (45), Slovakia (38), Poland (33), Greece (31) and Czech Republic (27).

In conclusion, sustainable human development means broad expression of options and the use of human capacities as a result of human capital modeling so that people are able to contribute to meeting the needs of present generations without compromising the needs of future generations. For these reasons, human development needs to be incorporated into public policy debates and included in the macroeconomic decision-making agenda.