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RELATIONS BETWEEN UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND SOCIETAL SECURITY. PART 3

Abstract

Sustainable development goals are main indicators and directions of achieving widely understood development complying with current world development strategies. The article presents the results of a literature review on the relationships between those goals and societal security. Consequently, the relationships were related to the most important utilitarian values (human life and health). In the third part, the focus was on four last goals: 'life below water', 'life on land', 'peace, justice and strong institutions' and 'partnership for the goals'. The Web of Science® Data Collection database was explored and 46 papers were selected for an in-depth analysis. In the third part, it was evidenced that life on the ground and partnership for the purposes were clearly more frequently taken into account in relation to the threat to human health and life, the universal nature, the immediacy of the response and the characteristic hazards (natural hazards and technical failure). This observation has been made in the context of all objectives. They can therefore serve to advance the issue of universal security in sustainable development in general.

Keywords: societal security, local and global security, sustainability, sustainable development goals (SDGs)

RELACJE POMIĘDZY CELAMI ZRÓWNOWAŻONEGO ROZWOJU ONZ A BEZPIECZEŃSTWEM POWSZECHNYM. CZĘŚĆ 3

Abstrakt

Cele zrównoważonego rozwoju są głównymi wskaźnikami i kierunkami osiągnięcia szeroko rozumianego zrównoważonego rozwoju zgodnie ze współczesnymi strategiami światowego rozwoju. Artykuł przedstawia wyniki przeglądu literatury poświęconego zależnościom pomiędzy tymi celami a bezpieczeństwem powszechnym. W konsekwencji, zależności zostały zrelatywizowane z naj-

ważniejszymi wartościami utylitarnymi (ludzkim życiem i zdrowiem). W części trzeciej uwaga została zwrócona na cztery ostatnie cele: 'życie pod wodą', 'życie na ziemi', 'pokój, sprawiedliwość i silne instytucje' oraz 'partnerstwo dla celów'. Przeszukano bazę Web of Science® Data Collection i do głębszej analizy wybrano 46 artykułów. W części trzeciej zostało udowodnione, że życie na ziemi i partnerstwo dla celów wyróżniająco częściej były brane pod uwagę w relacji z zagrożeniem ludzkiego zdrowia i życia, powszechnym charakterem, niezwłocznością odpowiedzi i charakterystycznymi zagrożeniami (zagrożeniem naturalnym i awarią techniczną). Zaobserwowano to w kontekście wszystkich celów. Mogą więc posłużyć do rozwoju kwestii bezpieczeństwa powszechnego w zrównoważonym rozwoju w ogóle.

Słowa kluczowe: bezpieczeństwo powszechne, bezpieczeństwo lokalne i globalne, zrównoważony rozwój; cele zrównoważonego rozwoju (SDGs)

1. Introduction

Sustainable development goals (SDGs) are current directions and indicators of global development in the light of sustainability [1]. The goals present a wide spectrum of issues that need to be considered when it comes to a holistic approach to sustainable existence nowadays. Some of them are also connected with challenges arising from threats to human life and health. This is why there is a need to analyse SDGs in the context of societal security to check whether the most important utilitarian values are sufficiently reflected in current agenda of global development, especially that the goals are implemented successively, the number of relevant reports keeps growing and first implementation conclusions are accessible [2].

The paper presents the third part of results obtained on the basis of a literature review. The review considered papers selected from the Web of Science® (WoS®) Core Collection database (the first two parts were reported in previous volumes of the journal) [3, 4]. This supplements the previous findings and broadens the analysis of relations between SDGs and societal security issues by a presentation of the last 4 goals (from SDG14 to SDG17) in the light of societal security characteristics. The cognitive focus was placed on both direct and indirect relations between the goals and characteristic societal security issues (danger to human life and health, societal character, urgency of the response, characteristic hazard).

2. Materials and methods

Given the methodological coherency with results presented in the previous parts of the report, we assumed that the analysis of materials should include publications from a verified reliable international database. For this purpose, WoS® Core Collection database was selected. Furthermore, the papers selection process regarded such search keywords, as 'sustainable development goals AND societal security' [3, 4].

46 publications met the above specified requirements and they were selected for further analysis. The next step was to verify whether relations between SDGs and societal security are noticed in the papers chosen. The authors read all the materials in their entirety, which allowed them to identify at least one relation. Abstracts, keywords, research assumptions, research results, discussions or conclusions (paying special attention to future research directions) were taken into account. They were examined to indicate information about societal security characteristics enumerated below and on Figure 1 [46]:

- a) danger to human life and health,
- b) societal character,
- c) urgency of the response,
- d) characteristic hazard (natural disaster or technical failure).

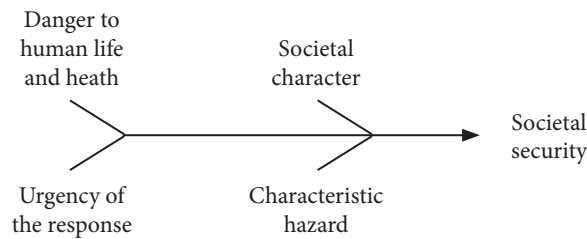


Fig. 1. Societal security characteristics

Source: own study

Premises for the existence of relations between SDGs and societal security were found in an entire set of the papers chosen (at least one relation in each paper). The final number of papers for the in-depth analysis was still 46. Consequently, the papers were read to find which SDGs are mentioned in particular papers. Figure 2 visualises a quantitative result of this analysis.

Different goals occur at a different frequency in the papers analysed. In this part of the research the focus was on following SDGs: ‘life below water’ (SDG14), ‘life on land’ (SDG15), ‘peace, justice and strong institutions’ (SDG16), and ‘partnership for the goals’ (SDG17). The frequency reflects the interest shown by other authors in taking into consideration aspects characteristic for societal security when making research on SDG14, SDG, SDG16 and SDG17. In this set of the goals, relevant values are scattered.

SDG15 and SDG17 were the top goals in terms of the authors’ interest. Relations to them were found in 11 papers. This gives almost the highest value in general (as compared to all 17 goals) and proves that societal security characteristics are relatively common with life on land and partnership for the goals. A completely opposite situation was observed for SDG14 and SDG16. Even if it is not so surprising for life below water (this goal seems to be not common around the world), it is

for peace, justice and strong institutions, especially that they are related to classical societal hazards (conflicts, violence, civil unrest, remnants of war) [47]. This allows a preliminary assumption that relations to societal security are in many cases not obvious and there is still much to do to cover all SDGs.

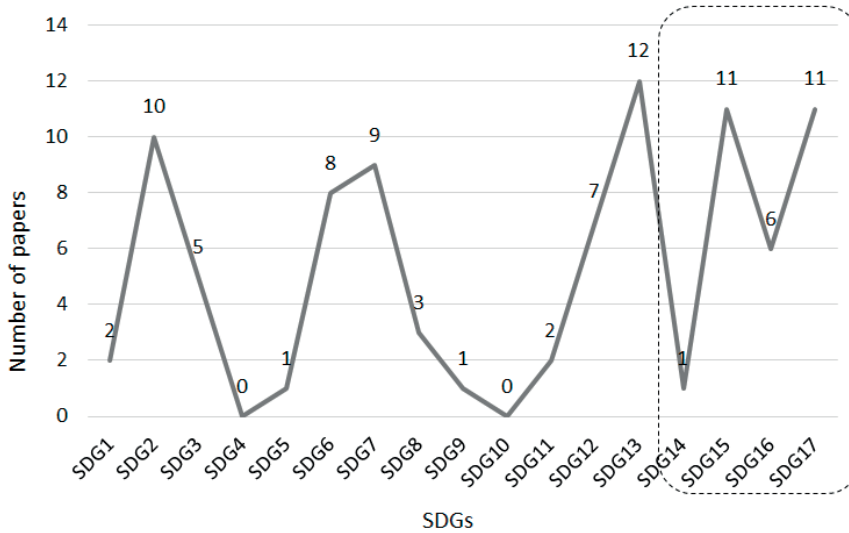


Fig. 2. The frequency of SDGs discussed in the analysed articles

Source: own study

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Security and 'life below water' (SDG14)

While it is a truism to keep repeating that without clean seas and oceans, rich in all kinds of fauna and flora, life on earth becomes impossible, unfortunately human activities, causing pollution and progressive acidification of marine waters, have degraded water quality and weakened coastal marine ecosystems. The seas and oceans provide billions of people on earth not only with food but also with subsistence. The oceans provide ca. 50% of oxygen on earth, absorb about a quarter of man-made carbon dioxide and heat and regulate the climate. Unfortunately, excessive CO₂ emissions and absorption by seas and ratings have not only led to changes in the chemical composition of sea water and a reduction in its pH (increase in water acidity) that threatens many organisms and ecosystem services, including food security, fishing and aquaculture. It has a degrading impact on coastal protection, transport and tourism [2]. Increasing ocean acidity reduces the absorption of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and consequently weakens the impact of

the oceans on climate change mitigation. The deterioration of marine ecosystems is significantly affected by pollution of coastal waters, which in some regions of the world (in certain equatorial zones, mainly parts of Asia, Africa and Central America) ranges from 0 to 60 on a scale of 0 (highly polluted) to 100 (clean water). We can say that the entire belt of seas and oceans between the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn in Central and Southern America, Africa, Europe and Asia coastal marine and ocean waters are affected by large land-based pollution (sewage, nutrients) leading to water quality degradation and weakening of coastal marine ecosystems [2].

Any adverse changes to marine ecosystems have been compounded by over-fishing of fish stocks. According to the data contained in the Report, the percentage of marine fish that are at sustainable levels has decreased from 90% in 1974 to 67% in 2025. The lowest percentages of sustainable fish stocks were in the Mediterranean and Black Sea region (37.8%) as well as in the South-Eastern Pacific region (38.5%) [2]. They mainly contribute to illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. Ruthless poaching in water bodies is causing them to collapse, leading to food insecurity and increasing poverty for communities or even threatening the survival of local communities based on small coastal fisheries.

This does not mean that humanity has become powerless. Actions taken in 2012–2019 to protect the coastal waters of the seas and oceans have resulted in 104 out of 220 regions improving the quality of their coastal waters. Since 2010, the reach of marine protected areas has doubled. In 2018, 17% of coastal waters under national jurisdiction were designated as protected areas. Most countries have legislation in place to meet the needs of small-scale coastal fisheries, but implementation is critical. It should be borne in mind that for ca. 120 million workers worldwide (97% of whom live in developing countries) commercial fishing is the primary source of income. In the supply chain of fish and seafood to markets, small-scale local fishing communities are most at risk and despite their key contribution to nutrition, food security is marginalised. One should also remember that in these communities almost half of the cheap labour force is made up of women [2].

3.2. Security and 'life on land' (SGD15)

The unsustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems by humans is causing a degradation of increasing areas of land (according to the UN report, between 2000 and 2015, 20% of the world's land area was degraded on average, of which: in Oceania 35.5%, Central and Southern Asia 28%, Latin America 27%, Sub-Saharan Africa 22.4%, Eastern and South-Eastern Asia 24%). At the same time, land biodegradation in Europe and Northern America (excluding Switzerland and the United States of America) was 10% and in Northern Africa and Western Asia 7%. Land degradation due to man-made processes (desertification, deforestation, urbanisation)

tion, expansion of agricultural land and poor soil management) directly affected the lives of more than one billion people [2]. The loss of forests is taking place at an alarming rate (between 2000 and 2015, the share of forests in the total land area decreased to 30.7% (down by 0.4 percentage points – i.e. by over 58 million hectares). The risk of extinction of one million plant and animal species continues to increase. This could lead to a loss of global biodiversity and unknown, irreversible changes in the earth's ecosystems. This includes loss of bird habitats, unsustainable agriculture, deforestation, trade, climate change and invasive alien species [2].

Mountain ecosystems are in the best condition - mainly owing to the difficult access to these areas. Mountain areas account for 60% to 80% of the world's fresh water resources for domestic consumption, agricultural and industrial production and green energy production [2].

Actions aimed at limiting the loss of biodiversity include primarily the protection of terrestrial, freshwater and mountain areas of importance for the biodiversity of species. Unfortunately, the pace of these actions is insufficient, so it is estimated that by 2030 less than 50% of each area of species biodiversity will be protected. In addition, the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization and the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture are working on the transfer of over 4.6 million samples of plant genetic resources for food production and agriculture worldwide [2].

As with the fight against hunger (SDG-2), responsible production activities (SDG-12) or climate protection (SDG-13), the responsible use of terrestrial ecosystems cannot do without the use of remote-controlled satellite Earth observation results [5]. They allow not only to develop methods of assessment and monitoring of changes in cultivated, forested or degraded areas, but also to inform and take actions to limit adverse changes. The opportunities offered by increasing levels of digitisation, influencing the geopolitics of non-state actors are highlighted, as the common values and interests of populations in protecting ecosystems are implemented across borders and become stronger than the actions of individual states [6]. In the scientific discourse, one can find claims that transformation and sustainable action in ecosystem conservation must be based not only on the results of multi-criteria assessments, but also on the underlying values, as complementary to holistic analyses, or based on objectives or outcomes [7].

The use and protection of land, and especially the directions of their development (expansion of arable fields or pastures) will depend on population, agricultural productivity, regulation of land use, consumer preferences, GDP growth, trade development [8]. Anyone developing in these directions in an unsustainable way will contribute to greenhouse gas emissions, cause an impact on biodiversity and carbon absorption capacity, leading to further degradation of Earth's ecosystems. The progressive degradation of land and terrestrial ecosystems will have

a very negative impact on a part of rural population and its livelihoods, especially if we assume that most of the world's arable land is in the hands of small farmers, the world's agrarian landscape will change on a large scale in a situation of changes in production and land purchase systems. Agrarian changes will also be followed by changes in water demand, or even water grabbing [9].

We can assume that serious lowland degradation in developing countries is crucial for the livelihoods and lives of a large part of the population. Restrictions on their use and even conflicts (especially with communities leading pastoral or nomadic lifestyles) can be a source of social, economic and environmental problems, especially due to the non-recognition of customary and nomadic grazing rights [10]. The degradation of farmland and the resulting poverty, in countries with unstable political systems, is often associated with socio-political changes, especially where the systems of governance and land ownership and use have undergone significant changes. Such areas are being completely destroyed without assuring proper management. Inappropriate policies and management (and often corruption) make it very difficult to maintain and develop such areas, and changes in the ecosystem, once the system's resilience is exceeded, lead to such a state of degradation [10] that its restoration requires investment or even international financing of development programs.

All these factors will cause not only changes in management conditions but also adverse social transformations. Therefore, land policy and tools for proper management and administration of lands, including problems with access to and use of land, play an important role in the process of ensuring the security of ecosystems and sustainable land use [11]. These activities must be supported by soil information, laboratory-based scientific work to improve soil quality, reverse degradation processes and protection of life on the ground [12]. Reversing the trend and stopping the biodegradation of land that could be used for cultivation will not bring about immediate changes and increased crop productivity that would contribute to food security for a growing population. In the food production cycle, vaccination of vegetables should be considered, mainly for two purposes: to eliminate soil-borne diseases and to induce shoot vigour [13].

From the technical point of view, negative ecological changes in riverine floodplains, dams (e.g. on the Mekong River) are not without significance. Deforestation and water infrastructure development have a direct impact on the environment, exacerbating negative regional factors and climate change [14]. Large-scale projects can have a positive impact (storing water for irrigation and urban uses and generating energy), but must not come at the expense of agro-ecological systems and cause social consequences such as displacement [15].

3.3. Security and 'peace, justice and strong institutions' (SDG16)

The implementation of SDG-16 does not inspire optimism. The authors of the Report conclude that “no significant progress has been made in recent years towards a stopping of violence, promoting the rule of law, strengthening institutions (state and local government) at all levels, or increasing access to justice. [...] Conflicts and other forms of violence are an insult to sustainable development” [2]. In 2018, the exodus of people in the world fleeing wars, conflicts and violence exceeded 70 million. Human rights are violated in many regions of the world. The rate of crimes in which lives are lost is not improving either. On average, in the decade 2007–2017 the murder rate was ca. 6 per 100 000 people. Statistics show that the highest murder rates in the world concern Latin America and the Caribbean (34%) and Sub-Saharan Africa (33%). The victims of the murders are mainly men (80%). 64% of women were victims of murders committed by partners/family members. This rate increases to 82% in the case of sexual homicide by intimate partners. Criminalisation makes them the regions of the world where young people between 15 and 29 years old are a group that is the most vulnerable to murder [2].

The world is failing to provide security for human rights defenders, journalists and trade unionists. Only during the first ten months of 2018, the UN reported that such killings occurred in 41 countries and claimed 397 victims. A quarter of the victims were journalists and bloggers. 10% of the victims were women. Statistically, nine people were murdered every week. Every second victim dealt with issues relating to land, the environment, poverty, the rights of minorities and indigenous peoples, or the environmental impact of economic activities [2].

Although the detection of human rights violations is increasing, human trafficking remains a shameful issue for justice systems. In 2016, 59% of victims were trafficked for sexual exploitation and more than a third were used for forced labour. In these groups more than 83% of women and girls were trafficked for sexual exploitation and 82% of men were trafficked for forced labour (The Sustainable, 2019).

Another sign of violation of civil rights is the lack of birth registration for children under 5 years of age. On average, only 73% of births of children in the world have been formally reported and registered. This problem mainly concerns Sub-Saharan Africa (46% of registered births and children), Central and Southern Asia (68%) and South-Eastern Asia (82%). Only in Europe and Northern America the registration rate is 100%. Even if in the rest of the world, Northern Africa and Western Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean and Oceania these rates are 89%, 94% and 98% respectively, everything must be done to ensure that every child has a right to identity [2].

The problem of effectively ensuring that human and civil rights are respected is not only the prevention of murder, human trafficking, violence or the right to identity. It is also the right of access to information held by public authorities, the

functioning of justice institutions and UN accredited human rights institutions (NHRI) operating in accordance with the Paris Principles (in 2018 only 39% of countries had such compliance) [2].

The articles selected in the research process show three directions of SDG-16 analysis:

- changing areas of geopolitical interest and the role of states in the security process;
- combining security with sustainable development priorities;
- changes in the security sector.

As regards entities responsible for geopolitical processes and security, states are still mentioned, but the role of non-state and non-government actors is pointed out. At the same time, it is emphasized that given the polycentric nature of the causes of security threats in a globalised world [16], a polycentric response system to threats to stability in individual regions of the world, without the involvement of other actors in the security processes, does not guarantee the effectiveness of providing and restoring peace. This is very important as geopolitics is also changing in dynamic security environment. It is especially noticeable due to shifting the point of security interest from typically military issues to issues related to energy security, food systems and climate change. The scientific discourse from the areas of national security and state security is moving towards human security [6].

The security of the individual and of the society is much broader than its previous dimensions: territorial and military [13]. It also emphasizes the joint activities of countries, e.g. the European Space Agency, which uses space technologies for combined geopolitical activities, priority shaping, and development of sectoral policies, including for security and defence [17]. In peacemaking, international crisis and conflict management and civil-military cooperation, there is no room for development, as its priority shifts from the typical protection of civilians to the ongoing fight against terrorism and non-state actors [13].

A certain hope in establishing the right to peace is the widespread involvement of international organizations and non-state actors in dispute resolution, leading to “the emergence of a new type of instrument of international law – Roadmaps for Peace for all actors, with binding effects on the parties involved” [13].

The state’s structures established for external (armed forces) and internal security (police, intelligence services and internal security agencies) cannot in any way influence the policy and functioning of the state. Any such action combined with the manipulation of power instruments by political actors leads to the collapse of democratic systems and the development of authoritarian systems in which respect for human rights is not a priority for the authorities [18]. Therefore, in the process of ensuring peace and building strong democratic institutions of law, the sine qua non condition is “to place security activities within the constitutional framework defined by law, [civilian control over all power structures – authors’ footnote] and

to develop security policies and instruments for their implementation], and [...] to enable state and non-state actors, responsible for monitoring security policies, to enforce the law to carry out their functions effectively” [18]. Otherwise, the state’s actions most often boil down to law-making with a tendency to restrict not only political life [17], but also to introduce public restrictions and give excessive powers to services to control society. All in the name of security, of course.

The establishment and implementation of SDGs makes the discussion about sustainable development and peaceful ecology “whether they will contribute to a more peaceful world” and make the world more resistant to new threats to peace and security [...]. Sustainable peace refers to the links between peace, security and the environment, where humanity and the environment, as two interdependent parts of the global earth, face the consequences of destruction, extraction and pollution [19]. This leads us to realize that, in an anthropogenic way, the threat to human survival is the human itself. We have degraded the Earth and all its ecosystems and we have not created security systems in any of the criteria for its division. The long-term development and linking of research on peace and ecology (peace ecology), security and climate and environmental change, linking peace and security as a new pillar of water management [20] are to become a catalyst for processes that “can prevent two types of conflict: those caused by climate and those caused by scarcity of resources [...] so that they reflect the impact of their implementation on sustainable peace and human security [19].

3.4. Security and ‘partnership for the goals’ (SDG17)

The multifaceted nature of sustainable development goals and their importance to the Earth and to humanity mean that the implementation of SDGs by individual countries without universal cooperation and support, especially by countries that for various reasons may not be able to keep up with their implementation, is not likely to bring the expected results. This is all the more important because, according to data from the targets, Official Development Assistance (ODA) flows are declining and some governments are withdrawing from multilateral activities due to ongoing trade tensions. Total in 2018 ODA amounted to USD 149 billion in 2018, 2.7% less than in 2017. At the same time, aid to underdeveloped countries (LDCs) decreased by 3% and to Africa by 4%. At the same time, donations from countries receiving emigrants decreased by 3% and for Africa by 4%. Support for humanitarian aid activities decreased by 8%. Persistent trade tensions between economic tycoons are affecting not only consumers and producers worldwide, but also the level and diversity of duties at regional level. Sub-Saharan Africa and LDCs applied the highest tariffs in 2017 – 7.1% and 7.8% of the value of imported goods respectively, while highly developed countries applied a duty of 1.2% and developing countries 3.7% [2].

Apart from aid activities, the internal fiscal policies of individual countries are very important in achieving the pre-set objectives. Excessive state fiscalism directly affects the economy and income of citizens and has social consequences. It does not allow escaping from poverty, reduces social and food security. A factor supporting and facilitating the lives of many citizens of developing countries are external remittances sent to their families by people who emigrated to wealthier countries. In 2018, this was USD 529 billion (twice as much as all ODA). The factor that limits the benefits of external money transfers is the cost of their sending (in 2019, the average cost of sending a transfer of USD 200 was 7% - with the planned SGD target of 3% by 2030). In many African countries and small Pacific islands, the cost of sending money is ca. 10% [2].

The report on the implementation of the objectives highlights two factors that facilitate development planning. The first one is access to the Internet and the second is the National Statistical Plans (NSP) planning and reporting tool. In developed countries more than 80% of the population use the Internet, in developing countries ca. 45%, and in the least developed countries only 20%. In total, half of the world's population (3.9 billion people) uses the Internet. The statistics indicate that 'an increase in fixed broadband Internet penetration by 1% – the number of subscribers per 100,000 inhabitants – is associated with an increase in average global GDP by 0.08%' [2].

The NSPs are to provide complete and reliable data necessary for the assessment of the implemented development projects and planning of their subsequent stages. In 2018, 129 countries implemented the CSP. However, their financing varies greatly. For example, in Europe and Northern America 94 % of plans have been fully finalised and in Sub-Saharan Africa more than four times less. Although developing and underdeveloped countries have received USD 1.214 billion of support from multilateral and bilateral donors for financing CSPs between 2015 and 2016 alone, statistical tools have not been fully developed. The authors of the Report estimate that 'in order to fully achieve the statistical capacity building objectives, current statistical commitments – 0.33% of ODA – must double' [2].

None of the items indicated by the article search mechanism refers directly to the purpose of the SDG-17, but in many of them one can indicate the elements that directly speak of the need to cooperate in the process of their implementation. The "co-benefits" of achieving particular goals are also important. They go beyond the main objective of the project (e.g. air safety and quality - as a result of mitigating climate change, energy security, air quality, reduction of particulate matter, availability of transport – as a result of implementing low-emission transport). They are also often interlinked – e.g. the concept of "one health", although often viewed from the perspective of human health security, is linked to trade and food supply, work and livelihood concerns, sustainable development that contribute to social well-being [21]. International trade in food/feed products involves the transfer of

virtual water – which exacerbates the problems of water-poor countries exporting these products [22]. Each of these activities and each of the SDGs and their specific areas of interest brings together ecosystems and their role in sustaining life on Earth. They range from food, climate change, crop and income opportunities, urbanization and water supply to response systems and effective disaster relief and human security [23]. By cooperating with SDGs implementation processes we can contribute to the development of policy, law, information and education needs and develop current and future methods of mediation and conflict resolution [12]. Without mutual support, any worsening of conditions in any area of the pursued goals is likely to increase conflicts and tensions.

However, even with the diversity of organizational structures responsible for SDGs' impressions in individual countries and different priorities, they will be united by global goals. This makes it possible to form coalitions to support specific policy and implementation actions [24]. Establishment of international consortia combines advanced information and communication technologies with environmental, economic and social awareness in order to, among other things, improve educational initiatives in the field of green information and communication technologies and to open studies related to sustainable development [25].

The cooperation of actors involved in SDGs implementation and the evaluation of actions taken must be based on concrete data that should provide a basis for informing the community, governments and international organizations about the SDGs implementation process, goals and needs. To obtain the goals, new technologies should be used (including satellite systems, remote sensing technologies [26] and ensuring communication and cooperation between the research and development entities involved in the evaluation of monitored areas). This will increase awareness of the value of Earth observation data [5], while at the same time gaining knowledge and indicating perspectives, best practices and development models. These will depend not only on local or even national actions, but above all on “how geopolitical aspects will affect the sense of responsibility of the actors for the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Agenda” [6]. Although national strategies take into account the interests of individual countries, there are also many similarities in terms of ecological and climate change objectives (e.g. in terms of halting the melting of glaciers and warming of the seas and oceans) [27]. They point to the importance of an integrated systemic view of the interconnectedness between a lifestyle based on greater use of materials and raw materials and energy, water and food supply systems when planning effective countermeasures [15]. Knowledge and ‘scientific evidence alone, is not a panacea for solving social problems, but provides opportunities for innovation that could help to combat hunger, poverty, inequality and underdevelopment’ [28]. Therefore, evidence and research has an important role to play in facilitating the implementation of SDGs through assessments and political engagement on a global and local scale [26].

By working together in all these areas, we can contribute to effectively stopping the degradation of the Earth and unsustainable development that is harmful to the broadly understood security of people and the environment.

4. Conclusions

Effective implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals is not only about human beings, eradicating poverty and hunger, clean air or combating climate change, it is also about taking care of ecosystems, including the cleanliness and resources of the seas and oceans – **SDG-14**.

An analysis of selected articles suggests that the problems of fisheries and aquaculture are one of the less frequently described objectives of sustainable development, and they make a fundamental contribution to global food security. For a large part of the population living in island states, fish and seafood are the main component of food. Therefore, in order to meet the growing global demand for fish in a sustainable way, it is not only possible to focus on the protection of marine areas, but to recognise the links between the objectives of fisheries, aquaculture and agriculture and take into account their changing nature.

If we realise that climate change and the lack of areas suitable for agriculture in island states, on the one hand, are having a negative impact on agricultural development opportunities and, on the other, are reducing fishing opportunities, many countries could face a triple threat in terms of fisheries, agriculture and poverty. Such a scenario would necessitate greater support to these communities to mitigate the effects of threats and halt the loss of not only biodiversity but also poverty reduction [29].

The need to implement **SDG-15** (Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss) shows that there is no area of the Earth that has not been degraded by human activity. Unsustainable agriculture, deforestation, greenhouse gas emissions, decreasing capacity to absorb carbon dioxide, extinction of millions of plant and animal species will lead to loss of biodiversity and irreversible changes in the earth's ecosystems.

Unsustainable human activities have exposed the planet to catastrophic floods and fires covering millions of hectares. Cutting down forests, including tropical forests, not only means irreversible changes to the ecosystem and loss of habitat for millions of animals, but also the loss of a natural barrier against excessive solar radiation, loss of water and transformation of many lands into steppe. Excessive greenhouse gas emissions causing climate change are leading to catastrophic weather anomalies and melting glaciers.

These threats could have unimaginable consequences for humanity if sea and ocean levels rise rapidly around the world. Climate catastrophes and extreme weather events result in the migration of millions of people around the world. According to estimates of the Polish Humanitarian Action, by 2050 around one billion people will live in areas completely unprepared for the effects of climate catastrophes.

Of course, there are various reasons for migration and for people fleeing their former habitats, often linked to armed conflicts taking place in these areas. However, if we add to this the climate crisis, the Coronavirus pandemic, food shortages and, in some regions of the world, extreme malnutrition¹, we can see that the world is facing a humanitarian disaster.

In implementing SGD-15 projects, we must take all these issues into account. All activities must be based on sustainable action, using the latest technological advances to monitor both negative and positive changes.

The implementation of **SDG-16**, which is the most dependent on the domestic politics and security and public order processes of individual states, seems to raise the greatest concerns about achieving its objectives. Endless and continually erupting armed conflicts, persistent violence, high levels of killings, human rights violations, human trafficking, with weak state institutions are a grim picture of reality.

Poverty, social inequality (discrimination and stratification of society), extremism and xenophobic and racist-nationalist political trends remain the causes of numerous social conflicts and destabilise and divide the societies in many countries (including European ones).

Despite the identification of non-state and non-governmental actors as important players in the process of peacekeeping, it is the states as actors of international relations that play a fundamental role in this process. This is a peculiar weakness of the system of international relations, since it is known that a rigid, polycentric mechanism of responding to threats to stability in different regions of the world tends to lead to an increase in dangers and an increase in the intensity of conflicts rather than to their mitigation and resolution.

Sustainable peace remains a challenge, and there is no consolidated way to facilitate dispute resolution and transition from war/armed conflict to peace. The right to peace, or to ensure justice after the war, still faces difficulties.

The analysis of SDG-16 shows that it is impossible to separate individual security, eradicate hunger, reduce climate change, save ecosystems, eliminate internal disputes, ensure internal security, create sustainable cities and societies without a holistic approach to achieving all SDGs.

SDG-17

¹ In April 2021, according to the FAO Report, more than 34 million people in various regions of the world (including Southern Sudan, Somalia, Yemen, Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Haiti) were at risk of hunger or extreme malnutrition.

Although **SDG-17** is one of the goals for which no articles have been found in the Web of Science® (WoS®) Core Collection database, the very preamble of the UN General Assembly Resolution and its reference to the five areas of people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership shows that these are not phrases to be achieved by some specific countries that are lagging behind in achieving the individual goals. They are tasks and challenges for the whole world and for all countries individually. For global problems cannot be solved locally or even regionally, regardless of the fact that certain threats exist only in certain regions of the world.

The creation of conditions for the safe functioning and development of societies and states is influenced by a great many coexisting and overlapping political, economic, social, environmental, technological and military factors. In many regions of the world, these factors have undergone, if not disruption, then outright destruction.

Human activity has caused a very serious damage to ecosystems and a progressive climate change. Not only does the stratification within societies persist, but there is a renewed stratification of the population. Hunger, malnutrition and poverty coexist with wealth, destruction and food waste. Climate change, excessive greenhouse gas emissions, land, air and water pollution have set humanity tasks that cannot be abandoned if we do not want to witness unimaginable natural disasters that will threaten millions of people around the world, which can create flashpoints and cause armed conflicts in many regions of the world.

In order to meet these tasks, the partnership and cooperation of all UN member states is essential, both in the implementation of individual 169 tasks and in their joint financing, as well as in supporting countries that do not have the means to implement sustainable changes. For it must be remembered that “there can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development” [1].

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