

MASS MEDIA AS A TOOL FOR ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

I. V. Riabtsev

Belarusian State University, Minsk;

riabtsev.igor@mail.ru;

scientific supervisor – S. V. Solovjeva, Master of Intercultural Communication

In 2015, 17 interrelated Sustainable Development Goals (the SDGs) were introduced by the United Nations (UN). Each of them is aimed at improving the life of each person, the development of social, political and economic institutions. A separate role in our society is played by the mass media that are often called the 4th estate after the legislative, executive and judicial branches. It is compelling to consider the role of mass media in achieving these goals. This paper is devoted to the study of the real and potential impact of the media on the approximation of each of the Sustainable Development Goals within the framework of the 2030 Agenda.

Key words: Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the 2030 Agenda, mass media, economic growth, climate action.

The concept of sustainable development emerged in the process of combining three main perspectives: economic, social and environmental ones. It implies the adoption of measures aimed at the optimal use of limited resources and the use of environmentally friendly nature-, energy-, and material-saving technologies, at maintaining the stability of social and cultural systems, at ensuring the integrity of biological and physical natural systems [1]. In order to achieve them, the efforts of all peoples, organizations and nations, and of the humanity as a whole, must be brought together [2].

Today's digital age has greatly accelerated the processes around us. Consequently, covering them is a big and difficult mission. Given that the goals set by the UN are the most ambitious project of the global community at the present stage, the role of mass media in achieving them is paramount [3].

The attainment of each of these goals depends not only on providing opportunities, but also on imposing responsibilities on society in order to achieve each of the goals fully.

The first goal, which is aimed at the eradication of poverty, is inherently quite difficult to achieve [2]. It is obvious that in a capitalist society, in which there must always be a person who manages capital and a person who serves it, there will permanently be a strong stratification in income. The poorest segments of the population are obviously low-paid workers and the unemployed. Undoubtedly, in order to eliminate the problem of poverty, it is necessary for a quality institute of independent media to work, which will alert the state itself in time that there are certain problems regarding poverty. News about increasing inflation, for example,

will strengthen the desire of the population to be more economically active in order to mitigate the negative consequences of possible crises.

The media can also play a significant role in solving the second problem – the elimination of hunger. The important function of the media will be to convey the right messages: a mere distribution of food will not solve the problem. Rational use of agricultural resources will help solve it, and the more people understand this, the faster the work in this area will proceed.

The media play a pivotal social role. Goals 3 and 4, i.e. good health and well-being; quality education have a significant impact on human development [2]. Every measure of the State or the administration of an institution that delays the achievement of this goal should be criticized by the media. On the contrary, a positive coverage of the opening of new hospitals and schools should get positive reviews.

Goals 5 and 10 (gender equality and reduced inequalities) can be combined with each other. Both of them are aimed at attaining social justice [2]. The 5th Goal is related to gender, while the 10th one focuses on equality as a whole. Gender, interstate, interpersonal equality is something that should be covered by the media. Undoubtedly, the media form a certain attitude to reality, and therefore it is necessary to correctly approach the circulation of certain information messages. At the same time, the weakness of the media is obvious here. In some States, they are directly dependent on the government. The media will not be able to help defeat sexist laws against women in totalitarian and religious states; however, in this case, the role of the media is to give a fair and unbiased account.

Regarding the attainment of Goals 6 and 7 – clean water and clean energy [2], the role of mass media could not be more obvious. Popularization of eco-friendly technologies for the purification of air and water, the promotion of alternative energy resources are the areas for the mass media to capitalize on for the fulfillment of these goals.

Goals 8, 9 and 11 are also similar in nature. They are aimed at changes in society in terms of establishing the economy and infrastructure. Everyone should feel that they are an integral part of the big machine of the world economy, and the media should perform an educational function.

Goals 12, 13, 14 and 15 are again environmentally oriented, but this time the focus is made on preserving the biosphere [2]. Indeed, humanity has made a large number of mistakes over the years, which led to eco-disasters. From this point of view, the media should spread information about these mistakes and prevent their recurrence. Apart from that, the media should help disseminate knowledge about how to be eco-friendly in everyday life, so as not to destroy what has already been damaged. Thanks to the media, humanity will be able to build a new, green world.

Goal number 16 (the promotion of just, peaceful and inclusive societies) [2] is, in our opinion, the most important one. Without building efficient, quality

institutions it is impossible to achieve the goals set. There is a vicious circle here, in which the media cannot be honest under censorship pressures. Consequently, without the media, people will not be able to learn about how to make social and legal institutions work for the benefit of society.

The last goal is centered on cooperation to achieve the above goals, and it is obvious that the media should bring people together, and this is quite a challenging task. That is why the solution of such goals should not be assigned to only one institution, be it a state, an organization, the media or anything else. All problems must be solved in the system, and only then can a result be achieved. From our part, we believe that the large-scale promotion of social advertising related to the 2030 Agenda through both: electronic and printed media, together with the development and sophistication of innovative SDGs apps for smartphones, can make a serious contribution to the success of the whole undertaking. The focus has to be placed on a more intensive outdoor advertising as well. Certainly, this requires support on the part of the state, the private sector and other stakeholders alike. We believe that irrespective of modern challenges, the SDGs serve as important benchmarks to align with.

Bibliographic references

1. Sustainable Development Report 2020 [Electronic resource] – Mode of access: <https://www.sdindex.org/reports/sustainable-development-report-2020/>. – Date of access: 03.05.2022.
2. The Sustainable Development Agenda [Electronic resource]. – Mode of access: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda/>. – Date of access: 03.05.2022.
3. SDG Media Compact [Electronic resource]. – Mode of access: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sdg-media-compact-about/>. – Date of access: 03.05.2022.