

GETTING THE GOODS

International news and views on sustainable production and consumption

April 2005

Towards regional strategies for sustainable production & consumption

Jeffrey Barber, Executive Director, Integrative Strategies Forum, USA

Support for regional initiatives

Over the last few years we watched various efforts within the UN and several countries discussing implementation of the "10-year framework of programmes in support of regional and national initiatives to accelerate the shift towards sustainable consumption and production." [1] In particular, the Production and Consumption Branch at the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Division for Sustainable Development in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) took the lead assembling governments and stakeholders to discuss this framework (dubbed the "Marrakech Process.")

Around the 2003 Marrakech meeting, we saw efforts in Latin America, Asia/Pacific,

Africa, and Europe to organize regional consultations to discuss this process in relation to regional and national needs and conditions. Each regional meeting involved NGO participation, with reports recommending strategies to continue the discussion and increase support for regional and national initiatives [2].

Advances or odes to a sinking ship?

These efforts are signs of leadership on one of the world's most critical and controversial cross-cutting issues. Yet many observers wonder how far this process will go, how strong the political will exists to move beyond the "low-hanging fruit" to the politically riskier realms of commitment.

Continued on page 12...

Enabling sustainable prod-cons systems

Louis Lebel, Director, Unit for Social and Environmental Research, Chiang Mai University, Thailand

Most say they agree with the ideals of sustainable development, but few are committed. Individuals, firms and governments still produce and consume as if the continued flow of ecosystem goods and services upon which their lifestyles, profits and economies are based are assured. They behave as if demand can expand indefinitely and that alone will produce prosperity for most. This is wishful thinking at best, and at worst an expression of the selfishness of wealthy nations and sectors of society as they seek to protect their interests at the expense of the environment and poor.

Continued on page 7...

SPAC at CSD-13

During the 13th Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-13), the thematic cluster under consideration includes water, sanitation and human settlements. As a cross cutting issue and one of the overarching objectives of sustainable development, sustainable production and consumption (SPAC) ought to figure prominently in the discussions of the Commission in these thematic areas.

At the Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting (IPM), held in February 2005, SPAC was mentioned briefly by some government delegates and major group representatives. The Chair's summary of interactive discussions at the IPM picked up some of the points raised including end user efficiency improvements in order to reduce unnecessary water consumption. It also stresses the need for water conservation techniques, along with information exchange and dissemination, technical assistance and training as a part of broader efforts to promote SPAC.

The NGO community should arrive at CSD-13 armed with concrete examples of policy actions and projects on SPAC and Water that have been advocated for and implemented by civil society. NGOs should also consider (i) what governments should do in order to make good on their policy commitments on the issue of SPAC & Freshwater and (ii) what support the NGO community needs from governments in order to facilitate their own work on SPAC & freshwater.



This issue and past issues are available online at www.isforum.org/pubs/gtg/

Inside this issue:

- Towards SPAC Strategies 1
- Enabling SPAC systems 1
- SPAC at CSD-13 1
- International news 2
- Regional news 3
- SC & China perspectives 4
- SC in Mexico 5
- Fair trade & sust. agriculture 6
- Reports released 8
- NSSDs: A 19 country analysis 8
- EPR in US & Canada 9
- Intro to Ostend meeting 10
- Intro to Ostend NGO Statement 10
- Ostend NGO Statement 11
- Events 13

International news

Upcoming event: Marrakech + 2 in Costa Rica

The 2nd International Expert Meeting on Sustainable Consumption and Production (the second global meeting of the Marrakech process) will be held in Costa Rica in September 2005.

SPAC at CSD IPM

Mar. 2005: A report on sustainable production and consumption (SPAC) issues, as was discussed in the CSD Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting is available at icspac.net/caucus/SPAC-IPM2005.aspx

SCP-8 concludes in Monterrey

Nov. 2004: The 8th High Level Seminar on Sustainable Consumption and Production, held in Monterrey, Mexico, on November 15-16 2004 addressed two basic themes: "Environment and Basic Needs" and "Global Challenges and Business" and aimed to create a new vision for the work of the international community to promote more sustainable lifestyles.

3rd International Workshop on SC indicators

Oct. 2004: Organized by the Society for Non Traditional Technology (SNTT) and the Research Center for Life Cycle Assessment as a part of its three year project "Research on the Development and Utilization of Indicators for Sustainable Consumption, the workshop was held on Oct 22- 23 at Tokyo.

Production-consumption systems: Research frontiers

Oct. 2004: The Unit for Social and Environmental Research (USER), Chiang Mai University organized an international workshop titled "Sustainable Production-Consumption Systems: Research Frontiers" in order to arrive at an improved framework and agenda for research on the sustainability of production-consumption systems that increasingly stretch across disparate parts of the globe. Dr. Louis Lebel writes in detail about the workshop in page 1.

Cyber seminar: Consumption, Population & Environment

May 2004: The Population-Environment Research Network organized a cyber seminar titled "Population, Consumption and Environment Dynamics: Theory and Method".

SPAC & advertising: The corporate response

May 2004: The issue of how corporate citizens can use advertising and marketing to roll out appropriate responses when confronted with sustainable consumption was discussed at the Global Compact Policy Dialogue titled "Sustainable Consumption: Marketing and Communications" in Paris, on April 4 - 5 2004.

Web tools for the Marrakech Process

Apr. 2004: UNEP and DESA have launched two internet based tools in support of the Marrakech process. The first is a webpage dedicated to the Marrakech process available at un.org/esa/sustdev/sdissues/consumption/Marrakech/conprod10Y.htm. The second is a Sustainable Consumption and Production database (available at webapps01.un.org/dsd/scp/public/Welcome.do) that lists SPAC initiatives throughout the world.



Consumption and technology

May 2004: "From Greed to Need: Reshaping Consumption and Technology for a Sustainable World" was the title of the 2004 conference organized by the Scientists for Global Responsibility on 15th May 2004.

Keep track of SPAC news & events at www.icspac.net



Features of the website include:

- International news and information
- Regional news and information
- Monitoring the Marrakech process

Regional news

AFRICA

Ghana: Cleaner Production Center

Feb. 2005: A national roundtable on sustainable consumption & production was held in Accra, Ghana based upon the theme: "Institutionalization of Ghana Cleaner Production Centre for the promotion of Sustainable Consumption and Production in the West African Sub-region". The workshop aimed at setting up a Cleaner Production Center in the country.

Kenya & Morocco : African SCP roundtables

Mar. 2005 & May 2004: Two roundtables on sustainable consumption and production patterns were held in Africa this year. The first, held in Casablanca, Morocco, between 17-20 May, 2004 considered the need for a regional framework for promoting sustainable consumption and production, as contributing to poverty alleviation, economic development and environmental protection in the region. The second, held in Nairobi, Kenya, (17-18 February) identified the priorities and concrete activities that have been and could be carried out in the region in the area of water, energy, urban environment, and renewable resource based industries.

ASIA & THE PACIFIC

Korea: Civil Society Forum on SPAC

Mar. 2005: The Civil Society Forum being held parallel to the 5th Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia (MCED-5) is focusing on "Sustainable Consumption and Production and the role of Civil Society: Achieving Environmentally Sustainable Development".

Philippines: SC.Asia meeting in Manila

Mar. 2005: As a part of it's SC.Asia project, UNEP brought together stakeholders from 13 Asian countries to discuss ways and means to reduce unsustainable consumption patterns in the region.

Australia: Young Australians as agents of change

Nov. 2004: Commissioned by the National Youth Affairs Research Scheme (NYARS), this study about youth consumption patterns in Australia, sustainability and the processes of social change explored how youth could be encouraged to make personal consumption changes, as well as being catalysts for wider social change.

EUROPE

UK: Sustainable development strategy

Mar. 2005: UK's new sustainable development strategy "Securing the future" emphasizes sustainable production and consumption as a key priority area. The UK government held workshops on sustainable consumption in September- October 2004 to contribute to the development of the strategy and sustainable development policy.

Finland: Best practices

Jan. 2005: The Finnish Ministry of Environment has released "Making it happen - Best Practices from Finland", a collection of best practices related to sustainable consumption and production in Finland. The examples are organized under three themes: sustainable development, water and sustainable consumption and production.

Belgium: European stakeholder meeting

Nov. 2004: The European stakeholder meeting on sustainable consumption and production was held in Ostend, Belgium on Nov 24 - 26 2004. Details can be found in Emmanuel Prinet's article available at page 10. European NGOs put together a remarkable collaborative effort and drafted a position paper on SPAC that was circulated at the meeting. Sylvia Lorek's article will describe the collaborative process and its effects in details. The position paper has been reproduced on page 10.

Spain: SC & the quality of life

Sept. 2004: Barcelona Universal Forum of Cultures 2004, hosted a workshop titled "Linking Sustainable Consumption and the Quality of Life" to raise awareness and clarify the links between sustainable consumption and quality of life, and to derive, based on these links, practical recommendations for strategies for the promotion of sustainable consumption by government, business and civil society, including NGOs, consumer associations, youth associations and the media.

Lithuania: Baltic states & SPAC

Jun. 2004: The Baltic sub-regional multistakeholder dialogue on sustainable consumption and production was organized in Vilnius, Lithuania on June 17 - 18 2004.

Spain: European roundtable on SCP

May 2004: Over 300 persons participated in the 9th European Roundtable on Sustainable Consumption and Production held in Bilbao, Spain between 12th and 14th May 2004.

LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN

Argentina: National strategy on SPAC

Mar. 2005: Argentina is in the process of finalizing a national programme on sustainable production and consumption. Details about the process are available at medioambiente.gov.ar/ordenamiento/programa1/default.htm

NORTH AMERICA

USA: Is US prone to overconsumption?

Jul. 2004: The text of this presentation made by OECD Chief Economist Jean-Philippe Cotis to the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston conference on The Macroeconomics of Fiscal Policy is available at oecd.org/dataoecd/53/57/33604019.pdf

USA: True cost of food campaign

May 2004: Sierra Club has launched a national grassroots campaign titled "True Cost of Food" campaign that focuses on American food production and consumption patterns. The goal of the Campaign is to make the Club a leader in sustainable eating by making Americans realize the "true cost of food".

Canada: C2P2/ NASCA workshop

Apr. 2004: The Canadian Center for Pollution Prevention and the North American Sustainable Consumption Alliance (NASCA) hosted an experts workshop on "Strategic priorities in promoting sustainable consumption in North America" in Ottawa on April 30th 2004.

Sustainable consumption and China perspectives

Changhua Wu, President, Professional Association for China's Environment, China

There seems no controversy about the ultimate goal of sustainable consumption. "Improved quality of life for all" has been accepted by both developing and industrial countries and become the common ground for the world community to work together to achieve sustainability. A rather broadly defined concept, sustainable consumption is now more of an issue of how and when. It will take each country's wisdom, determination, commitment, and innovation when policy and practice changes are concerned.

The recently concluded UNEP "Regional Cross-Learning Seminar on Sustainable Consumption" brought together representatives of government, business, NGOs and academics from 13 Asian countries to Manila to share the information and best practices within the region and with some European counterparts. While sharing many common challenges with other Asian countries, China represents a rather unique case. Its uniqueness comes from its size of the population, the path of creating an "economic miracle" over the last two decades, the transitional political, economic and social reforms, as well as the daunting pressure from the growth on the ecosystem and heavy price the country has paid for achieving the maintained high economic growth rate.

Besides the population pressure, with 1.3 billion people, or about 20 percent of the world total, to feed, clothe, house and transport, three other concurrent trends determine that China has to take on the sustainable consumption initiative and seek alternative development path: 1) trends of consumption and towards consumer society; 2) intensive resource use development; and 3) continued and emerging poverty.

Firstly, the large population base and the increasing number of households entering the middle class put China on top of the world's list of consumer products. A latest survey shows that in 2004, China's total consumption expenditures reached USD 700 billion, about nine percent of the US total. Even though the average per capita consumption remains still low, in 2003, Chinese consumers ate 33 percent of the world's rice, 22 percent soybean oil and 12 percent meat products. It is forecast that the expenditures will continue to grow at a rate of average annual 18 percent, much faster

than that of the US. Some organizations even predict that China will rapidly exceed the US and become the world's largest consumer society.

Secondly, even though China has succeeded in partly decoupling the energy use and economic growth in the last decade or so, official statistics points to a worrisome trend that China's rapid growth of GDP over the last two decades heavily relies on total resource input, including biomass, metal minerals, non-metal ores and construction materials. In the meantime, total pollutant discharges, such as water and air pollution, solid wastes and suspended matters, continue to rise. As a result, the Chinese consumers' welfares have been greatly



comprised and threatened. If the current trends remain, China could be kept in a vicious cycle – rapid economic growth in steps with continuous intensive resource use and increasing pollutant emissions, and in the end, the growth will be halted and even reversed.

And thirdly, one of the greatest achievements of the economic miracle in China is lifting millions of people out of poverty. While there are still millions of others in poverty, the increasing gaps between eastern coastal areas and the economically disadvantaged inland areas and the migration of rural population to cities have also generated new poverty-stricken groups in urban areas. As a result, the gaps between the haves and the have-nots have become a major cause of social unrest in many parts of the country.

Fully aware of the worrisome trends, the top leaders in China are determined to lead the country away from the current path and explore alternatives towards sustainability. This can be witnessed by the country adopting sustainable development as a national development strategy, and

integrating principles of sustainability and environmental protection into national policies. Circular economy, resource efficient society, greening GDP and very lately harmonious society are now among the identified models and policies to drive its development process.

What does this imply? First, life-cycle analysis and 3 R's principles are now commonly accepted as the basic framework of the reindustrialization process, in particular in the Northeastern and the western regions. Second, some of the environmental externalities are gradually integrated into the indicator framework to measure the progress and real growth. Third, resource efficiency is recognized as one of the national priorities to decouple the resource intensity and economic growth. And, fourth, individual consumer's rights and interests will be better protected when access to information, participation and redress is more emphasized in legal and policy framework.

In practice, China has developed a rather comprehensive legislative framework to reinforce the shift towards sustainable consumption. Laws such as promoting cleaner production, environmental impact assessments, energy conservation, renewable energy have been passed and enacted in the last couple of years. Public access to government information and public participation are now officially endorsed by the legal framework. Waste recycling and minimization, certification, eco-labeling and product information are actively pursued. Mass media, education and information campaigns have contributed greatly to informing consumers to make smarter choices. And very recently, the government even started experimenting with green procurement.

And yet, barriers and challenges in reality remain daunting. And gaps between policy and practice remain huge. Partly, it is because the complexity of the issues related to sustainable consumption, which range from teeny tiny daily life decision to purchase a product to national policy of how to restructure economy towards sustainability.

Continued on page 13...

Sustainable consumption in Mexico

Francisco Aguirre Saharrea, Vinculacion y Comunicacion Social, Mexico

Introduction

Each of us has the capability of influencing our environment in different ways: some of us favor the conservation of biodiversity, yet others press for the improvement of standards of living of the poor in our countries. However, there are those who favor a market system that only works to increase the profits of big companies, without internalizing the negative social and environmental fallouts of their operations.

This article will speak of the power of sustainable or responsible consumption to influence this choice by businesses.

Present context

The sustainable consumption movement arose from the social, environmental and economic repercussions of the neo-liberal politics that was characterized by open markets, the predominance of capital and the exaltation of consumption.

At present we find ourselves in a world situation where the developed countries, which house on 14 percent of the world's populations corner 75 percent of the world's GDP. The 50 largest MNCs of the world have greater sales figures than 150 of the poorest countries of the planet.

The situation is weighted in favor of countries that offer more favorable opportunities for MNCs: including fiscal support, labor and resource bonds etc. Numerous studies indicate that maintaining these high levels of production and consumption comes at a cost – the undoing of the middle class, exacerbation of levels of poverty and labor exploitation, migration towards cities and developed countries, etc.

Sustainable consumption vs. consumerism

Consumerism is based upon the twin pillars of accumulation and individualism. It can particularly be characterized by our current "use and throw" generation. Besides promoting a particular product or service, consumerism involves the careful selection of the information that is presented to the consumer: highlighting certain qualities while at the same time hiding other, potentially negative information like environmental repercussions and certain agro-industrial process (like GMOs). Sustainable consumption tries to counter this phenomenon. The premise of the sustainable consumption movement is that consumers can influence the market by choosing to acquire certain products and services over oth-

ers. The actions of several individuals contributing sustainable consumption, when joined together will create the sustainable consumption movement. This movement can be used to call for environmental protection, improvement of labor standards etc. The movement should be used to promote products and services that are created responsibly and to drive out products and services that are attempt to reduce costs with technologies that are harmful for people and the planet.



Challenges of practicing sustainable consumption today

There are many obstacles that prevent an easy change to responsible consumption practices.

First the advertising industry: Through mass media, the information that we receive is carefully tailored to induce us to purchase, by appealing to our brand consciousness, our need to "keep up with the Joneses" or by making us believe that charity is the way that we can contribute to the fight against poverty and social injustice.

Sustainable consumption means a reinterpretation of these advertising messages, as well as a constant search of independent information that will allow us to choose sustainable products and services. Sometimes, to consume sustainably, it might be necessary for us to stop the consumption of certain products that may have become habitual to use. However, one must not forget the advantages of globalization that provides us with many sustainable options.

In addition, we must present the purchasing power of sustainable consumption in such a manner that businesses and producers see it as

commercially profitable and viable to adopt socially and environmentally friendly production and practices.

Effects of sustainable consumption

Sustainable consumption is a framework that incorporates the values of justice, respect for human rights, as well as economic, social, environmental and cultural rights. It promotes the moderation of consumption in order to reduce the exploitation of the environment. Additionally, it promotes reuse and recycling. Additionally, it promotes organic agriculture and other environmentally friendly practices.

Fair commercial practices are to be supported. Through fair trade practices, the rights of small producers are protected. By guaranteeing the small producer a fair price for his products, goods and services of a high quality are made available to the sustainable consumer.

Sustainable consumption places are high responsibility on the part of consumers. It implies that products and services will not be chosen purely on the basis of their characteristics or their price – but instead that the consumer will consider the environmental, social and economic implications of their choice.

Sustainable consumption in Mexico City

Vinculacion y Comunicacion Social, A.C. has been promoting values and practices of sustainable consumption, fair trade and organic production among different groups within Mexico City by different means and projects. One of the most successful projects was carried out in alliance with private and public universities, where we found an amazing interest for these topics.

Students are more and more engaged and interested with different actions that support sustainable practices, so that when we go to schools to talk about these issues, they get very excited to participate at different levels, from increasing their awareness to current national problems such as poverty caused by current consumption patterns, to change their consumption practices, supporting small producers from our country.

We have also supported students' initiatives to recycle paper, with a tremendous interest from other schools and small enterprises. In this case, young people take in their hands the whole recycling process, and also share information for others to replicate this initiative at the local level.

Fair trade and sustainable agriculture

Stephen Law, Director, Environmental Monitoring Group, South Africa

Mid-summer is harvest time for the rooibos tea farmers of the Heiveld. A hot wind blows across the dry earth and the rains are still some months away. On their small cultivated plots, scattered amongst rocky outcrops, farmers carefully cut the summer growth from the rooibos bush and carry it to a central processing yard. Here, an old diesel motor drives the machine that chops the leaves finely before they are fermented, dried in the sun, and finally packaged. A years-worth of investment in careful cultivation is almost over and the financial reward will soon come. The feeling of anticipation is almost palpable and the whole community is mobilized for this hard, hot and dusty work.

A few years ago, this would have been an activity done almost in desperation. The tea processing and marketing system, dominated by rich, large-scale plantations, placed little value on the small-farmer's contributions. Their small volumes were a nuisance and their tea quality (organic by default) was not recognized. Under the apartheid regime, the colour of their skins alone kept them economically marginalized. Apartheid had gone, but the marginalization remained. The harvest would bring in just enough money to survive and survival meant pushing the productive capacity of the land to its limits and beyond. Signs of rural poverty were easy to see – alcoholism, migration, overgrazing and land degradation. Agriculture was not sustaining the community nor was the community sustaining the natural environment.

Then things changed. The small farmers discovered that discerning European consumers were prepared to pay a good price for rooibos tea, cultivated by hand without pesticides and fertilizers. They

Rooibos tea is made from the leaves of the *Aspalathus linearis* plant, which grows only in a small area in the south-western part of South Africa and is part of the Cape Fynbos floral kingdom. The dried leaves have been made into a healthy and refreshing beverage for thousands of years by the original inhabitants of the area, but has only been commercially cultivated since the 1940s. The tea is high in anti-oxidants and contains no caffeine or tannins. Its popularity locally and particularly overseas has grown exponentially in the last 10 years.

formed a co-operative when they realized they had to work together to access this market, and raised funds to build their own communal processing facility. They understood that conserving the biodiversity of their farmlands was the best way to manage pests, and better tea prices meant they could afford to do this. Home-grown methods of nurturing and feeding the soil, remembered from long ago, were proudly reintroduced. The co-operative could now afford to employ women of the community to sew cloth bags for the tea and help with packaging. Another women's group raised funds to build huts where "eco-tourists" could be fed and accommodated. There was clearly a new sense of "community", and a new sense of pride and hope. Their future was in their hands. Fair trade was one of the things that made this remarkable change possible.

The Heiveld Co-operative was formed in 2000. Its members farm small plots of rooibos tea and graze goats on their land in the extreme southern part of the Northern Cape Province of the Republic of South Africa. The area is semi-arid, sparsely populated and far from markets. In addition to facilitating communal harvesting and processing, the Co-operative has also initiated a farmer's study group and has co-operated on a number of research projects on combating desertification, tea-bush ecology, and indigenous knowledge.

Sustainable agricultural production, by definition, should support both environmental and social sustainability, where the natural productive capacity of the land provides sufficient food or income to meet social needs on an ongoing basis. In turn, a stable social order and robust ecosystem allows farmers to follow agricultural practices that are in themselves

s e l f - s u s t a i n i n g .
Agricultural land is seen as a productive asset rather than a resource to be exploited.

Fair trade, in simple terms, tries to contribute towards maintaining the above dynamic by providing farmers with a "fair" price for their products and medium-term price stability. It recognizes, at



Cut & fermented tea drying

least in principle, that agricultural products are more than mere commodities – that social and environmental externalities, exist and should be paid for. By contrast, most forms of conventional agricultural trade ignore external costs. Farmers are driven by survival pressure to produce more – requiring larger tracts of land, increased mechanization, and greater inputs of fertilizer and poisons – and ironically pushing

prices down even further. One only has to look at trends in global commodities prices to see how vulnerable agricultural producers have become. On average, agricultural commodity prices are lower today than they were in the 1950s while processed foods have constantly kept pace with inflation. External costs are merely shifted elsewhere – as environmental damage and rural social upheaval.

In theory, fairtrade brings in a higher and sustained income for farmers, and allows them to build up the financial capital to invest in developing their families, farms, and communities. They become less inclined to over-exploit their lands. Education, health and other social services and networks can be built. Financial security, increased social capital and environmental integrity become mutually reinforcing.

Continued on page 14...

Enabling sustainable prod-cons systems (Cont'd)

Continued from page 1

The conventional, slightly more sophisticated response is that we need improvements in efficiency and a bit more cooperation and we will be able solve problems of over-use without really having to give up expanding wants. [1]

Timely transitions to sustainability of societies at various scales ultimately depends on reducing aggregate use, degradation and conversion of many of the earth's critical ecosystem goods and services to levels below those which they can self-organize and be renewed. Gains in efficiency that are wiped out by re-investments that accelerate extent and rates of expansions do not count. Technological and institutional innovations cannot find timely substitutes for all services nature provides. For sustainable development to be socially just this means large areas of the developing world will need expanded access to resources and services for development, whereas the much smaller populations in the wealthy industrialized nations will, to compensate, have to cut-back the environmental services upon which their lifestyles are based. The sustainable consumption agenda is, at first glance, a threat to corporate profitability and the "way of life" of their elites. It is a radical agenda.

On the other hand, a closer look at things that matter for well-being suggests there is much to be gained for both poor and wealthier sectors and nations from a global pursuit of sustainable production-consumption systems.

Folk wisdom and scientific research are clear that increasing wealth does not invariably lead to corresponding increases in happiness in wealthy societies. Indeed there is much counter-evidence to suggest that the "growth fetish" is leading to reduced well-being in advanced industrial societies [2]. Competition in pursuit of other goals apart from aggregate growth may spawn creative innovations and still yield profits to creative entrepreneurs that serve society.

For the poor there are prospects that unsustainable "mining" of ecosystems in which they live or otherwise depend for their livelihoods will be replaced by investments and activities that provide proportionately greater local benefits and opportunities for

value-adding and social development. Changes in the quality of consumption by the wealthy will increase income flows to poor because those environmental burdens which cannot be avoided are reflected in prices and institutional mechanisms of compensation and ecosystem recovery.

The issue, however, is not just one of reducing aggregate household consumption in wealthy societies, but also of improving the way various goods and services are produced, provided, and in some cases, disposed. Alternative industrial processes can vary hugely with respect to their impacts on the environment. Technology matters: the gains from better processes may even exceed those that can be obtained by altering consumer demand. There are gains to be made both at level of technologies used at

partnerships between civil society and responsible firms and governments [3]. The sustainable production-consumption agenda is a radical agenda because it would set new goals for the "development system". That the sustainability of production-consumption systems is central to achieving sustainable development is at least acknowledged by world leaders. In the decade since the agreement on Agenda 21 at Rio this has been regularly acknowledged in rhetoric of international meetings, most recently at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 where changing consumption and production patterns was articulated as one of three over-arching objectives of sustainability [4].

Conventional piecemeal responses focusing on just production technologies or consumer behavior have only had limited success. Limited acknowledgement of the role of firms and governments as consumers, or conversely household enterprises as producers, has meant opportunities for influencing production-consumption relations have been missed [5, 6]. Many production-consumption systems cut across activities of the rich and poor, and the natural resources of developing and developed countries. Transforming such systems could and should be a mechanism for strengthening social justice not just optimizing global sustainability indicators.



Silk weavers in Thailand

individual plants but also increasingly in the linking of waste and material flows across industrial processes. Recycling, re-use and recovery of resources derived initially from nature could reduce aggregate resource consumption.

Ultimately, however, it may be the linking of production and consumption activities and perspectives that will lead to the kinds of changes needed for sustainability.

Development today is embedded in a global economic system that exists largely because of its effectiveness in endlessly creating new wants. States and their leaders have shown little willingness to work towards agreements on specific targets or timetables on sustainability. Much may depend on

There will be a lot of resistance. States and firms and commercially-oriented non-government organizations cannot be trusted to set targets and monitor progress towards sustainability alone. Civil society will need to play a critical role, but they will also have to fight to re-design the governance systems in which they are embedded or it will be hard to get a voice at the tables that matter. Thus, one of the biggest challenges is institutional: we need new forms of governance, new mechanisms for producers and consumers to meet, and new ways to trace and monitor the ecological consequences of the resulting exchanges. Innovative institutions probably also mean rediscovering values like self-restraint or sufficiency.

Continued on page 15...

Reports released

Consumers International: Gender & Consumption

Mar 2005: Consumers International celebrated International Women's Day by launching the English version of the manual, "Women, Men and Consumption: Applying a gender lens to consumer education". It sets out the main tools of gender analysis as applied to consumer relations in both the public and private spheres. It also contains a set of activities and methodologies to use in introducing gender perspectives into consumer education workshops. It is available at <http://www.consumidoresint.cl/biblioteca/detalleautor.asp?id=1101827924>

ANPED: Country reports and position papers on SPAC

Jan. 2005: Members of the ANPED SPAC WG have drafted country reports and policy papers on SPAC policies. The Countries profiled are far are Bulgaria, Latvia and the US. Policy papers are available about Right to Know, Education and Ecological Fiscal Reform. They are available at <http://spac.anped.org/resources.aspx>

Consumers International: Green Food Claims

Oct 2004: Given the "marketability" of sustainable food production, Consumers International has released a report that surveys green food claims displayed on labels and packaging on a range of typical foods in consumers' everyday shopping basket. The report can be accessed at http://www.consumersinternational.org/documents.asp/ViewACategory_levelBelowOnly.asp?regid=155&CategoryID=939&langid=1

WWF International: Living Planet Report 2004

Oct. 2004: WWF International has released its fifth Living Planet Report that is based upon the Ecological Footprint and other trends. The report confirms that ecological overshoot has become a reality - "humanity is now consuming over 20 percent more natural resources than the Earth can produce, causing rapid declines in wild animal populations" It is available at http://www.footprintnetwork.org/gfn_sub.php?content=lpr2004

Danish Environmental Protection Agency: The Future of SC in Europe

Apr. 2004: Consumption in Europe continues to rise and households account for a growing share of resource use and environmental burden. These are some of the conclusions of the study "Consumption and the Environment in Europe: Trends and Futures" commissioned by the Danish Environmental Protection Agency. The report identifies some of the implications for possible action that could be taken by governments, business and civil society to prepare for a future transition to more sustainable patterns of consumption. The report is available at <http://www.seri.at/Data/personendaten/sl/2004%20DEPA%20Michaelis%20Lorek.pdf>

Oxford Commission on Sustainable Consumption

April 2004: The Oxford Commission on Sustainable Consumption has released a report accusing governments of abasing themselves before the power of the market and urging them to do more to promote sustainable consumption. The report can be accessed at <http://www.environmentdaily.com/docs/41105a.pdf>

NSSDs: Challenges, approaches & innovations in strategic & coordinated action based on a 19 country analysis

Darren Swanson, *International Institute for Sustainable Development, Canada*



This 54-page publication and supporting country case studies can be downloaded from the following websites:

<http://www.iisd.org/measure/capacity/sdsip.asp>

<http://www.gtz.de/rioplus/download>

The 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development reiterated a call to all countries to "make progress in the formulation and elaboration of national strategies for sustainable development" and also to begin their implementation by 2005. A national sustainable development strategy is not simply a document, but rather it is a continuing and adaptive process of strategic and coordinated action.

To assist government officials in realizing this process, this publication builds on current thinking and studies 19 developed and developing countries to identify key challenges faced in relation to the strategic management aspects of national sustainable development strategies including leadership, planning, implementation, monitoring and review, co-ordination, and participation. The innovative approaches and tools observed in the 19 countries studied are featured to create a pragmatic toolbox for government sustainable development managers and policy-makers.

Countries studied were Brazil, Cameroon, Canada, China, Costa Rica, Denmark, Germany, India, Madagascar, Mexico, Morocco, the Philippines, Poland, South Africa, South Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom as well as the European Union.

The country case study research illustrated that many innovative approaches and tools for strategic and coordinated action for sustainable development have been developed and applied over the past decade—before and after WSSD. However, despite the progress made, nations are only at the early stages of learning toward effective strategic and coordinated action for sustainable development. From our analysis of 19 countries we conclude that few countries are acting truly strategically. Many challenges remain in the continuous cycle of strategic management. The key challenges include:

- The feedback mechanism – including monitoring, learning and adaptation.

Continued on page 15...

EPR in the US and Canada

Bill Sheehan & Helen Spiegelman, Product Policy Institute, USA

For most of the 20th century, the U.S. and Canada shared a common history in waste management, but the two countries' paths diverged in the last decade. Our northern neighbors began experimenting with extended producer responsibility (EPR), turning to producers for waste management solutions. EPR is a policy principle to promote total lifecycle environmental improvement of product systems by extending the responsibilities of the product manufacturer to various parts of the entire product's lifecycle, and especially to take-back, recycling and final disposal of the product. Meanwhile, the U.S. continued focusing on recycling as a public service – a situation that, of course, suits the producers of throwaway products just fine.

A new report released by the Product Policy Institute provides an overview of the history and status of EPR in these two countries. Pressure from a newly re-energized U.S. environmental community has begun to break the industry resistance that has stalled the development of EPR in the U.S., and two legislative victories at opposite corners of the country – Hawaii's 2002 bottle bill and Maine's 2004 e-waste bill – may be signs of bigger changes to come in this country.

Waste wasn't always a municipal responsibility. Back in the 19th century, when cities and towns first established public programs for the collection and disposal of refuse, municipal waste consisted mainly of coal ashes and kitchen scraps. Less than ten percent of our household waste was made up of worn-out products and discarded packaging.

Today's waste managers face a radically different waste stream. The coal ashes are gone and organics are up a bit, mainly due to the addition of suburban yard trimmings. But products and packaging now represent 75 to 87 percent of the waste stream, depending on whether you measure them by weight or volume. While the waste stream has changed radically, municipal infrastructure for managing it changed little except in scale.

During the 1980s, environmentalists in the U.S. and Canada convinced cities to start operating recycling programs, and by the late 1980s and early 1990s, municipal recycling was expanding rapidly across the U.S. and Canada. But the growth of recycling was matched by increased consumption, offsetting gains in municipal waste reduction. And by the mid-1990s, the recycling rate leveled off, a trend that continues to the present. Today, 70 percent of the product waste generated in both Canada and the U.S. still ends up in landfills and incinerators.



Starting in the late 1980s, Canadian provinces began experimenting with a producer responsibility approach to managing product waste. Starting with disposable packaging, then expanding successful deposit programs for beverage containers, provinces began looking to brand owners for solutions. Canada also pioneered new EPR initiatives to address toxic products. Today, all ten Canadian provinces have EPR programs up and running for various products including tires, batteries, lubricating oil, oil filters and consumer electronics. Duncan Bury, Head of Product Policy at Environment Canada's (Gatineau, Quebec) National Office of Pollution

Prevention, summed up Canada's situation, "There really isn't any question whether this is an appropriate kind of policy. We're now at the point of discussing how to make it more effective."

In the U.S., by contrast, industry mobilized successfully against bottle bills and confined deposit programs to ten of the nation's 50 states. When waste made headlines in the late 1980s, the policy response was to step up pressure on local governments: 42 states and the District of Columbia established recycling goals that municipalities – not producers – were required to meet. In the early 1990s, consumer product industries were hardened from fighting EPR in Europe, while environmental organizations across the country were not united around manufacturer responsibility as a priority.

Several industry groups, such as the Rechargeable Battery Recycling Corporation and the Thermostat Recycling Corporation initiated voluntary EPR programs to pre-empt government mandates. But these industry-designed programs lack recovery targets, public transparency or accountability. Florida, one of the few states tracking environmental release of cadmium, for example, calculates that the recovery rate of nickel-cadmium rechargeable batteries in 2003 was 14 percent, essentially unchanged from 1995 when RBRC was established as a voluntary alternative to state regulation, and touting the goal of 70 percent recovery by 2001. More recent efforts by U.S. government agencies and its allies have tried to negotiate voluntary producer responsibility for carpets and computer waste. The carpet recovery program has targets and transparency, but lacks consequences for not meeting targets, while the electronics negotiations, after four years have failed to produce agreement.

Continued on page 13...

Introduction to the European multi-stakeholder meeting on sustainable consumption and production patterns

Emmanuel Prinnet, Association 4D, France

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), in partnership with the European Commission, organized two multistakeholder workshops on November 25 - 26 2004 in Ostende, Belgium, around sustainable production and consumption patterns in Europe; the author, Emmanuel Prinnet represented Association 4D at the meeting.

This meeting was the regional component of the 10-year framework of programmes to reduce unsustainable production and consumption patterns, as evoked in the Implementation Plan of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (2002, Johannesburg). An international meeting of experts at Marrakech in June 2003 already defined a certain number of priorities for the action on a world level. Since, a certain number of regional initiatives have been commenced, in particular in Latin America

and the Caribbean, Asia-Pacific and Africa. A second international conference will take place in Costa Rica in September 2005. The Ostend conference brought together a certain number of actors on the European level, including government, intergovernmental institutions, NGOs, private sector, associations of consumer protection, and trade unions. The objectives were:

- to contribute to the implementation of the sustainable production and consumption commitments entered into at Johannesburg;
- to recognize the significant roles that various actors play, and to encourage their engagement in sustainable production and consumption;
- to share information on the activities in progress towards sustainable production & consumption; to identify the

priority questions and the inconsistencies in the policies; and to find the means of implementation of the policies and the activities.

A certain number of documents concerning the Ostende conference are available on 4D website (http://www.association4d.org/article.php3?id_article=74): including the agenda of the meeting, the preparatory document of the meeting (known as "Background Paper"), the NGO position for the conference, and the final report of the meeting which includes the summary of the discussions by the Co-organizers. There is also a text that collates instances of good practices and initiatives on the production and consumption patterns in Europe, prepared by the European Commission: www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/wssd/documents/scp_eu.pdf

Introduction to the Ostend NGO Statement

Sylvia Lorek, Coordinator, SPAC WG, ANPED, the Netherlands

The Ostend NGO Statement was a joint effort of the Northern Alliance for Sustainability (ANPED), the European Environment Bureau (EEB) and Eco Forum. The broad agreement on common positions towards sustainable consumption and production patterns was and is a success in itself. Intensive e-mail exchanges and several phone calls were necessary to get it to this stage. But as the statement is based on several existing position papers from the different organisations and networks the final approval was mostly a question of getting the responsible bodies to make decisions in time than a question of content. It is this broad platform that gives the paper strength to influence policy processes also beyond Ostend. This follow up is highly required as the Ostend meeting was not really a success, even though NGOs worked hard. Beside presenting the paper (that was included in every conference map) NGOs made sure that they were present in every working group, arranged a meeting with the co-chair and made some points in the final plenary. But all the efforts were not seen as having had any real effects when we left the meeting.

Looking back, three months later, the picture is even worse. The Regional Stakeholder meeting in Ostend might be referred to in Costa Rica in September, but within Europe it gets nearly no attention at all. When the European Consumer Day was celebrated with

Protection and not even the representative from the Direction General Environment who was one of the main organisers of Ostend. Is there any more to say about the non-position of Ostend and the Marrakech Process for Europe?



Bottle recycling station in Zagreb

200 participants from the Economic and Social Committee, nobody mentioned Ostend; not the Commissioner of Health and Consumer

So further influencing the processes is not a can, but a must. In the follow up of Ostend, ANPED sent out a letter to some of the relevant commissioners and other high level person within the EU asking for their contribution for the follow up. The answers are still outstanding.

The statement is relevant beyond Europe. Besides all the regional specific aspects, the statement also contains some general positions that can be applied in other regions or in a global context. Especially the five key elements might be worth to take forward. ANPED developed some policy papers on those elements open for discussion within its network. But the key elements as well as the policy papers may also serve as a basis for in-depth discussion and position making e.g. within the NGOs, NGO networks, NGO meetings elsewhere, e.g. during the CSD etc

Ostend NGO Statement towards Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns

Prepared by ANPED, the European Environmental Bureau & Eco-Forum

To “improve the quality of life for everyone within the Earth’s carrying capacity” is the core interest of Agenda 21 and all those who care for sustainability. Given the insight that only limited resources are available to fulfill this goal, it is necessary to develop economies which are less consumptive via different and more effective production and consumption patterns. *To reach this goal is not only a question of scientific or technical improvement; it is foremost a question which values drive societal development and of political will to make the necessary changes.* This means developing a wider vision of welfare, where satisfaction of *needs*, rather than consumption per se, is the aim. Consuming sustainable depends on accepting the responsibility to live in harmony with the greater community of life. It also means that responsible politicians need to move from commitments to action.

Responsibility of European Policy

As demanded in Agenda 21 the developed countries - and thus the EU at the regional level - have to show leadership in changing unsustainable consumption and production patterns. An international work plan was initiated in Oslo in 1994 already and states have been calling for action for more than a decade now. Thus the “European Stakeholder Meeting on Sustainable Consumption and Production” needs to implement those commitments and actions into institutional frameworks as well as specific initiatives. Recognizing that first steps have been taken - as reported in the EU Inventory - it is obvious that actual developments of consumption and production still do not lead into a sustainable direction.

Thus ANPED, the Northern Alliance for Sustainability, ECO-Forum, the European Environmental Citizens Organisations, the European Environmental Bureau as well as further NGOs call the European Commission, the National Governments of the member states as well as Governments all over Europe to identify the gaps in existing policies, and elaborate policies for all sectors, while taking into account the external dimensions of these policies.

Key Elements

To reach less consumptive economies requires a broad-based approach. Key elements within that are:

Ecological fiscal reform containing (i) removal of all perverse subsidies; (ii) use of eco-taxes to internalize external costs; (iii) price mechanisms to support policy integration; (iv) selective use of positive incentives; (v) development of new measures of progress accounting more fully for environmental impacts within the current system of accounts.

Clean and eco-effective production supported by (i) green investment; (ii) eco-innovation; (iii) eco - design; (iv) appropriate products standards and labelling programmes; (v) increasing market access for environmental goods and services; (vi) environmentally sound public procurement rules and practices.

Education for sustainable consumption and production via (i) integrating knowledge of relevant consumption behaviour into curricula from pre-school to universities and in the concepts of life long learning; (ii) providing data for reliable information; (iii) report on indicators to shape consumption behaviour that can make a difference.

Corporate responsibility and accountability as legally binding framework including (i) by creating full transparency about the sustainability performance of business; (ii) dialogue between enterprises and the communities in which they operate; (iii) financial institutions to incorporate sustainable development considerations into their decision -making processes; workplace.

Information and public participation for sustainable consumption and production including (i) a broader right to know; (ii) involvement of stakeholders into decision making or at least consultative structures; (iii) support and financing of participation structures; (iv) develop and provide effective transparent and verifiable consumer information tools relating to sustainable consumption and production.

Member State Policies

The same requirements as referred to for the European Union apply for national policies: the key elements necessary to achieve Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns as outlined above have to be integrated into national sustainability strategies as well as national sectoral policies.

Next steps

The Spring Summit 2005 should introduce an action plan how to implement instruments towards Sustainable Consumption and Production patterns instead of calling for action only.

As a starting point sustainable consumption and production must become a chapter unto itself with a clear objective and action plan in the revised version of the European Sustainable Development Strategy.

Also, by merging and harmonising objectives of the Lisbon and the SDS strategy and the integration of the key elements towards Sustainable Consumption and Production patterns, the European Union will be able to reaffirm Europe’s sustainable development leadership role both within Europe and in its external relations. Additionally, it is necessary to integrate the requirements of Sustainable Consumption and Production into other relevant policy areas e.g. to develop a European Sustainable Consumption and Production Research Platform within the seven point Research Framework; and a Framework for Consumer Policy within DG SANCO.

ANPED Eco Forum and EEB call the European Union, its member states and other European governments to agree on the following:

1. To establish a European Expert Group on Sustainable Consumption and Production based on national government representatives and relevant stakeholders. Participants should be mandated to work on concrete strategy building on regional level and serve as focal points in the national contexts.
2. To develop process related as well as content related targets, timetables and benchmarking procedures. A regional/EU framework how to integrate Sustainable Consumption and Production into EU policy-making should be presented at the Marrakech II conference in Costa Rica. It has to be build on content related targets and timetables for measures towards better quality of life and indicators to evaluate the material and physical success of these activities.

Continued on page 14...

Towards regional strategies for SPAC (Cont'd)

Continued from page 1

In turn, how can the world assess whether significant progress is indeed taking place? How to evaluate these meetings, speeches and papers? Do they represent steps forward? Or do they represent more of the same arguments and commitments made in the past decade, leading to the same scenario of nominal improvements in awareness and technological efficiency marked by worsening trends? Are these discussions strategic advances or odes to a sinking ship?

Measuring regional progress

To fulfill their responsibility to the public interest, policymakers and civil society need the means to effectively measure progress. We need to know which indicators to watch or develop, and to have access to data that matters.

Our proposal for Costa Rica and other meetings is creation of a multi-stakeholder monitoring system. The function of this system would be to track relevant (i) *state indicators*: whether social and environmental impacts are getting better or worse (e.g., ecological footprints), (ii) *pressure indicators*: the causal and driving factors behind those negative impacts, and (iii) *response indicators*: the development, implementation and effectiveness of political and social responses to the problem.

Targets and timetables as indicators

Sustainability research tends to concentrate on identifying and understanding the the social and environmental impacts of rural and urban modernization, the driving forces involved, and the effectiveness of policy and program responses. The Marrakech Process should draw information from this research needed to evaluate progress, especially in meeting **targets and timetables** agreed upon by decision-makers. If there *are* no targets and timetables, however, the question of monitoring and of progress turns in upon itself.

The presence of meaningful targets and timetables as part of international, regional, and national strategies represents a critical response indicator in itself, as does the presence of concrete strategies. These might be considered a measure of political will. Without clear objectives and timetables to measure progress, the process can easily

descend into a rhetorical maze, presenting illusions of progress but never arriving at any meaningful destination.

Toward regional SPAC strategies

In the coming months before Costa Rica we hope groups concerned with SPAC issues will look closely at the substance, outcomes and follow-up to the different regional consultations. Several members, associates and friends involved in the NGO SPAC Caucus at CSD and in the International Coalition for Sustainable Production and Consumption (ICSPAC) actively participated in these meetings and have their own assessments and ideas about these processes and overall regional progress. *As a civil society input into this meeting, ICSPAC will again sponsor a SPAC Watch report on progress [3], this report focusing especially on the efforts, obstacles and possibilities of progress experienced by civil society in these different regions.*

In this issue of *Getting the Goods* the authors report on developments (and difficulties) in several regions. Some reports focus on the more unique problems and possibilities in their country and region, others identify situations common to most if not all countries. In most cases, there is clearly a need for greater commitment and implementation by national governments in order to move towards sustainability. Hopefully, at Costa Rica and in further regional and national discussions, participants will agree to develop regional and national strategies with meaningful targets and timetables.

In turn, we hope to participate in the emergence of coordinated monitoring systems of relevance to and incorporating the inputs of concerned stakeholders. Although such strategies and monitoring systems are a responsibility of

government, we hope to see all concerned stakeholders show the necessary will and leadership to producing these tools. Otherwise we can expect to see not tangible progress but exceptional success stories dwarfed by future trends of increased poverty and inequality, disease and environmental degradation, and shameful declines in the quality of life for all but those privileged segments not tied to the docks when the rising tides and tsunamis swamp everyone else.

1 United Nations, *Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development*, §15.

2 UNEP website on regional Marrakech consultations <http://www.unepie.org/pc/sustain/10year/regional.htm>

3 The first SPAC Watch report on progress, released in 2002 at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, was titled *Waiting for Delivery*. This report can be downloaded at <http://icspac.net/spacwatch/reports.aspx>

Building a framework



Sustainable consumption & China perspectives

Continued from page 4

While sustainable consumption seems a rather simple concept to understand and many local initiatives are on the ground that could be linked to SC framework, the SC Asian review seemed to confirm a fact that the concept is poorly understood or misunderstood among governments and civil society stakeholders, including China. As a result, sustainable consumption, though being mentioned here or there in some government document, is not yet on national agenda.

An effective way to tackle the SC issues is to provide adequate public access to information, alternative products and services and infrastructure to deliver those products and services. Information-wise, Chinese media have played a significant role in raising consumer awareness and educating consumers so that they understand the impact of the current unsustainable behavior. But, what is inadequate is the availability of products and services on the markets that are deemed sustainable, let along the delivery infrastructure. This is also common to other Asian countries.

Then there is the issue of lack of law enforcement structure that severely affects the enforcement of laws and policies at national and local levels. When transforming unsustainable behaviors does not necessarily require hi-tech and huge amount of investment, instead, in many cases, more of an issue of shifting perceptions, influencing consumers' choices is much more complicated than expected since there are many factors, like values and cultural traditions that decide how a consumer chooses. And last but not the least, political wills and real commitments to change are not adequate and even missing in some cases. All those factors, including many others, are holding back the course towards sustainability.

One additional point I would like to emphasize here is innovation. When top level policies and legislation are absolutely necessary, innovations of practice from private sectors, civil society and consumers could be more powerful driving forces for change. While some innovative cases have been identified and shared at the regional cross-learning seminar, more and well-developed innovation strategies, policies and practices in China need to be investigated and shared in China and with the rest of the world.

EPR in US & Canada

Continued from page 9

In the late 1990s, the U.S. environmental movement began running consumer campaigns to promote producer responsibility. Local groups networked across the country and began establishing links with environmental groups outside the country. Campaigns targeting Coca-Cola, Dell Computer, hospital vendors and other consumer sectors have made gains and have convinced many legislators of the value of the producer responsibility approach.

After five years of mounting pressure on the beverage industry, Hawaii became the 11th U.S. state (the first since 1986) to adopt a beverage container deposit program. Maine enacted a law that bans televisions and computer monitors from disposal and requires producers to take possession of products collected by municipalities. This was the first U.S. take-back law for electronics to assign significant responsibility to producers. And many states are considering or adopting tough legislation restricting the use of mercury in products ranging from thermometers to mercury-added novelty toys.

Politically, EPR is a synthesis of approaches from the left and right wing. From a fiscal conservative perspective, EPR makes sense because it gets waste management off the tax base and it is based on the notion that market competition is more efficient and effective than government-managed programs. Those of a more liberal bent support EPR because they believe that producers should have responsibility for pollution prevention.

If public interest organizations can come to accept industry's hopeful view that green profits, rather than bureaucratic planning, will solve our environmental problems, can the business community be convinced that regulation is necessary to engage the market in this problem-solving activity? Achieving this will require skilled policy steering.

This report has been abridged from "Extended Producer Responsibility Policies in the United States and Canada: History and Status" available online at <http://www.productpolicy.org/assets/resources/EPR-US-Canada-01-2005.pdf>

Upcoming events

Apr. 11 - 22 2005
13th Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development
New York, United States

Apr. 11 - 14 2005
National Environmental Partnership: 2005 Summit
Chicago, USA

Apr. 14 - 15 2005
International Conference on Environmental Reforms in Asian Production & Consumption
Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

Apr. 14 - 15 2005
Fourth International Conference on Business & Sustainable Performance
Aalborg, Denmark

May 30 - 31 2005 (tentative)
Towards a N. American SPAC strategy
Washington DC, USA

Jun. 1 - 2 2005
2005 Northwest P2 Roundtable
Victoria, Canada

Jun. 12 - 15 2005
Industrial Ecology for a Sustainable Future: The ISIE 2005 Conference
Stockholm, Sweden

Oct. 5 - 7 2005
10th European Roundtable on Sustainable Consumption & Production
Antwerp, Belgium

Oct. 10 - 12 2005
6th Asia Pacific Roundtable for Sustainable Consumption & Production
Melbourne, Australia

Upcoming SPAC events can be viewed at :
<http://www.icspac.net/events/>

Fair trade and sustainable agriculture

Continued from page 6

On the consumption end of the “pipeline”, the marketing of fairtrade products serve as an important vehicle for raising awareness in wealthy countries about trade and its links to global poverty – and offers a more sustainable alternative to patronizing hand-outs and charity. Discerning consumers play their role in ensuring that environmental and social integrity is the “goose that lays the golden egg” for producers. Fairtrade moves the producer and consumer closer together in satisfying mutual needs, in not geographically.

However, fairtrade alone is not going to change the world. It is growing rapidly, but still accounts for a minute percentage of total global trade, and its benefits reach only a tiny proportion of the population. Attempts to “mainstream” fairtrade raise many contradictions and anomalies as fairtrade-as-business tries to reconcile itself with fairtrade as a set of values and a vehicle for social mobilisation, and one should be careful not to conflate the two. For example,

- Fairtrade attempts to bridge the rich consumer / poor producer divide, it in fact it relies on this divide to function.

- Most fairtrade products are shipped across large distances with an associated environmental cost.

- The desire to “mainstream” fairtrade in competition with conventional trade, is driven on one hand by the desire to spread the benefits more widely, and on the other, to pay for certification, auditing and other forms of regulation. The drive to increase fairtrade sales can easily translate into lower prices paid to farmers and lower standards of “fairness”.

- Even as primary “beneficiaries” of fairtrade, farmers and farm-workers are given little political standing in a system dominated by Northern NGOs.

But fairtrade’s limited global impact and other constraints, fairtrade has made a real and significant difference to the lives of the small-farmers of the Heiveld. The fairtrade income into the community has been a significant

catalyst of change, but more important has been the notion that their agricultural crop is more than just a commodity. It is something valuable in itself. It is something to be proud of and something to build a future onto. Ironically, they would probably make little sense of the term “sustainable agricultural production”. To farm in any other way would be an anathema to them.



Loading harvested tea into truck

Ostend NGO Statement

Continued from page 11

3. To enable information for better use of the potential on the demand side for sustainability and public participation via active inclusion of civil society into decision making, clear and transparent structures, open communication and funding for the input of civil society.

Supporting Activities and Cooperation

Further, ANPED, Eco-Forum & EEB call to support the following processes and activities.

(i) The elements of sustainable consumption and production should be included into the framework of the «Environment for Europe» work as pan-European regional strategy to phase out unsustainable production and consumption patterns. A Regional European Strategy for Sustainable Production and Consumption should be formally incorporated into the ECE agenda for the next Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference in Belgrade 2007.

(ii) Education on sustainable consumption should be embedded into the efforts of the UN Decade on Education for Sustainable Development mobilising and empowering the public for the protection of nature, environmental policies, and sustainable development. Highlighting the specific importance of sustainable consumption and production patterns to reach sustainability could be the European contribution to the ESD Decade that will start in 2005.

(iii) The European Environmental Agency has enabled adequate environmental communication through solid data research on consumption and productions patterns and its environmental effects. EEA work on sustainable consumption and productions should be strengthened, set on a permanent basis, and made available for practical use in the different member states.

(iv) In a broad and participatory process UN DESA developed a set of indicators allowing a reasonable and understandable monitoring of developments in sus-

tainable consumption and production developments. As a starting point these indicators should be used to report on national and regional level.

(v) The UNEP SCOPE program initiated national round tables on sustainable consumption and production in several Eastern European countries. This instrument to support national activities and to integrate stakeholder participation should be strengthened and extended to Western European countries.

Role of civil society

ANPED, Eco Forum and EEB as well as further national and international NGO's are prepared to cooperate as partners in concrete national and international projects towards sustainable consumption and production. Further on, they will provide reliable public information and education but also ensure accountability of those with the power to make policy and the rules for society and to guarantee transparency about successes and failures on the way to improve the quality of life for everyone.

Enabling sustainable production-consumption systems

Continued from page 7

We need research on how people organize to reduce consumption, re-assert values that are conducive to sustainability and which explore alternative institutional designs. The science and technology communities in developing and industrialized societies can and should make a larger contribution to efforts to transform production-consumption systems.



Factory workers in Chiang Mai

In October 2004 a diverse group of academics, activists and policy analysts got together in Chiang Mai, Thailand to discuss the priorities for research on sustainable production-consumption systems [7]. As a follow-up an ad hoc international working group is convening over 2005-6 to foster stronger knowledge-to-action links. This will bring together researchers and practitioners to re-define research and action agendas that would enable sustainable production-consumption systems. As a process independent from other more formal international activities it should provide good opportunities for innovative thinking, informed participation by civil society groups and responsible businesses. It will also be able to address the thorny political issues of why so little real progress has been made. We know

that this is very tough challenge but believe that the necessary trust and commitment can be forged for what will be a long-term but essential task.

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NSSDs: A 19 country analysis

Continued from page 8

- Co-ordination of strategy objectives and initiatives with the national budgeting process.
- Co-ordination with sub-national and local sustainable development action.
- Implementing a mix of policy initiatives, and in particular, environmental fiscal reform initiatives which are typically under-leveraged.

For example, regarding the first item, while most nations have statistical offices that monitor various aspects of our economy, society and environment, only a few countries have developed an integrated set of indicators to allow analysis of the inherent trade-offs and inter-linkages among the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. Even more elusive to detect from the research were formal and informal approaches and tools to learn from this type

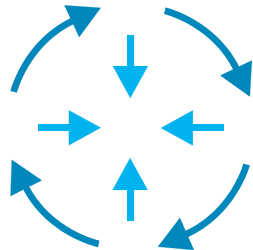
of integrated monitoring and to make critical and necessary adaptations. We manage what we measure. Until we systematically monitor integrated sets of sustainability indicators, and employ a mix of formal and informal approaches and tools to learn and adapt accordingly, nations will not be acting strategically. In addressing these challenges, among the 19 countries studied, the U.K. appeared as a consistent innovator through such approaches and tools as national sustainable development indicators and reporting; sustainable development audit committees and spending reviews; a Task Force for national strategy revision; and sustainable development research networks.

This project is a collaborative effort. Its research partners include the International Institute for Sustainable Development - Measurement & Assessment Program (IISD), the Canadian consulting firm Stratos Inc, and the Environmental Policy Research Centre of the

Freie Universität Berlin (FFU). The study was funded by and received continuous advice from the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ; commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development – BMZ), the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Foreign Affairs Canada and Environment Canada. Advisors to the project are IUCN – The World Conservation Union

For questions, inquiries, or comments please email Darren Swanson at the International Institute for Sustainable Development – Measurement & Assessment Program [dswanson@iisd.ca or telephone at +1.204.958.7746, Canada].

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**A CIVIL SOCIETY INITIATIVE
TO MONITOR PROGRESS TOWARD
SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION
AND CONSUMPTION**

SPAC Watch (Sustainable Production and Consumption Watch) is a collaborative global assessment by the International Coalition for Sustainable Production and Consumption (ICSPAC).

Drawing upon the experiences, knowledge and insights of civil society organizations and networks from around the world, SPAC Watch reports will examine progress that countries, governments and international institutions have made, as well as identifying the obstacles in achieving the sustainable production and consumption (SPAC)-related commitments made during the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio.

As a contribution to the WSSD ten-year framework (i.e., the "Marrakech Process"), **a new SPAC Watch global report will be produced in 2005.** The report will provide civil society input and views on national and regional progress and strategies for change.

If your organization is interested in participating or learning more about SPAC Watch or ICSPAC, please visit <http://www.icspac.net/spacwatch/>

**GETTING
THE GOODS
APRIL 2005**

Editorial Director

Jeffrey Barber

Editor

Veena Ramani

Contributors

Jeffrey Barber, USA

Stephen Law, South Africa

Louis Lebel, Thailand

Sylvia Lorek, Germany

Emmanuel Prinet, France

Francisco Aguirre Saharrea, Mexico

Bill Sheehan & Helen Speigelman, USA

Darren Swanson, Canada

Changhua Wu, China

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11426 Rockville Pike, Suite 306
Rockville, MD 20852 USA
Phone: +1-301-770-6375
Fax: +1-301-770-6377
info@isforum.org

www.isforum.org