



**CIELAP Brief on Sustainable Consumption and Production and the 2010/2011
review/policy cycle of the UN Commission for Sustainable Development
May 2009**

UN CSD, Sustainable Consumption and Production, and the Marrakech Process

The United Nations Commission for Sustainable Development (CSD) is the high-level forum for sustainable development within the UN system. It was established in 1992 to ensure effective follow-up from UN agreements relating to Sustainable Development. The CSD reviews progress in the implementation of Agenda 21 (1992) and provides policy guidance to move the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (2002) forward at the local, national, regional and international levels.

The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation called for the development of a 10-Year Framework of Programmes (10YFP) on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) patterns in recognition that these patterns need to change if sustainable development is to be advanced. The Marrakech Process was established in 2003 to support the development and elaboration of this framework – specifically to help countries green their economies, to help corporations develop sustainable business models, and to encourage consumers to adopt more sustainable lifestyles. SCP is considered to be a cross-cutting issue at CSD and is examined at each of the CSD's 2-year review/policy cycles; however, the theme will be addressed as a major focus at the CSD's 2010/2011 cycle of work when the 10YFP will be negotiated along with the themes of Transport, Chemicals, Waste Management and Mining.

The draft of the 10YFP states that it is intended to be voluntary, flexible, and non-prescriptive; it will be driven by demand and it will respond to stakeholder input into the Marrakech Process; it will provide incentives to support country engagement; it will provide entry points and encourage the active engagement of all stakeholders; and it will support other Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEA) and past CSD decisions.

Sustainable Consumption and Production: Priority issues for 2010/2011

Around the world, regional clusters have been meeting to discuss priority activities for the 10YFP and, as of November 2008 when the first North American meeting on SCP was held, all of the regions have met and stated their priorities. Most regions have identified energy, waste management, water, mobility and housing as key areas of interest, while a few regions identified agriculture and tourism to be priorities. The draft 10YFP identifies the following priority area clusters:

1. Institutional and policy support:

- Mainstreaming SCP into national development plans and translating SCP to national and regional contexts
- Enabling SCP policies and instruments; continuing to promote the internalization of environmental costs and the use of economic instruments; leveraging funding for SCP research and development; and supporting existing MEAs

2. Cross-sectoral opportunities:

- Promoting sustainable products and services by providing accessible information and addressing ways to lower certification costs to poor producers
- Sustainable manufacturing and value chains including increasing eco-efficiency; corporate social responsibility; and supporting market transformation efforts for sustainable products

- Scaling up sustainable procurement (public and private)
- Promoting sustainable education and sustainable lifestyles
- Encouraging sustainable cities and supporting local governments to better integrate environmental, social and economic costs into urban planning

3. Sectoral Opportunities:

- Mobility
- Building and construction
- Food/Agriculture
- Sustainable Tourism

4. Natural resources management:

- Sustainable energy use
- Sustainable water use
- Integrated waste management

Seven voluntary task forces have been established through the Marrakech Process to carry out concrete activities at the regional, national and local levels. Each task force is generally made up of 5-10 interested governments who promote best practices and encourage projects among the international community. The seven task forces do not cover all of the Marrakech Process' priorities, however. For priorities not represented by a task force, input into the 10YFP will be sought from relevant organizations within the interested regions and within the UN system. The seven task forces and their focuses are:

Task force on Education for Sustainable Consumption (Led by Italy)

- Introduction of sustainable consumption and production issues into formal learning processes as well as non-formal and informal education

Task force on Cooperation with Africa (Led by Germany)

- Development of an ecologo / green label for sustainable African products
- Establishment of waste management systems in African countries
- Establishment of a network of lifecycle assessment experts from African countries
- Formal and informal education in Africa
- Government procurement including training, awareness raising, and pilot projects
- Leapfrogging to clean technologies

Task force on Sustainable Buildings and Construction (Led by Finland)

- Use of public policies and legislation to promote energy efficiency, energy savings and the use of renewable energy in the built environment. Note that the scope of "built environment" includes the excavation and transport of raw materials, building design and construction, land use planning, construction of infrastructure, transport, and the use, maintenance, and demolition of buildings.

Task force on Sustainable Tourism (Led by France)

- Promotion of tourism that: makes optimal use of environmental resources and helps to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity; respects the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities; and ensures viable, long-term economic operations that provide socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders.
- Raising awareness of the impact of tourism and its impact on climate change

Task force on Sustainable Lifestyles (Led by Sweden)

- Encouragement, by governments, businesses, and others, of sustainable lifestyles and consumer choices in which people live more in harmony with their natural environment and develop strong socially cohesive communities
- Encouragement of and support for communication strategies, marketing, and sustainability awareness campaigns, especially to youth

- Issues of focus include: energy, resource consumption and waste production; health, including chemicals in products; food, including international life cycles and waste production; travel; and procurement.

Task force on Sustainable Public Procurement (Led by Switzerland)

- Establishment of national public procurement programmes – goal is 10% of countries by 2010
- Issues of focus include: greenhouse gas emissions and air pollutants; energy and water efficiency; waste, reuse and recycling; use of renewable resources; hazardous waste; and toxic and hazardous substances.

Task force on Sustainable Products (Led by the United Kingdom)

- Support for innovations relating to product eco-design (i.e. that reduce consumption of energy, water and other resources; use fewer hazardous substances; and produce less problematic waste)
- Development of open and transparent processes for improving product performance include better policy signals for industry, encouraging investment in innovation, and reducing policy costs
- Encouraging international co-operation in policy development

Canadian engagement in SCP and the Marrakech Process

Regional meetings, needs, priorities and commitment

In November 2008 Canada and the US held a North American regional meeting on SCP, which was attended by stakeholders from government, industry, academia and civil society. Participants called for greater government leadership to bring stakeholders together, harmonize labelling and standard-setting, resolve definitions, and provide social marketing for SCP. Stakeholders suggested that the economic situation presented an opportunity to explore alternatives and shift economies towards SCP.

Participants identified the following regional needs and priorities: enabling SCP policies and instruments (institutional and policy support); sustainable manufacturing and value chains and sustainable procurement (cross-sectoral opportunities); mobility, buildings and construction as well as food and agriculture (sectoral opportunities); and water and energy use as well as materials management (natural resources management). It is positive to see these meetings taking place and CIELAP encourages North America to adopt and support a broad range of priorities. Canada might also consider including some of the EU's priorities including changing consumer behaviour, decoupling economic growth from environmental degradation and advancing SCP in developing countries.¹

It is important to mention that NGOs in Canada and elsewhere have expressed concerns about the Marrakech Process. Stakeholders criticize that the focus has strayed from the development of and support for programs to the advancement of the Process (i.e. number of meetings held, commitments made, etc...). NGOs have called on the UN to support tangible initiatives and programs and to ask what support is needed by regional and national initiatives so that they can implement their programs effectively.

NGO stakeholders have also suggested that the Marrakech Process should develop a method to analyze and overcome resistance to change rather than focus on sharing best practices. NGOs have criticized the prioritization of information clearinghouses, awareness-raising, and capacity-building, stating that information is not necessarily effective on its own and that stronger regulatory and economic measures are needed. NGOs have expressed concern

¹ Europe has identified key priority areas including changing consumer behaviour; policy integration and decoupling economic growth from environmental degradation; addressing market failures and getting prices right, and building a clean and competitive Europe; and supporting developing countries to achieve SCP.

that the 10YFP is to be voluntary, flexible, and non-prescriptive. Many are calling for it to be more active and to establish clear targets with mechanisms to achieve them.

The Marrakech Process website provides information about SCP task force initiatives and details about regional meetings and regional priorities. Canada is listed as a member of the International Task Force for Sustainable Products and the Task Force on Sustainable Lifestyles. CIELAP is pleased that that Canada and the US have met to develop a regional approach. We do encourage Canada to be more active at developing programs and processes for moving SCP forward domestically and internationally and at communicating its activities.

Regional and Canadian Frameworks for SCP

At the North American regional meeting in November stakeholders recognized the need to develop a broadly supported SCP vision and framework to advance SCP in North America. This echoes calls that a number of players have made for the Canadian government to fulfill the statement made in Agenda 21, the plan of action that developed at the 1992 Summit in Rio, that governments will “develop a domestic policy framework that will encourage a shift to more sustainable patterns of production and consumption” (Chapter 4).

Following the North American meeting Canada hired Five Winds International to develop a Canadian Framework for Sustainable Consumption and Production. The draft at the time this brief was published, which is designed to stimulate discussion among Canadian stakeholders, calls for political, business, and civil society leaders to participate in developing the framework’s vision and for high level political participation in and commitment to the process. CIELAP supports the development of a vision and framework for SCP and encourages full stakeholder involvement and ownership in the process, including participation from ENGOs, social justice groups, health groups, business leaders, municipalities, labour unions and others.

CIELAP encourages the Canadian government to build on its strengths domestically and to promote them internationally. One example is Canada’s strength regarding labelling and standards including ecologos (e.g. energy star), organic labelling, and a sustainable product standard being generated by the CSA. CIELAP also encourages Canada to focus on gaps including targeting unsustainable patterns of consumption; collaborating with international players on labelling; and using a range of policy mechanisms (regulatory, voluntary, economic, information) to support stronger consumer choices and the development and sale of more sustainable products.

Additional Reading

The Marrakech Process – UNEP website: <http://www.unep.fr/scp/marrakech/>

The Marrakech Process website: <http://esa.un.org/marrakechprocess/>

Summary of the North American Workshop on Sustainable Consumption and Production, November 9 2008: <http://www.iisd.ca/ymb/sdwsc/html/ymbvol156num1e.html#SESSIONe>

Marrakech NGO Forum on Production and Consumption: <http://ngoforum.wordpress.com/>

Agenda 21, Chapter 4 – Changing consumption patterns: <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/agenda21/english/agenda21chapter4.htm>

Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, Chapter III - Changing unsustainable patterns of consumption and production: http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/WSSD_POI_PD/English/POIToc.htm

This brief is one of seven policy briefs prepared by CIELAP in the spring of 2009. CIELAP’s other briefs and publications can be found on the CIELAP website at www.cielap.org.