

with serious environmental pollution, it is reasonable for us to ask developed countries to make greater contributions to environmental protection in accordance with the principle of responsibility distribution.

### (3) Implementation of differentiated environmental standards

In international exchanges, China should also ask for differences in environmental protection standards, which are determined by the types and quantities of natural resources in different regions and countries and their current national conditions. Take Africa and the United States for example. Most countries in Africa produce primary products, but their current national conditions are to meet the basic needs of their people, while the United States produces advanced industrial products and electronic products and enjoys a relatively high standard of living. And it is clearly not in Africa's interest for the US to share a set of standards. Therefore, China should also choose to implement the corresponding environmental standards according to its national conditions.

To sum up, China still has a long way to go in the coordination of environmental development and trade. At the present stage, only by ensuring both «legislation» and «supervision» and mastering the discourse initiative of environmental development in international conferences, can the balanced relationship between foreign trade and environmental development be well maintained.

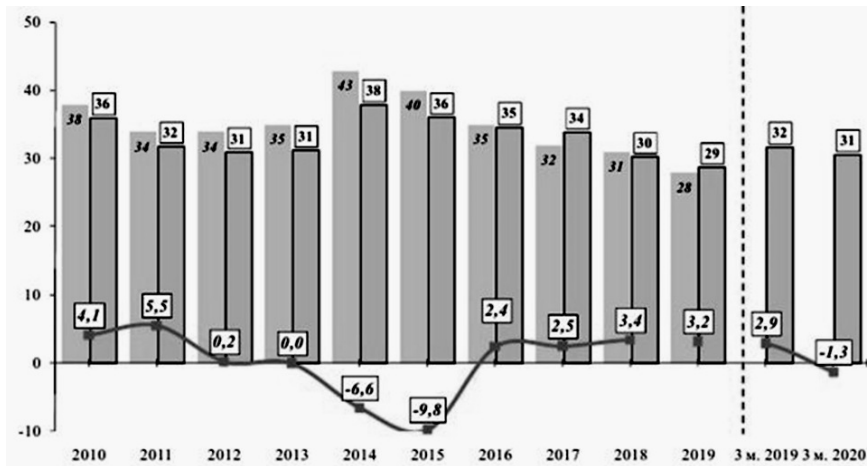
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## **SHADOW ECONOMY IN UKRAINE**

For decades, the shadow economy has been present in most states of the world. The shadow economy is largely interpreted as the economic activity of citizens hidden from the state. It is also defined as a complex socio-economic phenomenon, represented by a set of uncontrolled and unregulated both illegal and legal, but immoral, economic relations between economic entities to make a profit by concealing income and tax evasion. Among the works of foreign researchers, like F. Schneider, P. Gutmann, E. de Soto, E. Feig and others, who considered the essence, described methods and scales of assessing the shadow economy, as well as the reasons for the transition to shadow, ways of de-shadowing. Well-known economist F. Schneider believes that the shadow sector of the economy should include the share of gross national product that is not reflected in official reports. Another economist and researcher of the shadow economy, E. de Soto, believes that the «shadow economy is a «refuge for those for whom the cost of complying with the relevant legislation in carrying out economic activities exceeds the benefits of achieving its goal». By the way, Ukrainian researchers of economics also described all aspects of the shadow economy, in particular: V. Bazylevych, Z. Varnaliy, O. Zasanska, V. Mandibura, S. Ogreba, M. Fleichuk, O. Khalkovsky, Y. Kharazishvili and others.

Almost all countries of the world face the problems of the existence of the shadow economy. In some, its volumes are fixed at the level that has no significant impact on the economy, and in others, there is evidence of the existence of a reproductive system of shadow economic relations. The second category includes Ukraine, whose shadow economy, according to various sources, is fixed at 20-50% of GDP (fig.1).



■ – level of shadow economy, % to the volume of official GDP (according to the old methodology);  
■ – level of shadow economy, % to the volume of official GDP (according to the improved methodology);  
— – change in the volume of real GDP of Ukraine, % to the corresponding period of the previous year.

A comprehensive look at the problem of shadowing the economy in Ukraine, we can identify certain factors that objectively explain the large indicator of the shadow economy:

- high taxes and uneven tax burden;
- insufficient transparency of tax legislation and constant changes to it;
- slow and non-transparent privatization processes;
- interference of government structures at all levels in the activities of economic entities;
- corruption in public authorities and local self-government.

To eliminate the shadow economy, a number of de-shadowing reforms are needed. The priorities of de-shadowing of the economy in the context of economic reforms are de-shadowing of financial flows and legalization of the labor market.

- Strengthening market regulation of the economy and anti-corruption reform.
- Tax reform.

- Reform of the banking system.
- Labor market reform.
- Judicial reform.

Thus, the process of de-shadowing in Ukraine is essential to overcome all manifestations of the shadow economy and its main goal is to create the necessary conditions to improve the investment climate, reduce taxes and regulatory pressure on business, protect property rights and labor relations. These reforms will also give impetus to economic development, which is impossible given the high performance of the shadow economy.

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## **SMART ECONOMY IN SMART AFRICAN CITIES**

Given the enormous advantages of a smart city, various plans have been developed throughout the world to elaborate this concept and further implement them in real life, not only in developed countries but also in countries with emerging economies. Africa is not left out in the smart cities concept as many countries are putting measures in place to develop various aspects of their capital cities to meet smart city standards.

Africa is experiencing unprecedented population growth. By 2030, Africa's population will exceed that of Europe, South and North America combined. The continent has the highest urban growth rate in the world (3.3% per year between 2000 and 2015) and urbanization achieved 40% in 2018. Today, half a billion people of Africa's population live in urban areas. When the implementation of the New Urban Agenda will be concluded in 2036, the majority of Africa's population (52%) will already be living in towns and cities. Africa's rapid urbanization has also been accompanied by a spectacular growth of the number of large cities. Today, the continent has about 55 cities with a population of one million or more and four megacities. African urbanization occurs at a time when ICT is making the production and distribution of goods and services more efficient as well as easing the connection between settlements. Recognizing the crucial role ICT can play in sustainable