



## WASTE OF RESOURCES AS A GLOBAL PROBLEM AND THE ROLE OF NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN ITS RESOLUTION

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*Waste of resources can be viewed as a global problem that causes great losses to the human community. Many aspects of this issue are on the agenda of international organizations and states. The article gives an original definition of waste of resources, a substantiation of the problem as a global one, an overview of modern examples of squander of resources, an analysis of attempts to tackle aspects of the issue.*

The main actors in international relations, states and international organizations are currently faced with various problems of a global scale. These world problems hinder the sustainable development of mankind. In the scientific literature, there are at least two approaches to formulating the very concept of global issues: narrowed and expanded. Depending on these approaches, the number of the identified world problems varies from 6-8 to 30 or even more [1, p. 64]. Some of the world's issues have been widely recognized and studied. Others of no less importance are much less explored.

Waste of resources is such a problem. The world has squandered its resources for decades using extensive economic practices, encouraging consumer attitudes, in the worst sense of the word, toward resources and nature. Along with causing enormous damage to nature, translated in indirect losses, wasted resources mean the direct squander of billions of dollars. However, what does the *waste of resources* mean? Many scientists found it difficult to answer the question relying on the relativity of the notion of wastefulness for different people. Nevertheless, based on the very idea of relativity, a comprehensive definition can be created. The study of factual material makes it possible to assert that each social group, subgroup, even some large social movements put forward through its representatives its understanding (standard) of the expediency of using the specific

resource. The views of different social groups, subgroups or movements may coincide or, on the contrary, may be completely opposite. Proceeding from aforementioned, the waste of resources is defined as *the use of resources purposeless, according to a certain standard of expediency of a social group, subgroup or social movement, in the processes of production, trade and consumption*. The standard of expediency can also be influenced by historical, cultural and technological factors.

The views of various social groups, subgroups or movements on some types of resources may coincide. It creates the basis for a kind of consensus on wastefulness, reflected in contemporary international organizations (e.g. the UN has specialized organizations trying to resolve issues of waste of food, electronics as well as squander due to "unconstrained" military spending; the EU Commission developed a new Circular Economy Action Plan 2020 where it defined various wasted resources; the Platform for Accelerating the Circular Economy created Action Plans 2021 for food, clothing, electronics and plastics. Therefore, it can be considered as generally accepted that these types of resources are currently being squandered).

Having defined the concept of the problem, it is also necessary to prove its globality. A narrow approach implies that global problems are such problems that affect absolutely all people and threaten the survival of humanity and human civilization itself [2, p. 341-346]. However, if this definition is adopted, it turns out that a number of global issues recognized as "classical" ones will not be such at all. A broad view presupposes the following: global problems are a set of the most important problems of mankind, which further progress in the modern era depends on. These issues have a number of common characteristics: they are a "brake" on the further socio-economic development of mankind; they affect the interests of most countries of the world and require their interaction and cooperation with international organizations to solve these issues; they are interrelated [3, p. 24]. Having identified waste of resources on the basis of the emerging consensus on wastefulness expressed in international organizations, it is safe to say that the issue is an absolute brake on the

path of human development, absorbing in vain huge amounts of resources. Further, the problem requires international cooperation, attraction of foreign investment and grants of international organizations as well as international experience. Finally, this issue is closely interconnected with many other important world issues, and in many cases it is often the key to solving them. It is directly associated with such Sustainable Development Goals as 1 (Eradicate Poverty), 2 (Zero Hunger), 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), 13 (Action to Fight Climate Change) and 14 (Living Below the Water) and so on [4]. Thus, it can be said that the waste of resources is a global problem.

In order to summarize some of the key figures for resource waste, the following examples are worth mentioning. The Ellen MacArthur Foundation assessed global waste of clothing at \$560 billion and global waste of plastic packaging at \$80-120 billion. It is important to note that negative impact on nature of plastics in the consumer goods industry alone may amount to \$75 billion. The World Economic Forum presented in its report one extremely minimalistic estimation that the material cost of e-waste is \$62.5 billion. FAO estimates that the world's food waste is worth about \$1 trillion, not to mention the indirect costs of environmental damage and increased greenhouse gases. According to the World Bank, in 2019 the world burned 150 billion cubic meters of associated gas in vain. Depending on prices, tens of billions of dollars are wasted. Thus, just five aspects of the problem of waste are directly costing the world at least \$1.75 trillion each year. If indirect losses are taken into account that is damage to the environment, an increase in the amount of carbon dioxide and greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, then this figure should be increased many times over.

The constantly growing flow of wasted resources, as well as indirect damage to the environment, which manifests itself in the intensification of environmental and climate crises, force international organizations to search for ways to cope with the problem. One of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015, SDG 12, aims to achieve efficient use of natural resources, halve global food waste and introduce recycling and reuse

technologies. Some of the initiatives of international organizations addressing different aspects of the problem of wasteful use of resources include SAVE FOOD, launched in 2011 by FAO with the UNEP; the Global Gas Flaring Reduction Partnership (2002) and the Zero Routine Flaring by 2030 (2015), created by the World Bank; the New Plastic Economy (2016) and the Make Fashion Circular (2018), organized by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation. The European Union is often viewed by researchers as a *sui generis* organization. In 2020, to combat food waste, the European Commission launched a new initiative, the EU Farm to Fork Strategy. The European Parliament and the Council of the EU adopted Directive 2018/852 in 2018 (targets for the recycling of plastic packaging: by the end of 2025 – 50%, by the end of 2030 – 55%) as well as the Directive 2018/851 (targets: to achieve 55% reuse and recycling of municipal waste by 2025, 60% by 2030 and 65% by 2035).

Many developed states, following international organizations, declare a real crusade against waste of resources. The zeal of governments is also often spurred on by specific commitments made within major international organizations. France is currently leading. In 2016, it was the first in the world to pass the law to prohibit supermarkets larger than 400 square meters from throwing away unsold but usable food. In 2020, it adopted a Law regarding a Circular Economy and the Fight against Waste. Italy and Germany in Europe as well as Japan with China in Asia are very active in a similar direction. In recent years, the Moldovan government, seeking to bring the Moldovan reality in line with EU norms and striving to meet the UN SDGs, adopted the National Waste Management Strategy (2013-2027), which proposed to reduce the amount of refuse in landfills and introduce full-scale recycling. In 2019, the government began working on combating food waste law, based on support of FAO. However, after two years, the draft law has not yet been adopted. At the same time, the COVID-19 pandemic has led to difficulties in the relatively small recycling that existed in the RM.

In conclusion, the author believes that despite numbers of initiatives to tackle various aspects of waste of resources, undertaken by the

states and international organizations, they are still insufficient as it is evidenced by the continued increase in the use of resources in vain. Only an integrated approach to the issue at the global and national levels can solve it.

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*Recomandat  
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