

# Some Specifics of the Strategy of Sustainable Development in Russia

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**Abstract:** The paper is aimed at examining and reviewing the key issues covered in the current Russia's development strategy and how they align with those in the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations, determining the localized features of the former and ways of implementing it. The study showcases the shift of the sustainable development goals of the Russian Federation from the global scope to the national one. These national goals are spelt out in The Decree On the National Development Goals of the Russian Federation (for the period up to 2030 and for the future up to 2036) issued in 2024. To implement them the Russian Government launched a number of state programmes. Outlining its own track of sustainable development distinguished from the UN one the Russian Government prioritises the social goals. It spotlights three focal points identified in this study: cultivation of moral, patriotic and family values, physical training and sports promotion, personality development. The paper dwells upon the first and the third ones as they lay the foundation for the other social, economic and ecological goals. The demographic issues are also discussed in the paper highlighting some inconsistency in the national policies.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Being suggested by the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987 the concept of sustainable development resulted in the unified and comprehensive approach to the global issues that are recognized worldwide. The basic principles of the concept are as follows: integration and guidance, partnership and democracy, thorough planning and preventive measures, justice. Since then, the concept of sustainable development has evolved from abstract reasoning and academic discourse to hands-on strategies to tackle the issues of healthcare, economic instability and inequality, social and national security, environmental pollution, international partnership at the national and international levels.


Regardless of a case-specific approach and accountability of each of the nations, the related UN agreements such as The Paris Agreement were criticized for some aspects of financing, controlling, schedules, and balance of needs and goals. Judging by the recent Decree *On the National Development Goals of the Russian Federation (for the period up to*

*2030 and for the future up to 2036)* Russia has its own vision of establishing sustainable development within the national borders (President of the Russian Federation, 2024).

The aim of the paper is to examine and review the key points covered in the current Russia's development strategy and how they align with those in the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations, determine the localized features of the former and ways of implementing it.

Adopted by the United Nations in 2015 The Sustainable Development Goals arose from a series of global-scale events, discussions and scientific papers.

To specify the contribution to The 2030 Agenda, *World Dynamics* by Jay W. Forrester can be considered pioneering (Forrester, 1971). Suggested in the book, the ideas of global modelling, the use of quantitative methods to study development of the humanity, limited access to natural resources and responsible consumption of them, strategic and tactical planning, the necessity for changes worldwide have transformed the methodology of scientific research enormously.

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Moreover, the successive report for The Club of Rome's Project on the Predicament of Mankind *The Limits to Growth* published in 1972 advanced the idea of devastating human impact on the biosphere investigating the "trends of global concern" and providing several scenarios of world development (Meadows et al., 1972).

Both studies covered the interrelated issues of demographics, economics and ecology which supposed industrial decline in the near decades and sequential rising death rates. They encouraged to consciously change the current behavior patterns of societies. These fundamental papers introduced unconventional models and patterns that resulted in the emergence and design of the key principles of the sustainable development phenomenon.

Having recognized the contribution of the papers mentioned, we cannot but consider Vernadskii's study. He approached the idea of the biosphere as an entity experiencing "destabilising" human impact philosophically (Oldfield, Shaw, 2013) since he had lived through the Second World War. The main message of his biosphere concept that facilitated initiation of the scientific understanding of sustainable development is in the holistic vision of the man and nature, their interdependence, and irrationality of wars and military conflicts. The latter, in Vernadskii's opinion, prevents the humanity from balanced development (Benson, 2020).

## 2 MATERIALS AND METHODS

To examine the regulatory documents of the Government of the Russian Federation and compare them to the Sustainable Development Goals established by the United Nations a descriptive-analytical research method is employed. The RF government decrees, doctrines, acts, policies, federal laws are examined, the first of them dated 2002.

Another method used is the PRISMA Flow Diagram to study scientific papers on sustainable development in both English and Russian. Since the changes studied in the paper are quite novel, the number of scientific papers on this topic is not impressive and totals 43 papers. It should be mentioned that due to the novelty of the shift in the national strategy of the Russian Government and to the enormous territory and population Russia possesses, the detailed quantitative data Rosstat (the Federal State Statistics Service) provides us with is available only for the period up to 2022. Other statistics provided come from separate unconnected studies and research.

The official websites of the United Nations and the Government of the Russian Federation are also of use to the study.

## 3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Vernadskii's concept echoed down the ages. It evolved into the criteria for sustainable development (particularly maintaining a man-biosphere balance) elaborated and adopted by the State Duma of the Russian Federation in 2002. The document is called *The main provisions of the strategy of sustainable development of Russia* (Zalihanov et al., 2002). The preceding drafts of the State strategy for sustainable development were rejected several times due to their infeasibility and a lack of integrated approach.

Overall, the RF government regulations, decrees (such as *On the Concept of transition of the Russian Federation to sustainable development*, *On the implementation of State control in the field of environmental protection (State environmental control)*), doctrines (such as *Environmental Doctrine of the Russian Federation*), federal laws, acts (such as *On production and consumption waste*, *On the protection of atmospheric air*) and policies manifest engagement and commitment to the arrangements and agreements on participation and procedures established at the UN Conferences on sustainable development.

However, the external restrictions and constraints made the Russian Government search for its own track of sustainable development refocusing and adapting The 17 Sustainable Development Goals to fit the urgent needs of the nation.

The recent Decree *On the National Development Goals of the Russian Federation (for the period up to 2030 and for the future up to 2036)* (President of the Russian Federation, 2024) reflects the message of the Presidential Address to the Federal Assembly (en.kremlin.ru) delivered in 2023. Even the order in which the national goals are enumerated in the Decree highlights the top priorities established at the national level.

According to the Decree the social and demographic needs are ranked first since they are covered in the first 3 goals out of 7. The performance targets and tasks to achieve the goals are connected with the following issues (including economic ones): birth rates, life expectancy and health, the elderly, remuneration rates, poverty, young generations and patriotism, education, culture and arts, housing stock, urban improvement, public transport, highways and

roads, air-passenger operations, educational facilities, gas infrastructure expansion.

Having compared The Sustainable Development Goals established by the United Nations to The Decree in respect of the issues mentioned above, we identified the focal points in the latter missing in the former which sticks to the ideas delivered by President Vladimir Putin in his Address to the Federal Assembly:

- cultivation of moral, patriotic and family values;
- physical training and sports promotion;
- personality development.

The shift from the global scope to the national one is quite explicable since The 17 Goals can be categorized as the most pressing and non-deferrable but a country cannot move forward and contribute to the global well-being without satisfying its own pressing issues. The importance of the related regional activities is highlighted in scientific papers (Alferova, 2021; Teslenko, Nikolina, 2025; Escobar, 2025; Tasneem, 2024). That is why a series of state programmes is launched in Russia in order to achieve the strategic goals spelt out in the Decree. The first two goals are as follows (President of the Russian Federation, 2024):

- preservation of the population, promotion of health, well-being of people, support for families;
- fulfilment of the potential of each citizen, developing their talents, cultivation of a patriotic and socially responsible personality.

They are covered in the state programmes such as:

Development of healthcare, Social support for citizens, Inclusive environment, Development of physical training and sports, Job creation, Development of education, Development of culture, Development of tourism, Implementation of state national policy (Government of the Russian Federation, 2025). The programmes are to have been implemented by 2030-2036.

However, the strategic goals of the Russian Government and *The National Strategy for the Women's Sake for 2023-2030* (<http://static.government.ru>) issued in 2022 created discord in terms of the role of women in implementing both of the documents. On the one hand, the Decree addresses the issue of an increase in the birth rate (specifically of third and subsequent children) promoting family values and providing support to families. On the other hand, The National strategy defining the state policy is aimed at deeper engagement of Russian women in political, social and business activities within Russia and abroad which will increase their economic independence and contribute to the development of the national

economy. This document showcases their current successful and profound involvement and engagement. It also indicates a high rate of employment of women.

The data provided by Federal State Statistics Service (<https://eng.rosstat.gov.ru/>) and partly given in The National Strategy for the Women's Sake for 2023-2030 indicate that there is no significant difference between the number of employed women and employed men in Russia (women make up 48.7 % of the total employed population in 2020 and men make up 51.3 %; 48.6 % and 51.4 % respectively in 2021). A labor force participation rate was 51 % (74.9 m) of the total population (146.7 m) in 2020 whereas the employed workforce totaled 48.1 % of the total population in Russia and 94.2 % of the total workforce. What stands out is the low percentage of the unemployed in 2020: only 5.8 % of the total workforce starting at the age of 15 (2.8 % of unemployed women and 3 % of unemployed men). Though men predominate on the Russian labor market, the number of women who have completed higher education prevails (55 % of the total population possessing a higher education degree). In this respect, among highly qualified researchers, women who earned a postgraduate degree made up a significant proportion, second to men (43.4% of female candidates of sciences and 56.6 % of male candidates of sciences; a marked divergence - 28.3% of female doctors of sciences and 71.7 % of male doctors of sciences) in 2022.

Overall, education, accomplishments and employment of Russian women are striking which witnesses their prominent involvement and engagement in all the spheres and activities of the nation. Despite the fact that a proportion of women in senior positions in government bodies and private businesses is gradually increasing, there is a considerable wage gap between men and women which made up 28 % in 2021. Nowadays, the Russian corporate sector adopts measures ensuring equal opportunities for men and women and developing leadership of women (Taranukha, 2024). Nadiya Cherkasova, Chairman of the Committee for the Development of Women's Entrepreneurship at Opora Russia, confirms a steady increase in involvement of Russian women in the national economy (Women's Entrepreneurial Activity Index WBI-10, 2023).

According to WBI studies, one of the main groups of factors that prevent Russian women from engaging in entrepreneurial activity is resources comprising the following obstacles. Families do not support them in this initiative financially as well as emotionally. Women lack time due to their family responsibilities

that take much efforts. Naming dissatisfaction with family financial standing as a powerful motivator for entrepreneurship, the female respondents rate family responsibilities high as a demotivator and deterrent (Women's Entrepreneurial Activity Index WBI-10, 2023).

Consequently, to achieve the required birth rate established in the strategic goals of the Russian Government it is necessary to shift the focus of The National Strategy for the Women's Sake from economic independence of Russian women and their engagement with economic, political and business issues to:

- enhancement of the role of women in shaping a healthy society that supports family values;
- improvement of living standards;
- a life-work balance.

It should be emphasized that according to the UN statistics women are experiencing some health issues, for example, the rise of anemia which can negatively impact the demographic goals (Sakharov, 2025). That is why the state healthcare programmes are of vital importance as well.

Three more strategic goals announced in the Decree can be grouped as well since they cover social, environmental and economic issues (President of the Russian Federation, 2024):

- a comfortable and safe living environment;
- environmental well-being;
- a stable and dynamic economy.

The programmes launched to achieve these goals are closely interconnected. Most of them perform the social, economic and ecological functions simultaneously. This feature of the programmes is aligned with the concept of sustainable development which supposes the comprehensive approach to the global issues affecting all fields of human activity and an individual in particular. Some of the programmes are:

Environmental protection, Integrated rural development, Protection of the population and territories from emergency situations, fire safety and safety of people on water bodies, Socio-economic development of the Far Eastern Federal District, Development of the North Caucasus Federal District, Socio-economic development of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation, Socio-economic development of the Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol, Restoration and socio-economic development of the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics, the Zaporozhye and Kherson regions, Ensuring the protection of individuals, society and the state, Ensuring the country's defense capability (Government of the Russian Federation, 2025).

To advance decarbonisation efforts in Russia, the Government initiated these programmes in terms of production and equipping, technological development, tax, customs and budgetary policies, financing and management, and educating the society.

The last group of two strategic goals announced in the Decree is (President of the Russian Federation, 2024):

- technological leadership;
- digital transformation of public and municipal administration, economy and social sphere.

Some of the programmes aimed at reaching them are:

Information Society, National Spatial Data System, Energy development, Energy conservation and energy efficiency improvement, Scientific and technological development of the Russian Federation.

Apart from The UN goal 9 (Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation), the goal of technological leadership of Russia reflects the message of Vladimir Putin's Address to ensure "the security, sovereignty and competitiveness of Russia" (Putin, 2023) since the current external restrictions and constraints limit participation of Russia in global social and economic activities of other countries. Becoming the market leader or at least providing Russia with domestically designed technologies does not prevent Russia from supporting the countries in need (that is what Russia does on a regular basis, for example, in case of an earthquake in Syria or Türkiye) and contributing to their development. It means promoting "sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work", building resilient infrastructure, promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization, fostering innovation this way at the national level which is fully compliant with UN Goal 8 and Goal 9.

More than that, the shift from the two-way international communication on reaching sustainable development goals applying a participative style and strategies to the national needs and priorities is fully justified due to the failure of the UN and West to comply with the goals of sustainable development (Mityakov, 2023).

In search of Russia's own track of sustainable development Mityakov S.N. suggests a reviewed version of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. First, this reviewed version for Russia does not contradict the UN version and is aligned with it. Second, this new set of goals has resulted from proactive as well as reactive adaptation of Russia to the new environment and circumstances. The

reviewed version has been designed to harmonize with the Presidential Address, the Decree On the National Development Goals and other recent governmental documents, to fit the urgent and long-term needs of the Russian Federation (Mityakov, 2023).

The scholar combined several UN goals into one, for example, Goal 1 and Goal 2, reconsidered them and formed a new Goal 1 *The growth of the welfare of the nation, the growth of real wages, the minimum wage increase*. Mityakov S.N. claims that some of the UN Goals or at least their interpretations are not relevant or timely. Moreover, he introduces the new ones (Mityakov, 2023):

- Goal 4 *Cultural development* (highlighting the desperate need for reviving and preserving the cultural heritage of Russia)
- Goal 5 *Support for family and childhood* (expecting careful state planning along with extended budgeting)
- Goal 6 *Patriotism and love for the Motherland* (supposing cultivation of a patriotic and socially responsible personality, a man of dignity and respect for Russia)
- Goal 12 *Development of the national financial system* (supposing rouble strengthening and guaranteed independence from the dollar and other reserve currencies)
- Goal 13 *National stability* (involving a change in the structure of the national economy)
- Goal 14 *National security* (supposing an honest partnership of countries and a uniform indivisible security system available to all countries).

In our opinion, Goals 4 and 6 suggested by Mityakov S.N. can be united since both of them emphasize the vital role of the country's history, cultural background and traditions in forming and preserving the national identity (Roy, 2025; Saraeva et al., 2023). History as a science is a powerful strategic tool for reclaiming power and collective memory (Boldin, Shirinyants, 2020; Petrosyants, 2025).

Overall, the recent national research has shown a consistent progress in the field of healthcare, food security and digitalization. However, the research has identified the major bottlenecks that are expected to be eliminated. They are income inequality and disproportioned regional development (specifically of remote regions) (Sakharov, 2025).

## 4 CONCLUSIONS

The strategic goals of the Russian Federation and the UN ones do not contradict each other. Nevertheless, having refocused and adapted the UN 17 Sustainable Development Goals, the Russian Government prioritises social issues. Currently, the well-being and health of the citizens of Russia, their national self-identification, and subsequently progress of the country rely heavily on 3 focal points identified in this study: cultivation of moral, patriotic and family values, physical training and sports promotion, personality development.

Emphasising the role of Russian women being critical for these focal points in implementing the national goals announced in The Decree On the National Development Goals of the Russian Federation (for the period up to 2030 and for the future up to 2036), the paper showcases their considerable involvement and engagement in all the activities of the nation. If the Government insists on further accomplishments of the Russian women encouraging women's self-actualization in profession (in particular, in STEM fields), career (in particular, to occupy senior positions in different industries (specifically high-tech) and sectors), science (in particular, biotechnologies, other high-tech health-saving resources, participation in international exchange programmes), it should strengthen its support for families and shouldn't expect a sudden and substantial increase in the birth rate (specifically of third and subsequent children).

Moreover, if the Government intends to promote moral and patriotic values within its borders along with personality development, it needs to raise public awareness of well-established historical facts, characters, events, particularly among younger generations. The state educational and cultural programmes connected with this issue exist but, firstly, forming a new way of thinking takes time, secondly, it is necessary to revise the existing programmes to make them more profound.

As for the environmental issues, they require eminently much time, effort and investment since Russia occupies an enormous territory and is engaged in primary, secondary, tertiary, and quaternary sectors. The Russian Government does not rank the environmental issues first. Nevertheless, it plans to increase government spending on environmental protection.

Most of the state programmes serving as the approaches to implement the current national goals are comprehensive. They are intended to cultivate an authentic spirit of unity and cohesion, unlike an

imposed one, which will facilitate implementation of the goals set by the Government.

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