

# Report from the International Expert Meeting on the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Production and Consumption

Marrakech, Morocco, June 16<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> 2003

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## Background

This meeting was organized by United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) in order to “work towards the development of a 10 year framework in support of national and regional initiatives to promote sustainable production and consumption” (SPAC) as highlighted in the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD)<sup>1</sup>. The meeting was attended by over 100 participants from 54 countries. Of these, the civil society participants included Mr. Stefan Larenas Riobo of Consumers International, Mr. Rajan Gandhi of the Consumers Union and Trust Society (CUTS), Ms. Saradha Iyer from Third World Network (TWN) and Ms. Veena Ramani from the Integrative Strategies Forum (ISF).

The meeting aimed at bringing together experts from around the world in order to discuss various concerns and issues related to SPAC. The results of the meeting were recorded as a “Summary of Discussion” which was to reflect all the points of view that had been

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<sup>1</sup> Para. 15 of the [Johannesburg Plan of Implementation](#) states:

Encourage and promote the development of a 10-year framework of programmes in support of regional and national initiatives to accelerate the shift towards sustainable consumption and production to promote social and economic development within the carrying capacity of ecosystems by addressing and, where appropriate, delinking economic growth and environmental degradation through improving efficiency and sustainability in the use of resources and production processes and reducing resource degradation, pollution and waste. All countries should take action, with developed countries taking the lead, taking into account the development needs and capabilities of developing countries, through mobilization, from all sources, of financial and technical assistance and capacity-building for developing countries.

presented at the meeting. The organizers emphasized through the meeting that the purpose was not negotiation and compromise, but rather to secure a diversity of opinions. The meeting considered the 10-year cycle of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD)<sup>2</sup>. However, the aim of the meeting was to feed into the CSD process and not to duplicate it.

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

UN DESA prepared a [discussion paper](#) that was distributed to the participants before the meeting. The aim of the discussion paper was to stimulate discussion, and did not serve as recommendations on their part. DESA also prepared a [background paper](#) titled “Survey of International Activities on Consumption and Production Patterns” which was widely considered during the working group deliberations. However, this survey focused mainly on the work done by international and intergovernmental organizations, and very few civil society activities in the field of production and consumption were mentioned. Discussions through the meeting also focused on the outcomes of the Regional Expert Meetings on SPAC that had already been organized in Argentina and Indonesia. Copies of background documents and meeting outcome reports can be found at UNEP’s Sustainable Consumption Newsletter [SC.Net No. 43](#).

## Plenary

The meeting was co-chaired by Mr. M’hamed Elmurabit of Morocco and Ms. Viveka Bohn of Sweden. The plenary included detailed reports on the outcomes of the two regional expert meetings on SPAC held in Argentina between April 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> 2003 and in Indonesia between May 21<sup>st</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> 2003.

Two keynote presentations were made at the conference. The first presentation was made by Ms. Laura Ceneviva of the Department of Environment Planning in Sao Paulo, Brazil. She highlighted the use of sustainable production and consumption policies in local administration. The second presentation was made by Mr. Rajan Gandhi of India’s Consumer Unity and Trust Society (CUTS) on Consumer Behaviour and Sustainable Development. His presentation focused on the need to influence the choices of consumers in making purchasing decisions.

## Working Groups

The meeting was divided into four working groups, which were initially titled:

1. Urban management and transportation
2. General policy instruments and analytical tools

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<sup>2</sup> The 10-year cycle was one of the outcomes of the 11<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission of Sustainable Development held at New York in April – May 2003. Details of the Session can be found at [www.icspac.net](http://www.icspac.net), which also contains the outcome paper, [Implementation Track for Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation: Future Programme, Organisation and Methods of Work of the Commission on Sustainable Development](#).

3. Tools for changing consumer behaviour
4. Tools for changing production patterns

“Urban management and transportation” was chosen as an example of a sectoral approach to considering the issues of SPAC. “General policy instruments and analytical tools” included the instruments that affected both production and consumption. During the plenary, several participants raised misgivings on considering production and consumption issues separately, as they were both sides of the same coin. The organizers proposed to resolve this during the discussion on the interlinkages between the various working group reports. Objections were also raised about the choice of urban management and transportation as the only sectoral issue that would be considered during the meeting as opposed to others.

The working groups were asked to consider the following questions with reference to their topics of discussion:

1. What works and what doesn't?
2. What are the main challenges to implementation?
3. What are the main priorities for future SPAC work at the national level?
4. What actions are needed at the international level to support SPAC?

## Results of the Working Groups

### WORKING GROUP I

The group on “Urban management and transportation” renamed themselves **“Human settlements and sustainable consumption and production”**. They focused their work on 4 key areas – (a) waste management, (b) transportation, (c) construction (d) water and sanitation.

The 3-R approach (reduction, reuse and recycling) to waste management was reported as effective in many countries. Waste collection is an important source of livelihood and resource collection for poor communities. Effective and efficient waste management required decentralization of responsibility among a large number of small local authorities using regulation, technical assistance and information regulation. New technologies have been used to turn waste disposal into revenue. Product design can be used to reduce waste generation.

Transportation was cited as the leading contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. Road infrastructure should be redeveloped to contribute to the use of non-motorized transportation (e.g. bicycles), as well as improve education and awareness of the same. Public procurement policies that promote green transportation modes– particularly for public transportation – should be adopted by governments. Economic incentives and disincentives should be used to develop sustainable transportation. Various regulatory interventions like emission controls, unleaded petrol can also be used. Effective public transportation and transport planning should be developed.

Buildings should be made more energy efficient through construction codes, eco-labelling, technical support, subsidies and other incentives. Participants indicated a need to take another look at traditional building methods as these are often more environmentally friendly than modern methods. Labor-intensive construction techniques can provide employment opportunities. Effective land use planning saves time and money, reduces congestion and pollution.

Participants referred to a shift from developing new water supplies, to water conservation and management through water efficient technology, water pricing by volume of consumption, national water standards with permit requirements etc. There was a reference to desalination techniques used to provide freshwater, but the cost is very high. Technological and financial assistance should be used to develop water distribution and treatment mechanisms. Water subsidies should be used only to benefit the poor.

The results of the working group did not focus too much on the challenges to implementation. The future priorities identified included partnerships, employment generation, transfer of environmentally sound technologies, using an optimal mix of instruments (regulatory, economic and communicative), creating linkages (between levels of decision making, sectors and programs), stimulating integrated planning (urban, land use and spatial), supporting programmes for educating and awareness raising, and learning from traditional knowledge.

## **WORKING GROUP 2**

This group considered **the general policy instruments and analytical tools for sustainable consumption and production**. It was agreed that one of the overarching goals of SPAC strategies was poverty reduction and meeting basic human needs. The use of IPPs (Integrated Product Policy) was encouraged, in spite of its potential use as a trade barrier. Co-operation between government, business and civil society was highlighted. To achieve SPAC, economic growth should be delinked from environmental degradation and use. The 10 year framework cannot be inflexible and countries should be allowed to assess their own situation and decide the best combination of policies. The relationship between environmental policies and international trade agreements should be understood. Most participants agreed that SPAC tools should not act as disguised trade barriers.

In dealing with challenges, the working group called for supporting the formation and distribution of sustainable technologies. The participants recognized that trade was an important challenge and held that the competitiveness of sustainable goods and services can be ensured by establishing market incentives, reducing barriers to trade and improving market access. There is a need to reduce the internal resistance of stakeholders to SPAC by increasing political will and increasing the long-term political planning horizon.

International cooperation with agencies like UN HABITAT, UNIDO, UNCTAD, UN-DESA, UNEP, UNDP, the World Bank, OECD, WTO etc was encouraged. The regional

expert meetings in Argentina and Indonesia<sup>3</sup> were applauded and there was a call for such initiatives in other regions. There was an urgent need for financing and co-financing mechanisms in order to implement the regional priorities that had been identified.

### WORKING GROUP 3

Working group 3 changed its working title from “Tools for changing consumer behaviour” to “**Tools for promoting sustainable consumption patterns**”.

The group considered consumer information tools like eco-labelling, awareness raising, education, media and advertising. Eco-labelling could be used as a broad information tool, which could consider even social aspects, but needed to be traced back to a credible authority. The importance of education and awareness raising activities, which could integrate social and environmental aspects, was stressed. A tie up between the 10-year framework and the UNESCO Decade of Education in Sustainable Development was encouraged. Advertising unsustainable products in the context of ill informed consumers would be an obstacle to sustainable consumption. On the other hand, advertising could also be used to stimulate sustainable consumption patterns. International icons and heroes could play an important role in raising awareness of SPAC lifestyles – by acting as UN Ambassadors of the cause.

The UN Guidelines for Sustainable Consumption were held to be useful starting points that the governments could use to implement sustainable consumption policies.

The importance of sustainable institutional procurement and environmental management to promote SPAC was stressed, but it was noted that such policies could be expensive. In this context, the need for financial incentives and technological assistance to developing countries was emphasized.

Priorities for future action included both regulating advertising for unsustainable products as well as using advertising to spread sustainable messages. There was a call for co-operation at a national level involving governments and other stakeholders through collaborative mechanisms. The UN Guidelines on Consumer Protection must be widely implemented and incorporated in legislation. The role of the civil society should be strengthened in this regard. Financial incentives and information dissemination schemes should be used to promote sustainable institutional procurement and environmental management.

### WORKING GROUP 4

This group considered **Tools for changing production patterns**. The group recognized that cleaner products, services replacing products, and cleaner production are important strategies for moving towards SPAC patterns. A mix of instruments is needed. A regulatory legal framework is needed, which incorporates environmental audits, sanctions and fees – and that served to educate industry about their responsibilities. Economic instruments like taxes on emissions and subsidies on renewable energies are important.

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<sup>3</sup> For details on the meetings, visit [www.icspac.net](http://www.icspac.net)

Voluntary instruments such as labelling, standards and reporting are equally important. These should be combined with institutional settings, such as social dialogue that mobilize all stakeholders in achieving sustainable production. Green procurement and IPP are also recognized as important tools.

Information, education and capacity building, like the work done by national cleaner production centers, were considered essential to achieving sustainable consumption patterns. The role of the other stakeholders – i.e. government, business and consumer organizations was also stressed. Efforts are needed to promote technology transfer – as sustainable production technology research often suffers from a lack of funds.

In order to meet the challenges, the working group recommended raising awareness on sustainable production, building capacity in developing countries, engaging small and medium enterprises (SMEs), integrating SPAC and sustainable development into formal and vocational education systems, improving product design, strengthening international co-operation, and obtaining political commitment.

Priorities on future work included mainstreaming production and consumption, encouraging stakeholder involvement and partnerships, disseminating information and practical tools, capacity building and education, and promoting future work on the 10 year framework of programs.

## Conclusions and Future Work

After extensive discussion with the other participants, the co-chairs decided to call the conceptualization of the 10 year framework of programs on sustainable production and consumption, as commenced in Marrakech, as the “Marrakech process”. They concluded that this process had emphasized the importance of integrating the three overarching objectives of sustainable development<sup>4</sup> and the importance of integrating SPAC in National Strategies for Sustainable Development and in poverty reduction strategies. The meeting called for political commitment for SPAC among all stakeholders –including government, industry and civil society – and the active involvement of stakeholders in all relevant fora. The process called for a specification of national and regional priorities on SPAC. Capacity building, technology transfer, financial assistance and information dissemination were identified as overriding priorities of the 10-year framework.

## FUTURE PROGRAMME OF WORK

The future programme of work of the Marrakech process include:

- Targeted responses by international organizations according to identified national and regional priorities;
- Mechanisms that encourage and support information and experience sharing;
- Involvement of all stakeholders and establishment of concrete partnerships;

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<sup>4</sup> Para 11 of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation states:

We recognize that poverty eradication, changing consumption and production patterns and protecting and managing the natural resource base for economic and social development are overarching objectives of and essential requirements for sustainable development.

- Preparation of a report based upon the findings of the Marrakech meeting and wide dissemination of the same;
- Strengthening of regional processes at all levels.