

Abstract. *The economic, social and environmental undesirable impact of the existing development pattern pushes to the adoption and use of a new development paradigm that of sustainable development. This paper intends to substantiate how the marketing can help the sustainable development. It begins with the subjects of sustainable development and sustainable marketing as they are discussed in literature. The sustainable development is a tri-dimensional concept which embeds the economic dimension, the social dimension and the environmental dimension that ask to have in view the simultaneous pursuit of economic prosperity, social equity and environmental quality. A major challenge to achieve these goals at business level and to integrate all three dimensions of sustainability is the sustainable marketing. The sustainable marketing is a relationship marketing that aims at building lasting relationships with the social and natural environment on a long-term thinking and futurity and this philosophy allows helping all three dimensions of sustainability. As marketing solutions that could contribute to the sustainable development we advance the stimulation of sustainable demand, the constant innovation and improvement of sustainable products, the design and use of customized communication, a multi-channel distribution network and the sale of sustainable products and services at fair prices. Their implementation will increase the economic, social and environmental sustainability at a large extent in the future if they are supported by political, governmental and legal efforts.*

Keywords: sustainable development, sustainable marketing, sustainable demand, sustainable product, credible communication, multi-channel distribution network, fair price.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF SUSTAINABLE MARKETING TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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1. Sustainable development, the only chance for the future of humankind

In 1987, the World Commission on the Environment and Development, presently called Brundtland Commission, coined the term “*sustainable development*” to illustrate the links among the economic, social and environmental objectives of development. Since then, there has been considerable evidence backing the need for sustainable development. Many of the Earth’s ecosystems are falling apart, species are endangered, global warming is becoming increasingly apparent and resources depletion is starting to take its toll. If humanity continues to remain inside the current paradigm when it comes to development, people who live on Earth will need at least two planets to supply the needed resources to sustain life. The crux of the problem lies in the fact that 80 per cent of the world resources are used by 20 per cent of the people. The environmental issues are to be considered, too. Societies are developing so fast that up to 137 species go extinct daily in the tropical forests alone. The social aspects have appeared as a result of disparities in economic and political power. Most people around the world have seen major improvement in their lives over the past 40 years. But there are major constraints on the ability to sustain such evolutions. This ability depends on the freedom of choice and equity by protecting the availability and diversity of natural resources that are not in place today. The healthier nations are better placed financially and technically to cope with the efforts of climatic change and social disparities.

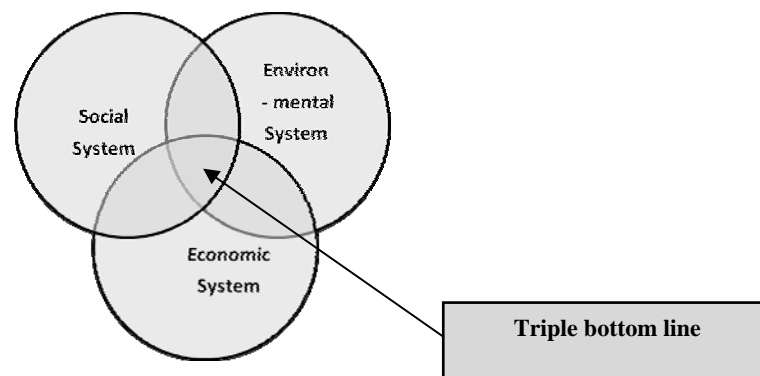
All aspects discussed above are evidence that emphasize the need for policy makers to realize that economic growth, environmental protection and social issues such as the quality of life are interconnected. They must be included into a new development paradigm that of sustainable development. This kind of sustainable development pattern has to take into account not only the interdependence between its economic, social and environmental dimensions, but also how the human needs are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The potential congruence of economic growth and social and environmental sustainability could appear only within a broader paradigm of green economy. This new way of thinking diverges from one traditional discourse on sustainability by focusing on ways in which economic policies can engender sustainable production and consumption patterns inclusively with solutions that integrate social decisions and environmental considerations into everyday economic activity (Mangal and Sheldon, 2011). This approach complements and enriches the multiple dimensions of well-being and equity.

Marketing has traditionally been seen as part of the problem. It helped to create many unsustainable habits we now need to change, but it can also be part of the solution, making new alternatives desirable. In this line of reasoning, green marketing is a constituent part of the solutions for green development while sustainable marketing should be a part of and support for sustainable development. To meet the challenge of sustainable development, sustainable marketing could help foster more sustainable levels and patterns of consumption. There are significant opportunities for business to help the consumer choose and use its goods and services sustainably

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(Ravindra and Khandelwal, 2010). Through sustainable marketing, the business is in the position to create sustainable value for consumers by supplying products and services that meet their functional and emotional needs now and for future generations while respecting social and environmental limits and common values.

The development pattern based on production and consumption that exceed the needs and the resources has many undesirable consequences on economy, society and environment forcing mankind to face serious issues. The more urgent need of working out these issues pushes for finding a new development pattern which is known as “*sustainable development*”. The United Nations Report of World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) views sustainable development as “*a kind of development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*”. This definition suggests that sustainable development is a pattern of resource use that aims to meet human needs while preserving the environment so that these needs can be met not only in the present but also in the future (Ravindra and Khandelwal, 2010). This meaning of sustainable development emphasizes the interdependence of economic, social and environmental constituent parts. If sustainable development is judged as a system, it has three interlinked systems that are the sustainable economic system, the sustainable social system and the sustainable environmental system (Saxena and Pradeep, 2010, p.1; Belz and Karstens, 2010, p. 4). The sustainable economic system exists entirely within the sustainable society because all parts of the human economy require interaction among people. The sustainable social system, in turn, exists entirely within the environmental or biophysical system. Thus, the sustainable development involves the simultaneous pursuit of economic sustainability and prosperity, social equity and environmental quality. These goals can only be achieved if the accurate interaction of the three constituent parts is identified in “*the triple bottom line*” as in Figure 1.



Source: Saxena and Khandelwal, 2010, p. 60.

Figure 1. The interdependent system of sustainable development

The true sustainable development is that kind of development that meets the “triple bottom line” where the three systems interact on an equal basis. Economic sustainability requires an economic system that facilitates the equitable access to resources and opportunities and the fair sharing of finite environmentally productive space, enables sustainable livelihood and establishes viable business and industries based on sound ethical principles. The focus is on creating prosperity for all not just for a few and to do this to be bound of the environmentally possible and without infringing on basic human rights.

The social aspects of sustainability require humanity to enable the development of fair and just societies, foster positive human development and provide people with opportunities for self-actualization and fair quality of life. The environmental elements of sustainability require humanity to find a balance of protecting the physical environment and preserving its resources, and using these in a way that allows the Earth to continue supporting a fair quality of life for all beings. The conclusion of the previous analysis underlines two points that are essential to sustainable development. First, the economic growth alone is not enough to solve the world’s problems and the economic, social and environmental aspects of any action are interconnected. Secondly, the interconnected nature of sustainable development calls for going beyond borders whether they be geographical or institutional, to coordinate strategies and make good decisions.

2. A new marketing paradigm for sustainable development

The concept and practices of sustainable development continue to evolve, becoming an important vector of the development politics by integrating the components of “*the triple bottom line*”. Businesses have to maintain financial stability and competitiveness while acknowledging environmental requirements and social demands (Belz and Karstens, 2010). Understanding the importance of sustainable development and the difficulty, full of conflicts and trade offs, of the integration of the three dimensions of sustainability, one of the key business strategies ensuring sustainable development has taken the shape of green marketing, currently known as sustainable marketing (Saxena and Pradeep, 2010; Belz and Karstens, 2010). The motive of this evolution is the fact that businesses and nations have realized that sustainable marketing can help with getting more customers and making more money leading to sustainable development while protecting the environment and society.

Sustainable marketing is “*a management conception which attends to the environmental and social demands and eventually turns them into competitive advantages by delivering customers value and satisfaction*” (Belz and Karstens, 2010, p. 3). In the vision of three bottom lines sustainability, sustainable marketing may be defined as building and maintaining sustainable and profitable relationships with the customers, the social environment and the natural environment. Last but not least, a

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wide vision on sustainable marketing considers it as being the adoption of sustainable business practices that create better businesses, better relationships and a better world (Anderson, 2012). All these points of view suggest that sustainable marketing is more than green marketing because it embodies the guiding principle of sustainability.

The ability of businesses to successfully use sustainable marketing as support of their strategy for gaining sustainability depends on their social and environmental sensitivity. The environmental issues such as global warming, toxic waste disposal, resource depletion and landfill management are items of public as well as legislative concerns. As a result of such evolutions companies have become eco-centric. This orientation is not suitable anymore. Green values must be organized into a new paradigm that recognizes not only the partnership of humankind and Earth, but views that partnership as a part of sustainable development. It means that green marketing has to redirect its philosophy in such a manner that it becomes sustainable marketing. Belz and Karstens (2010) think that there are some distinguishing features of sustainable marketing paradigm. The environmental and social issues are the easiest to identify. In classic marketing, the environmental and social aspects of the products are hardly considered and green marketing includes only the ecological problems. In contrast, the analysis and identification of the environmental and social problems are starting points. Another particular problem is the identification of the intersection of the social and environmental problems with the consumer behavior. This is a crucial aspect of sustainability and sustainable marketing, which tries to find solutions to the social and environmental problems and meet the customer demand at the same time. In order to succeed, sustainable marketing aims at sustainable and profitable relationships with customers, natural environment and social environment thus meeting the *triple bottom line*. One issue for a helpful sustainable marketing consists in information asymmetries. These asymmetries originate in the credibility of the environmental and social qualities of many sustainable products as organic farming or fair trade products. The customer has to believe the information given by producers and third parties with respect to social and ecological qualities of the products. These information asymmetries open the door for opportunistic behavior on the supply side which is known as "*green washing*". As reaction to such behaviors, customers could become skeptical and finally stop purchasing the products.

Sustainable marketing is relationship marketing. It aims at building lasting relationships with customers, the social and natural environment on a long-term thinking. This kind of lasting relationships needs a transformation of the conception about the external forces from regarding its elements as uncontrollable components the business has to adapt toward considering them a constraint to overcome. Sustainability is achieved only if the governments, non-governmental organizations and companies assume the change of external frameworks in the favor of sustainable development and make efforts at local, national and international levels.

3. The diversified contribution of sustainable marketing to sustainable development

3.1. Sustainable marketing stimulates sustainable demand

The first goal of sustainable marketing is to create and enlarge the market for sustainable products and services. In order to achieve such a goal, one key task is to identify the demand for sustainable products and stimulate it. The achievement of sustainable objectives depends on if and how much the company's sustainable efforts are recognized by the market. If the company wants to keep producing and marketing sustainable products, the demand for such products must be helped, in order to become and maintain sustainability. A first suitable way for stimulating the sustainable demand consists in the creation of a market for sustainable supply. The business has to create market pull with direct consumers. It must address the sustainability function of consumers to understand the value of the environmentally and socially friendly supply, information requirements and so on. A better action could show the creation of the market pull with two important categories of customers which are the end users and product retailers. This could be done in collaboration with direct customers or alone.

The appropriate market segmentation could be another strategic move to stimulate the sustainable demand. This move requires a good identification of the market segments that are natural buyers of the sustainable attributes because they have a compliance obligation or voluntary commitment to improve performance (PwC, 2010). A great help could give the translation of the communication arguments from the sustainable product to the services it furnishes. These arguments must emphasize the idea that the customers pay for the services not the product which aligns the commercial incentives on efficiency, durability, recycling, reuse and other sustainable attributes.

One of the most effective methods for the stimulation of the sustainable demand may be the collaboration of the producer with the customer to co-create a sustainable product. Acting this way, a product with unique sustainability characteristics which is suitable for both parties could be developed.

3.2. Sustainable marketing constantly improves sustainable products

The concept of sustainable product includes a variety of economic, social and environmental considerations. A sustainable product is an item or service that minimizes its impact on resource use and environment and maximizes that on society at each stage of its life cycle. The improvement of both characteristics must become the constant objective of the producers. The more they succeed to achieve these objectives, the more sustainable the products become. The end product of sustainable marketing consists in its contribution to the sustainable development by the favorable impact on its economic, social and environmental constituent parts (Yazdanifard and Mercy, 2011, p. 638). The producers and marketers can make a difference by reducing the impact of

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their products and services on the environment and increasing their good effects on society. These impacts could be the result of the design, materials use, water and energy consumption, packaging, delivery, marketing disposal and reuse and other attributes (Belz and Karstens, 2010, p. 11; DEFRA, 2013). This balanced approach is a proof that sustainable products try to integrate all three components of sustainable development. On one hand, the sustainable product strategy considers and integrates environmental and social dimensions along the entire value chain. On the other hand, the sustainable products are competitive and economic successful over a long period of time. In their turn, consumers can reduce the impact by the choices they make about sustainable goods and services they buy and how they use them.

An important help to the sustainability of the products can bring solutions such as *the acceleration of sustainable innovation, introduction of a product road map and the development and use of a rating system for sustainable products and companies*. The business has to *accelerate the sustainable innovation* based on sustainable attributes. A good strategy consists in the re-branding and re-categorizing of the existing products. By combining the two directions it might be possible to develop a large-scale portfolio transformation. Companies can differentiate the products and brands of their portfolio with the help of sustainability attributes (PwC, 2010). The sustainability of the production and producers can be also helped by *introducing a product road map*. The case of United Kingdom is a good example. The government and the industry are working on a number of pilot road maps to improve sustainability across the life cycles of a range of important products as the information from Table 1 proves.

Table 1

The current status of seven products road maps in the UK

Sector	Product	Evidence study	Action plan status
Buildings	Plasterboard	Published 2009	Action Plan published October 2010. Plasterboard sustainability partnership established. Road map led by Waste & Resources Action Program (WRAP)
Buildings	WCS	Published 2008	Action Plan in development. Road secretarial function provided by WRAP
Buildings	Windows	Published 2009	Action Plan published October 2010. Windows Sustainability Partnership established. Road map led by WRAP.
Food & Drink	Fish and shellfish	Published 2010	In development
	Milk	Published 2007	Update Action Plan published 2009. Road map led by WRAP.
Passenger Transport	Passenger cars	Published 2009	No forthcoming Action Plan
Textiles	Clothing	Search for "Sustainable Clothing" among Search Science & Research Projects	Progress report published March 2011. Road map led by WRAP

Source: [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/procurement/What Is.html](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/procurement/What%20Is.html), February 3, 2011.

With the help of the road map the status of sustainability of each product can be established, the delays can be identified and the necessary actions can be performed. Another new tool for the identification of the required extension of the different products future sustainable improvement consists in the *development of a rating system for products and companies*. Good Guide, Inc., a company from United States of America, rates products and businesses on their health, environmental and social performance on a scale from 1 to 10. Some examples of high rated products based on their performances in the three above mentioned fields, marketed in US, as they have been evaluated by Good Guide, Inc. are posted on the site www.goodguide.com. In 2011, for example, Aquaphor Baby Gentle Wash & Shampoo had 6, 8 score (health-8.0; environment-7.0; society-5.4) and Method Flushable Tub & Tiles Wipe has obtained general score of 8, 5 (10-health; 8, 6-environment; 6, 9-society).

3.3. Sustainable marketing designs and uses customized credible communication

The communication has an advantageous impact on the sustainable development by transforming the power generated by sustainable policy into action. In order to maximize its added value to sustainable development, the communication must take into account the specifics of the sustainable products and sustainable cause and integrate the results in a communication project from the start. This project should focus on the strategic and tactic particular issues of the communication for sustainability.

A very particular issue appears to be the social and environmental qualities of the sustainable product. These qualities constitute credence qualities which cannot be inspected by the consumer. Therefore, many green consumers are insecure if the promised product's qualities are real (Belz and Karstens, 2010, p. 14; Strategic Communication for Sustainable Development, 2006, p. 27). The task of the sustainable communication is to ensure and convey credibility and reputation to unsettled consumers. This task can be achieved by means of endorsing the sustainable product and packaging label by independent third parties such as Bio Suisse and Trans Fair and others are providing the consumer with enough credible information to push sustainable purchase. Another issue regards the buying decision of the consumers of sustainable products. These consumers decide in favour of sustainable products if they individually perceived net-benefits are valued higher than the net-benefits of a comparable brown product (Belz and Karstens, 2010, p. 14; Cox, 2008).

A good strategic project that may increase the role of communication in the sustainability development has to be prepared on the basis of the following leading ideas. First of all, the whole sustainable communication effort must *create a vision*. This vision is that of the sustainable business about sustainable values such as clean air, green technology, bicycles, farmer markets and many others. Second, *targeting the right people* helps a better contribution of the communication to the sustainable development. A list of appropriate people includes community leaders, mavens who

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wish to be of service and influence and who love to share their knowledge, connectors who know an extraordinary amount of people and who are very powerful, public opinion leaders who are more trustworthy or well-respected, salesmen who are good at spreading ideas and persuasive and authority figures who are on the side of sustainable practices (James, 2010, p. 14). The third, the business and people should *use a hot chain of sustainable communication*. The hot chain of communication means that the dialogue is a continuous process at all levels. This dialogue is a two-way relationship based on realistic, true messages (Nail, 2010). The appropriate communication for sustainable change has a participatory character, and its tools are crucial for the sustainable development. At the time, the appropriate communication process is as important as the appropriation of the sustainable development itself (Gumucio Dagrón and Tufté, 2006, p. 5). Fourth, *emphasizing the need for the commitment of business and people* has an impact on the credibility of the sustainable communication. The business has to develop an engaged communication. That means the messages must tell the truth, even if it hurts and stress upon the business dedication to the sustainability cause. On the side of the people's commitment, the messages have a role in encouraging the present and potential customers by putting the social and environmental pressures on them, in order to convince these customers to commit themselves in purchasing sustainable products. Fifth, *the business has to develop a true sustainable communication*. A mission of such importance can be accomplished with the help of actions aiming at a better understanding of the role of the communication in the sustainable development. More, the actors involved in the communication process must assume actions that go beyond jargon and discourse (ibidem, p. 6). The messages should be constructed in a manner that shows that they are attuned to sustainability. All these require a simple and reassuring argumentation. The communicated image of the company has to be realistic and active, the commitment must be emphasized, and the mistakes should be admitted and accompanied by the message of how the company or its products can be improved. The communication for sustainability becomes true also if partnerships with specialists, institutions or researchers groups are established, community programs are developed, scientists and experts are involved in discussions with media and information through websites and sustainability reports are widespread.

3.4. Sustainable marketing helps a multi-channel distribution network

The distribution system must have as priority its contribution to the environmental, social and product quality and efficiency. These goals may be easier to achieve if the producer of the sustainable goods builds reliable relationships with the consumers, the members of the supply chain and the channels of distribution. The distribution works in two strategic directions, in order to support the sustainable development. A first direction is providing the customers with sustainable products. The second direction consists in efforts for lowering consumption of materials and energy, reducing waste of resources and pollution so that the purchase costs of the

consumers don't increase and environmental and social negative effects keep lowering (Belz and Karstens, 2010).

One of the most important jobs is the transformation of the conventional distribution into a sustainable one. The identification and use of the sustainable trends of the distribution is a part of the construction of a sustainable distribution network. The increasing customization, activity interdependence and specialization are significant trends that strongly influence the sustainability of the distribution (Hulthen and Gadde, 2009, pp. 5-11). *The increasing customization of distribution* gives a better flexibility but needs a great number of channels that provide a high degree of distribution. A high degree of distribution is essential if the sustainable product should be marketed successfully and this goal can be only achieved through a multi-channel distribution (Belz and Karstens, 2010). A multi-channel distribution helps to handle the diversity of customer groups and to make it possible for a particular customer to select the most appropriate solution (Hulthen and Gadde, 2009, p. 11). *The increasing activity interdependence* has a useful impact on the reduction of inventories through diminishing the resource use. In its turn, the emergence of frequent and smaller lot sizes from suppliers may have an opposite influence that results in more wrapping and waste to be handled on the supply chain. *An increasing specialization* encourages better capacity utilization and the gain of economies of scale when the activities are performed by specialized resources. When the companies specialize in certain distribution activities, ways for new types of actors engaging in the coordination of globally dispersed operations open up. Some distributors turn out into service providers, providing waste handling services, taking care of all scrap and waste related to a delivery. Other companies become specialists in green transportation, focusing on the use of more environmentally transportation facilities and resources in a more efficient way.

The above trends have various effects. Some fields where they become visible are the materials consumption, transportation work and facilities exploitation (ibidem, pp. 11-12). The increasing activity interdependences has as results the reduction in inventories and less surplus supply both impacts acting for the reduction of waste amount. The more frequent and smaller lot sizes and specialization generate undesirable effects. These effects take the form of more waste and pollution and increased transportation work. Such negative effects created by increasing interdependencies and specialization can be partly counterbalanced by the customization of the facilities and distribution solutions. More, specialization may help better exploitation of facilities since it creates opportunities for companies to specialize in the coordination of such physical flows.

3.5. Sustainable marketing markets at fair prices

The pricing of sustainable products is an important issue due to its impact on sustainability. In order to contribute to the sustainability of those who are involved in transactions for sustainable products, particular agreements and partnerships that have as main goal to provide conditions for a fair trade are needed. The Fair Trade is a

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trading partnership based on dialogue, transparency and respect that seeks greater quality of international trade think Locke et al. (2010, p. 7). A point of view more connected to sustainable development can be found on Wikipedia which sustains that Fair Trade is an “*organized social movement and market-based approach that aims to help producers in developing countries to make better trading conditions and promote sustainability*”. Fair Trade has three strategic intents: to work with small producers and workers in order to help move from a position of vulnerability to security and economic self-sufficiency, to empower producers and workers as stakeholders in their own organizations, and actively play a wider role in the global arena to achieve greater equity in international trade (Locke et al., 2010, pp. 7-8).

Fairtrade International Organization (FIO) is the well known organization which focuses on initiatives that develop Fair Trade standards, license labels and Fairtrade Certification Mark in consuming countries. Fairtrade certifications purport to guarantee not only fair prices, but also the principles of ethical purchasing. The Fairtrade certification system also attempts to promote long-term business, relationships between sellers and buyers, crop pre-financing and greater transparency throughout the supply chain. Fair trade helps sustainable development because it offers better conditions. A major contribution of fair trade is ensuring the conditions that the producers receive a price which reflects an adequate return of their input of skills, work and resources and share of the total profit commensurate with their input (EC, 1997, p. 3). The price which meets the case is known as *fair price*. A fair price is the kind of price that covers the cost of production and facilitates the social development and the protection and conservation of the environment. One of the most important products marketed in the Fair trade system is coffee. Fair Trade certified growers have guaranteed a minimum price for their coffee. This price is guaranteed in the case of any Fair Trade certified product. If the world market price rises above the minimum price, Fair Trade minimum price is set to a higher price.

Table 2

Prices for fair trade coffee valid June 1, 2008

Type of Coffee	Fair Trade minimum Price	Organic Differential	Fair Trade Premium	Total Price
Washed Arabica	USD 1.25	USD 0.20	USD 0.10	USD 1.55
Non-washed Arabica	USD 1.20	USD 0.20	USD 0.10	USD 1.50
Washed Robusta	USD 1.05	USD 0.20	USD 0.10	USD 1.35
Non-washed Robusta	USD 1.01	USD 0.20	USD 0.10	USD 1.31

Source: Locke et al. 2010, p.11 and author’s calculations.

The numbers from Table 2 show how the price of all coffee producing regions was structured and calculated taking into account Fair Trade minimum price, the organic differential if coffee is ecologically produced and Fair Trade premium when

the prices rise above the minimum price. As the numbers point out, a certified producer of Washed Arabica receives USD 1.25 for a pound (0.45 kg) as minimum price. If its coffee is ecologically produced, the producer will earn an additional USD 0.20 and when the world price rises with an agreed percentage above Fair Trade minimum price a premium of USD 0.10 is added and the producer can receive a total price of USD 1.55.

Fair Trade and Fair Price help the sustainability of the supply side of the market. The farmers are guaranteed a minimum price and direct links with importers, creating long-term sustainability. Through Fair Trade the farmers earn better incomes allowing them to hold on their land and invest in quality. More, Fair Trade advocates the payment of a higher price to exporters, too, as well as higher environmental and social standards.

The demand side of the market needs also help for sustainability not only the supply side. The sustainable products generate higher costs. Therefore, they are marketed at higher prices, which is not a benefit for the consumers. They choose the products at prices judged to be fair, particularly from the point of view of the ratio benefits/price. A theory of fair pricing may have two assumptions (Rotemberg, 2004, p. 4). One is that *the consumers expect companies to be somewhat altruistic towards them*, and they react with anger if the companies prove to be insufficiently altruistic. The fear of angry reactions against them leads businesses to act as if they were altruistic even if they do not feel true benevolence towards consumers. The other assumption consists in the fact that *the consumers experience a loss over and above their loss in real income* when they learn something that makes them wish they had carried out a different set of transactions at an earlier time.

The fair price seems to be the response to both assumptions in terms of making consumers to bear the experiences of loss more easily. Moreover, the sustainable products with higher costs are demanded and purchased by the consumers which perceive a value added and are willing to pay a higher price. Therefore, in order to enlarge the segment of customers by attracting the less active persons, the suppliers of sustainable products need to reconsider pricing to pass possible cost saving through directly to the consumers. The goal of such a move is to demonstrate that sustainable products do not have to be inevitably more expensive than other high quality products, offering “*more for same*” (Belz and Karstens, 2010). This goal could be achieved through fair trade which has the fair price as essential constituent part.

4. Conclusions

Sustainable development has become peremptory for every country or business. Its growing importance is the result of constant degradation of many eco-systems and resource depletion. These undesirable trends push for a new paradigm of development that of sustainable development which is considered as a kind of development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet

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their own needs. At business level, sustainable development refers to the model of development which focuses on making *profits* while taking into account the social (*people*) and environmental (*planet*) aspects. In other words, the business must integrate and balance all three dimensions of sustainability in a responsible way. One of the business strategies which contribute to the sustainable development takes the shape of sustainable marketing. This kind of marketing is more than green marketing and it builds and maintains sustainable and profitable relationships with the customers, social environment and natural environment. The results of sustainable marketing efforts may be found in economic sustainability, environmental sustainability and social sustainability.

The sustainable marketing *helps the economic sustainability* by establishing the credibility for the sustainable efforts and solutions of the business. The areas where the credibility has to be obtained may be corporate and product brands, responsible product use and disposal practices. Another area of support provided by sustainable marketing consists in developing and marketing higher quality products with social impact based on sustainable innovation, lasting products, developing sustainable brands which offer practical benefits like better ratio quality/price and cost/undesirable effects on resources and environment. A true sustainable communication as the result of the permanent dialogue at all levels is in the benefit of sustainable development due to its potential for convincing customers that they buy “more for same”. The fair trade and the fair prices bring also benefits for both sides of the market, producers and consumers, in order to cover the higher costs of the sustainable products.

The social sustainability is improved in many ways. Empowering consumers in meaningful ways about the important issues they can solve with the help of the sustainable marketing solutions is a powerful contribution to maintain and improve the sustainable development. Other contributions that sustainable marketing provides consist in the creation of jobs in agriculture and other industries, the increase of income of the producers and marketers. The production and consumption of sustainable products and services which have the qualities for a healthier use (ecologic, bio, organic) may improve the consumers’ health and increase the labor capacity and life expectance. The contribution to sustainable development could be found also in better conditions offered by the fair trade and fair prices. The fair trade aims at helping the producers in developing countries and promoting sustainability. The key element of the fair trade is the fair price. The social sustainability gets support since the producers earn better incomes allowing them to hold on their lands and invest in quality.

The environmental sustainability also benefits from sustainable marketing efforts. The consumers are stimulated to become sustainable by supplying them products with added value in terms of better health and environmental preservation. At a wider level, the biophysical environmental benefits from the protection of Earth’s support systems (air, water, soil), the saving of renewable resources, the stimulation of saving the non-renewable resources, the increase of environmental awareness.

The contribution of sustainable marketing to the sustainable development will increase in the future if at the business, social and environmental level are meet at least the following conditions:

- 1) The general development strategy is based on the sustainable business, political, governmental and legal practices.
- 2) Businesses deliver marketing strategies, plans and activities that create ongoing growth, social development and environment preservation.
- 3) Businesses and people minimize the use of resources and its negative impact on the future generations on a permanent basis.
- 4) People are empowered to meet their own economic, social and environmental needs and build stronger communities that seek local and global economies, better quality of life and safer environment.

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