

MAINSTREAMING SCP IN DEVELOPMENT POLICIES: NEEDS AT NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS

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Ladies and gentleman, before I begin my presentation I feel the need to recount historic previous events that lead the way to where we are today.

As you all recall, since 1987, the Brundtland Commission recognized the social dimension of sustainable development and its linkages to nature's limits, stressing that "long before these are reached, the world must ensure equitable access to the constrained resource and reorient technological efforts to relieve the pressure". Later on the Millennium Development Goals, required that production and consumption of more goods and services meet basic needs and aspirations of the world's poorest while keeping the limits of our already stressed ecosystems. Furthermore, in chapter III of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation in response to Agenda 21, calls for a 10 Year Framework of Programmes in support of Sustainable Consumption and Production. All of which have given birth to The Marrakesh Process as a global and informal multi-stakeholder process that supports SCP policies and capacity building, providing inputs for the elaboration of the 10 YFP.

We already heard the accomplishments and advancements the Marrakesh process has achieved through the recent years as well as the strategies and linkages towards development plans.

Now I will convey to you the recent discussions at the global, regional and national levels of Sustainable Consumption and Production.

A few weeks ago, in New York, we ended the year process of CSD 18, whose Presidency was lead by the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources of Guatemala, Mr. Luis Ferraté at the United Nations Headquarters; agenda that included the issue of Sustainable Consumption and Production.

The deliberations clearly demonstrated that the issue of Consumption and Production, cannot continue as we know it today; during the inaugural speeches of CSD 18, the previous President of CSD 17, Minister of Holland, Gerda Verburgh, stated that if we continue our ways of production and consumption and utilizing our natural resources the way we have been doing, by the year 2050 when it is expected that the population will raise to 9 billion human beings on earth we will need 5 Planets to satisfy the needs of all humanity. Other speakers said, we would need three planets; but whether we need 5 or 3 Planets is not the issue. The issue is that we only have ONE PLANET Earth, and there is no other Planet in the galaxy where we can live, therefore we must find the keys, the mechanisms, and the solutions to be able to change our behaviors in order to achieve the sustainability needed for survival.

We as humans have achieved important changes towards development. We now have the possibilities to fly into space, study not only our galaxy but even other neighboring galaxies, we travel around the globe and see and learn other ways and cultures; technology has reached successfully even ways to produce energy coming from the sun as well as others. But, yet, we still don't know how to take care of our own Planet, and the problem is not only to provide sustainability to our home, earth, it is the need to find the right answers for our own survival, not for us, but for all future generations.

Dear ladies and gentleman, the issue we will be approaching during our two days discussions, is in a grip, to find the answers that are required in order to achieve a significant paradigm throughout the whole society, and engage all; businesses, consumers, workers, policy decision makers, researchers, scientists, retailers, media, and development cooperation agencies, that is to say, everyone; from governments to citizens, producers to the end of the line, final consumers.

We need to build a new society which will embrace a total change of attitudes towards the way we have been accommodating ourselves in this world of commodities and aiming at "doing more and better with less" by reducing resource use, degradation and pollution along the whole life cycle of goods and services, while at the same time increasing quality of life for all.

We must work together towards influencing all decision makers on new patterns that will continue to provide the means towards a changing economy where there will always be a growing economy but greener economy.

In his inaugural speech at CSD 18, The Chair person emphasized that in order to achieve sustainable consumption and production (SCP) it was needed to link poverty eradication and food security; specially for developing countries. He also reflected on the need for recognition on the valuable lessons on sustainable consumption and production practices Indigenous peoples offer.

The opening remarks (delivered by the Assistant-Secretary-General for Economic Development), Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs emphasized the need to bring consumption and production patterns within the carrying capacities of ecosystems while ensuring upward convergence in standards of living across the planet. He stressed further that while some advances towards sustainable management have happened in all areas under consideration, progress has been limited by the continuing low priority and under-resourcing of these sectors, weak technical and institutional capacities in developing countries, and inadequate transfer and diffusion of technologies.

In the cross regional perspectives, delegations emphasized the need for urgent action and a development of a 10-year framework of programs on SCP, relevant to discussions on a green economy in the context of poverty eradication and sustainable development, to take place in the preparatory process and during the UNCSD. The large number of existing cross-regional partnerships and joint initiatives demonstrates the potential for cooperation, including sharing of lessons learned. An important next step is to focus on joint initiatives, notably for replicating best practices, including replicable methodologies, and creation of networks of experts

Speakers also recognized the contribution of partnerships, South-South cooperation, North-South and triangular cooperation in advancing inter-regional initiatives.

There is no doubt in our minds that sustainable patterns of consumption and production need to focus on reducing the gross disparities in consumption levels between the poor

and the rich, the material and energy intensity of economies and the generation of wastes, and in the overall enable the attainment of higher living standards with reduced environmental impacts. These are important issues to be approached during the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD), to be convened in 2012 in Brazil.

Participants highlighted the need to emphasized the continued need for increased technology transfer and capacity building on the cluster issues, as well as financial support. They also emphasized on the importance of policy coherence and integration at the regional, sub-regional, national and local levels.

Translating decisions in actions is today one of the most important challenges for CSD into the future

It will be very important to ensure that CSD 18 discussions can effectively be implemented during the following meeting CSD 19, in order to arrive at decisions that are concrete and actionable, those which add value to existing commitments, as important, as to enhance mechanisms for more effective review of progress with implementation, including accountability and transparency as well as open and effective participation of all actors of society.

Given the role of many developing countries as manufacturing hubs, it is essential to find solutions to cleaner production including support for National Cleaner Production Centers, which does not only have social, economic and environmental benefits, but raise productivity and create jobs.

With need for predictable and additional financial resources was again highlighted in order to translate decisions at the CSD into concrete programs and actions.

A suggestion was made to link CSD discussions with existing processes and mechanisms that deal specifically with financing for development, as well as to engage the banking sector, including international financial institutions, more actively in sustainable development financing.

The next 10 years are critical for sustainable development. The recent series of crises have highlighted shared vulnerabilities and created a new sense of urgency. They have

underscored the need for greater international co-operation simultaneously to accelerate the pursuit of poverty eradication and the MDGs, maintain and enhance the development momentum, and halt reverse the mounting pressure on the earth's ecosystems.

A strong and coherent international framework with adequate financial support can help consolidate gains, scale up successful experiences, leverage local, national and regional initiatives, and support effective partnerships for action.

At the Latin America and the Caribbean Level

Progress has been made in the development of regional and sub- regional action plans on SCP. Some countries have implemented mechanisms to accelerate SCP, and common policies for cooperation have been approved by regional organizations. Nevertheless, consumption patterns continue to be unsustainable and characterized by limited consumer awareness. Greater technical and financial support is needed for small- and medium-scale enterprises, which often lack access to the latest clean technologies.

In the region the linkage between this thematic cycle and green economy, has raised serious questions and concerns regarding the definition of a "green economy" and its relevance to poverty eradication and social equity aspects. The importance of indigenous peoples' contribution to a discussion of a green economy was emphasized, taking into consideration their traditional knowledge in managing natural resources and adapting to severe droughts and flooding over centuries.

The need for greater financial assistance, technology access, capacity building for sustainable development, to eradicate poverty and achieve the MDGs, as well as the need to scale up best practices that have worked in the region is of greater importance.

During the THE THIRD REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION FORUM (RIM) ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN LATIN AMERICA

AND THE CARIBBEAN celebrated in November of last year in Antigua, Guatemala Countries gave importance to the topic of green economies for the debate on SCP, emphasizing the cross-cutting nature of the process, not only because of the window of opportunity represented by the preparation of the Ten-Year Framework, but also

because of the multiple crises, which required an integration of the economy, the environment and natural resource use.

The importance of the discussions during the next two years, related to consumption and production patterns and green economies as part of a single sustainable development process, and the fact that unsustainable growth was taking a toll on basic needs for water and food, while international talks have not placed sufficient emphasis on demand-side management.

Among the challenges that lie ahead for SCP, is the information barriers and the need to increase the capacity for innovation and to find mechanisms making it possible to replicate and more broadly apply already in existing technologies.

It was recognized that the issue of a Green Economy Initiative, and its link with SCP and of the benefits that can be generated when economic growth is decoupled from environmental deterioration.

During the fifth meeting of the Council of Government Experts on Sustainable Production and Consumption for Latin America and the Caribbean, held from 16 to 18 September 2009 in Cartagena (Colombia), the conclusions reached on promoting regional priorities as well as the life cycle and supply chain management perspective needed to be as the cornerstone of the Ten-Year Framework.

It was acknowledged that the financial crisis, despite the damage that it had caused, was a good opportunity to encourage change towards producing more with less.

Other issues that must be tackled are related to bioethics, ethics, morality, education and culture, and that mention be made of the role of traditional practices and knowledge and the importance of achieving a fair and balanced agreement on access to and distribution of benefits in the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity at the negotiations that would culminate in Nagoya (Japan) in October 2010.

Consideration should also be given to the role of the State in the SCP process as the regulator, through public procurement and the provision of sustainable alternatives to consumers.

The participants highlighted the importance of the media and the advertising industry; developed countries' responsibility to exercise leadership regarding sustainable consumption and production patterns, which required greater technology transfer and cooperation efforts; the dangers of luxury consumption; the importance of innovation and of mechanisms to ensure access to existing technologies; the linkage between SCP and construction, human settlements and land use planning; and the new challenges to water and food consumption posed by climate change.

It was requested that more emphasis be placed on the different stages of the production chains of products and services and of the role of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

The importance that should be carried out by the work of government delegates' to harmonize the regional priorities of the Ten-Year Framework and support the proposal from Latin America and the Caribbean for the SCP Ten-Year Framework that has been drafted, on the basis of the work of the Council of Government Experts on Sustainable Production and Consumption and of the recommendation of priorities to be included in the Ten-Year framework of programmes for sustainable consumption and production presented at the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean that was agreed at the fifth meeting of the Regional Council of Government Experts on Sustainable Production and Consumption, in Colombia, in September 2009.

The regional Action Plan for Latin America and the Caribbean is based on four subregional plans, in which, in addition, there was the participation of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) representing the Caribbean region; of the Environment Central American Commission CCAD, representing Mesoamerica; of the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR), and of the Andean Community.

Participants of major groups agreed on three main points: in calling upon governments and international organizations to seek pathways of collaboration to incorporate the participation of major groups in this type of debate; in considering that a change in the fast-growth doctrine was essential; and in asking that the Governments make an effort to integrate the work of the various government organizations.

National Level

Guatemala's economic growth has not made it possible to reduce poverty and has caused environmental deterioration as well as an inadequate market mechanisms for ensuring sustainable development.

Guatemala counts with a National Office on Clean Development that has been working along with the private sector in the importance of a more sustainable production, cleaner mechanisms as well as inducing policies towards a green economy.

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The Government's decision to actively participate in sustainable development emphasizes the importance of having a framework of suitable public policies so as to improve consumption and production patterns within a context of globalization and reliance on remittances from Guatemalan emigrants and on foreign capital.

Today, the sustainable production and consumption process has entailed challenges, in which the predominant agricultural processes made an excessive, unsustainable use of environmental goods and services and whose inhabitants suffered from problems relating to poverty and extreme poverty.

At the same time, some initiatives to promote sustainable consumption and production have enabled micro, small and medium sized enterprises to implement some of the measures considered in the Marrakesh Process.

Larger trade flows have brought benefits to the region but has also caused a loss of traditional consumption and production patterns and values, contributing to poverty.

Our high level of vulnerability to climate change has made it even more imperative to assume responsibility for the transgenerational effects of current consumption and production patterns.

Recently, we just went through a tropical rain, Agatha, and a volcano eruption that generated along with the rain an emergency which affected the city as well as most of

the regions in the south pacific and the north eastern planes of Guatemala. This shows us again the great vulnerability and lack of capacity most developing countries in this region have in order to respond promptly to such natural phenomena.

In conclusion we can say that the great need to have a sustainable consumption and production patterns must be tackled today, there is no more time to waste, we have today in our hands the responsibility to find the right mechanisms in which we can influence decision makers as well as all societies on the importance of making the right choices.

As we continue our discussions it is very important we understand the difference between developed countries, developing countries and the least developed countries in order to approach the solution for each in a differentiated manner.

Thank you very much, let us now make this occasion very productive.