

Democratic People's Republic of Korea- Example of Independence and Sustainable Development

Lyudmil Alexandre Kostadinov

Director, Board of Directors, European Regional Society for the Study of the Juche Idea,
President, Bulgarian Kimilsungism-Kimjongilism Study Group

On the Road to Independence

A view on the future of the new people's republic can be obtained from the conversation of the prominent Soviet leader Zhdanov with the leader of the Korean revolution and founder of the DPRK, Comrade Kim Il Sung. They met in Moscow in 1945. When asked by Zhdanov in what form his country could give assistance to the Korean people in their struggle to build their country after liberation. Kim Il Sung's answer is telling: **“Your help will, as a matter of fact, be welcome, but we are going to build the country by ourselves to the best of our ability. Though difficult, it will be beneficial for the future. In our country worship of great powers has existed historically as the root cause of national ruin. We're determined to prevent this malady from doing harm to the building of our new country.”**

After liberation from the Japanese rule, Korea inherited an economy typical of a colonial country. There was some industry built up, but it was aimed at extracting and exporting local raw materials to Japan. All the major industrial enterprises were Japanese owned and 90% of the administration and engineering staff in them were also Japanese. All necessary machines and equipment were imported from Japan. In practice, Korea did not have its own personnel and its own machinery manufacturing. The only university in the country was located in Seoul, where more than half of the students were Japanese, and over 80% of the Korean population was illiterate. The DPRK needed peace, but less than two years after the establishment of the republic, it was forced to defend itself against an imposed war by the imperialist superpower USA. After the end of the war, the DPRK had to start again from scratch as almost everything was destroyed or damaged. But despite all the trials, the course towards independent development was followed steadfastly.

By 1986, machinery manufacturing was already providing with its own production 98% of the necessary machines for all other branches of the national economy.

The production of all, including the most complex, modern machines at the highest

world level was mastered. On the basis of economic success, people's living standards rose rapidly.

A stage of new severe trials for the DPRK occurred after the destruction of socialism in the USSR and the countries of the Eastern Europe. Once again, it was a question of the survival or death of socialism not only because of the severed economic ties with the former socialist countries and the unprecedented economic sanctions imposed on the country under the pressure of the USA, but also because of the increased threat of armed aggression and, accordingly, the need to significantly increase the expenses for defense. Added to this were the unprecedented natural disasters that annually inflicted huge losses on the country. It must be emphasized that these natural disasters are a direct consequence of the insane waste of natural resources, emissions of greenhouse gases and pollution of nature by transnational corporations from the USA, Japan, south Korea and other capitalist countries. This period of trials was successfully overcome under the leadership of Kim Il Sung's successor, Comrade Kim Jong Il. When all the enemies were predicting the imminent collapse of socialism in the DPRK, on August 31, 1998, a DPRK satellite was launched with own carrier rocket as a symbol of success in the struggle to preserve independence and socialism in the country.

At the beginning of the 21st century, the DPRK entered a new stage of its development. After the sudden demise of Kim Jong Il in late 2011, the construction of the independent socialist economy continued under the leadership of Comrade Kim Jong Un. In more than 10 years that have passed since then, remarkable successes have been achieved in all fields-economic construction, science, technology, culture, health care, defense, etc. First of all, production in domestic enterprises has been put on a normal track and a radical modernization of almost all the main production facilities is carried out on the basis of state-of-the-art equipment using only local raw materials. The standard of living of the people is rising. Defense potential has been successfully strengthened, allowing peace to be maintained on the Korean peninsula.

Thanks to the measures taken in time, the DPRK has overcome with minimal losses a very serious health crisis caused by the global epidemic of coronavirus.

Sustainable Development Social system

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a country where the priority is the people and not the profit of capital. The DPRK is the people-centered socialist state where the people-first principle is at the foundation of the state building and activities and where the masses of working people are the master of everything and everything of the society serves for their benefits. The Socialist Constitution of the DPRK states that the state regards the improvement of the material and cultural life of the people as the supreme principle in its activities and provides workers with all living conditions,

including food, clothing and housing.

Improvement of housing conditions and public transport

In the DPRK, housing is provided to people for free, including without rent. To meet the increased housing demand of the people, the government has made remarkable progress in recent years by building housing on large-scale across the country. Improving the living conditions of people both in the capital and in smaller towns and villages is a top priority of the country's Party and state leadership and to Kim Jong Un personally. Housing construction is developing at a high pace and the quality of new houses has been raised to a new, much higher level. After the severe natural disasters, typhoons and floods that occurred every year from 2015, the government mobilized all human and material resources for recovery. In the affected areas, new homes were built on a large scale and a large number of homes were renovated. Roads, electricity supply and water supply were also being restored. In a number of places, the local Party committees and state administration worked in tents, giving up their buildings temporarily to accommodate the affected families.

The government aims to expand transport infrastructure, increase road safety and provide people with a safe and convenient public transport system that is also incomparably more energy efficient. Modern subway trains, trams, trolleybuses and buses are manufactured in the country and delivered to the cities, and the Pyongyang subway is undergoing renovation and modernization.

Sustainable development of agriculture

The main priority of the DPRK government is the sustainable development of agriculture and the country's food self-sufficiency.

The DPRK is mountainous country and arable land is insufficient (less than 1 acre per capita). Since arable land is very limited, tidal land reclamation is considered an important solution for the development of agriculture and the improvement of people's livelihood, and national efforts are directed to the reclamation of tens of thousands of hectares of coastal tidal lands.

Major efforts are aimed at growing better crop varieties in larger quantities, increasing soil fertility to ensure sustainable food production. About 20 new models of agricultural machinery were developed and produced. Last year alone, the military industry produced and donated 5 500 modern machines to farmers.

Animal husbandry by farms and sideline animal husbandry by individual farmers were encouraged, and a number of greenhouses were built, including the largest in the world, which was built by military builders on the grounds of a former military airbase.

Freshwater and offshore fish farming has been widely developed.

Other important achievements are the development of gravity irrigation, which does not require pumps and the consumption of electricity, and the mass composting of agricultural and household waste for use as natural fertilizers which saves large amounts of raw materials and energy for the production of synthetic fertilizers.

Healthcare

The state has legislated that the life and health of the people are protected by universal and free medical care, a household-doctor system and the implementation of the policy of preventive medicine. Thanks to the universal system of free medical care, all people have access to medical services free of charge, regardless of gender, age, profession or place of residence. The system of universal free medical care has been introduced since 1953, and the complete universal system, including free medicines, sanatoriums, etc. since 1960.

In terms of the number of doctors per capita, the DPRK significantly surpasses South Korea and the United States. The exceptional capabilities of the DPRK's healthcare system were demonstrated in full force in 2022, when with the mobilization of the entire society, including military medics, and under the leadership of Kim Jong Un, was overcome with minimal losses the severe health crisis caused by the penetration of the coronavirus epidemic into the country.

There has been significant progress in protecting the lives and health of mothers and children.

Sustainable development of energy

The goal of the DPRK is to ensure sustainable growth of the economy through the effective use of its own resources.

Sustainable consumption and production of energy, according to the DPRK government, is a key policy for economic development. In order to ensure sustainable energy production and consumption, an energy plan has been developed, with efforts mainly focused on hydropower and its rational combination with thermal power to generate electricity, increasing the share of nuclear energy and using various renewable sources of energy.

In energy consumption, the introduction of zero-energy and zero-carbon buildings is expanding. The use of renewable energy and improvement of energy efficiency is increasing in the industry. In the agricultural sector, the use of fertilizers from agricultural and household waste and gravity irrigation is expanding. The reuse and recycling of industrial and household waste is vigorously enforced throughout the country. The DPRK Law on Recycling (adopted on April 12, 2020) specifies the reusable goods that are collected by enterprises and households through a public

procurement system. Ash and slag from burning coal are recycled into building materials. Waste paper, waste wood, glass and waste plastic are also fully recycled, as are vegetable and livestock waste composted for use as fertiliser.

Of the fossil fuels, the DPRK only imports a small amount of oil. In comparison, south Korea, which is often cited as an example of economic development, imports a huge amount of energy resources that provide over 90% of its energy consumption.

A comparison of annual data on the import of energy resources and greenhouse gas emissions from the burning of fuels in the DPRK and south Korea, according to data from the International Energy Agency for 2016, shows that:

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea Emissions of greenhouse gases when burning fuels-25.4 million tons or only 1.0 ton per capita. Import of oil and petroleum products-1.0 million tons. There is no import of natural gas. Share of renewable energy sources in electricity production-76.0%. Share of fossil fuels in electricity production-24.0%. South Korea Emissions of greenhouse gases when burning fuels-589.2 million tons or 11.5 tons per capita. In other words, 11.5 times more than the DPRK. Import of oil and petroleum fuels-125.5 million tons. Coal imports-81.4 million tons of oil equivalent. Import of liquefied natural gas-39.6 million tons of oil equivalent. Share of renewable energy sources in electricity production-only 3.0% Share of fossil fuels in electricity production-68.0% Share of nuclear energy in electricity production-29.0%.

From these data, it is clear that south Korea imports huge amounts of fossil fuels and has over 11 times more greenhouse gas emissions per capita than the DPRK's from fuel burning.

Reduction of climate change effects

The main cause of climate change is the emission of greenhouse gases from human activities. For example, per capita greenhouse gas emissions in the US are about 15 tons per year, in south Korea about 12 tons per year, while in the DPRK they are about 1 ton per year. It is obvious who is responsible for the natural disasters caused by climate change.

However, the DPRK is one of the countries that suffer the biggest losses from these natural disasters for decades and unfortunately this trend can continue in the coming decades. More than one significant natural disaster has been observed every year on the territory of the country during the last ten years. They are accompanied by human casualties, damage to homes, roads, crop destruction, etc. The DPRK has adopted and is implementing the National Strategy for Reducing the Consequences of Natural Disasters for the period 2019-2030. The main goal of the strategy is to complete a rapid response system to minimize disaster risks, increase public awareness and increase capacity for material procurement.

Although the DPRK's greenhouse gas emissions are relatively minimal today, a National Plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 has been developed and is being implemented.

Notable achievements in adapting to climate change are the introduction of a crop rotation system to ensure natural soil fertilization, zero energy architecture and zero carbon emissions in the building sector, development of nuclear energy and renewable energy sources etc.

The reforestation campaign gained momentum, which after 2015 became a mass movement, which led to an increase in forested areas by 1.7% on average per year. To achieve the 2015-2024 reforestation goals, the government plans to restore forests on 1.4 million hectares in mountain areas by 2024, thereby greening most of the deforested mountains. This will create the capacity to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by more than 10 million tons per year.

A significant obstacle to DPRK's ability to implement measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is the unprecedented economic sanctions imposed on the country under the US pressure. This requires that only local financial and scientific and technical resources be used so that the country can contribute to the solution of this problem, which is mainly caused by the actions of the same USA.

The conclusion we can draw is that the DPRK has set clear goals and is taking real actions to ensure sustainable development. If developing countries follow the example of south Korea, resource scarcity, global climate and environmental catastrophe are inevitable in the near future. The only way out for humanity is sustainable development following the example and path indicated by the DPRK, and this is a guarantee that there will never be a depletion of resources, dangerous climate changes and ecological catastrophe.

The DPRK's economy has demonstrated unprecedented vitality, despite extremely heavy and prolonged economic sanctions, the country's small size and limited resources. Under such an economic blockade, the economy of neighboring south Korea would collapse in a few months, while the independent socialist economy of the DPRK grows and develops, and there can be no doubt that under the leadership of Kim Jong Un, the dream of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il to build a "strong and prosperous" socialist state with its own forces and resources will be realized without fail.