

Chapter 1

Achieving Sustainable Development Through a Green Economy Approach

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ABSTRACT

Sustainable development aims to create a balance between economic, social, and environmental elements for continuity between humanity and the natural environment. Current economic systems and production or consumption models prevent achieving sustainable development in the long term, and the green economy approach seems to be the best option for sustainable development. This chapter investigates the relationship between green economy and sustainable development. Accordingly, the study presents a brief view of the green economy approach and sustainable development goals. As a result, the study discusses the contribution of green economy for achieving sustainable development goals.

INTRODUCTION

The term of sustainability has been shining in every kinds of area in human life. Recently, sustainable development takes part in every countries (Strowbridge, 2012) as a main issue because of the truth that the survival is related with sustainable and green civilization in the long term (Meadows et.al., 1972; WCED, 1987; Beatley

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and Manning, 1998; Berke & Conroy, 2000; OECD, 2008; Puppim de Olivera, 2012; Bostancı & Albayrak, 2017; Yıldırım, Yıldırım & Gedikli, 2016). The need of sustainable development came to the literature by study of Meadows, Meadows and Randers (1972) which was called as “The limits to grow” and determined that there should be balance between economic growth and earth’s resources (Meadows et.al., 1972). Essentially, sustainable development was determined as a significant and important issue by United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in 1972 (UNEP, 1972) and then Brundtland Commission which was known as World Commission on Environment and Development published a report as “Our Common Future” in 1987 (WCED, 1987). According to WCED’s report (1987), development should meet the needs of present with protecting the future ones. In 1992, the term of sustainability from sustainable development came to sustainable economy with United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development by United Nations (Puppim de Olivera, 2012).

Green economy aims to economic growth and improve economic life conditions as well as reducing environmental harm (UNEP, 2011). Understanding the implications of green economy is so crucial for sustainable development that measure is another crucial topic for determining the degree of being sustainable for economies. Hart (1999) suggested sustainable measure and some sustainability indicators for the world and the links between economy, environment and society were found as so important indicator for sustainable community. In addition, sustainable development can be successful when economic, social and environmental responsibilities are carried out coordinately (Munasinghe, 2002). In general, it can be said that sustainable economy is much more related with environmental responsibilities and economic growth. Although, governments try to keep green economy for sustainable development and they develop new strategies and plans through green economy, the indicators of being green economy can’t provide sufficient results for governments. Maybe governments can’t understand being green or being green and green economy can’t reach to citizens or business practically (Puppim de Olivera, 2012).

This chapter explains how green economy helps and support sustainable development. In this context, the chapter investigates the relationship between green economy and sustainable development goals. Without achieving sustainable development goals, sustainable development can’t be achieved. Today, 2030 Sustainable Development Goals is the last accepted goals by the world and every kinds of economy try to achieve these goals to reach sustainable development.

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