

1st Joint Preparatory Retreat of the Bureaux
of the UN Environment Assembly and of the
Committee of Permanent Representatives
22 - 23 March 2018
Tribe Hotel
Nairobi, Kenya

Secretariat update on Sustainable Consumption and Production

The Secretariat has the pleasure to submit as follow up to the Subcommittee meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives held on 15 March 2018, an update on the status of UN Environment Programme's progress on Sustainable consumption and production.

The document will also be used as a background document for the 1st Joint Preparatory Retreat of the Bureaux of the UN Environment Assembly taking place in Nairobi, 22-23 March 2018.

Sustainable consumption and production: an update from the Secretariat

The issue

Global material extraction in 2017 was around 90 billion tonnes, more than three times the level in 1970¹. By 2050, at current trends, it is expected to double to 180 billion tonnes. In line with increased material extraction, domestic material consumption (DMC) per capita (SDG indicator 12.2.2) has steadily risen and has almost doubled since 1970.

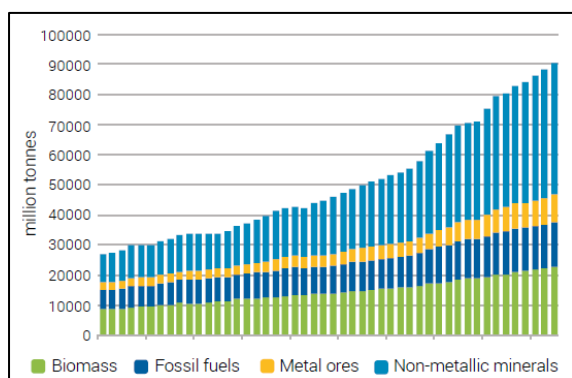


Figure 2: Global material extraction in four main material categories, 1970–2017, million tonnes (International Resource Panel, 2017)

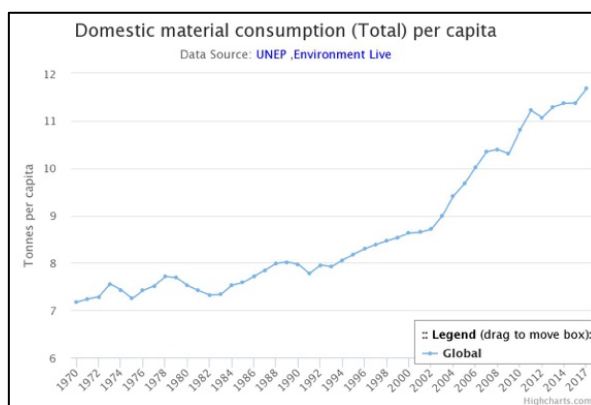


Figure 1: Domestic material consumption per capita 1970–2017

Sustainable growth is necessary to ensure that the 2030 agenda is achieved and that no one is left behind, but economic activity and growth in a business-as-usual mode, will dramatically increase pressures on the environment and demand for resources affecting the quality of life.

It is hence evident that the ‘decoupling’ (i.e. delinking) of growth and economic activity

and human well-being from unsustainable resource use and environmental impact through the adoption of sustainable consumption and production patterns are key to the long-term prosperity and well-being of people and the planet.

Sustainable consumption and production and Agenda 2030

This importance is clearly recognized and affirmed by Agenda 2030 – not only is there a stand-alone goal on “ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns” (SDG 12), but more than 50 SDG targets are dependent on those patterns, embedded across a total of 13 SDGs. Whereas the need for a shift to more sustainable consumption and production patterns was recognized as long ago as the Earth Summit in 1992, there have so far been only small scale and fragmented policies, investments, capacity building and initiatives to achieve this enormous task.

¹ Assessing global resource use: A systems approach to resource efficiency and pollution reduction. International Resource Panel, 2017. <http://www.resourcepanel.org/reports/assessing-global-resource-use>

The Secretary General's report on Repositioning the UN Development System for Agenda 2030 (July 2017) included the following important finding:

“Previous sector-focused policy-making or a goal-by-goal approach will not achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development or its SDGs. Stronger integrated planning, strategic thinking and policy integration will be crucial for Governments to define the best SDG implementation mix at the local level.”

Sustainable consumption and production (SDG 12) is in fact a key cross cutting **enabler** of Agenda 2030 and these goals, making achievement of that Agenda and its overall objectives *dependent* upon shifting to SCP patterns. For example, clusters of SDG targets can be attained through the design and implementation of National Action Plans on sustainable consumption and production (target 12.1), which include resource efficiency measures for water (6.4), energy (7.3), waste (12.5), and/or measures of sustainable resource management (12.2). Through such actions there will also be a mitigation of impacts on the environment and human well-being, such as from pollution (targets 6.3 and 11.6), land degradation and biodiversity loss (targets in goal 15). Such interlinkages can be made through SCP action plans made by city planners (11.6), by companies in the design and application of their sustainability strategies (12.6) or by national governments in the design and implementation of Sustainable Public Procurement policies (12.7) that can drive demand for sustainable goods and services. Resource efficiency measures (such as waste reduction, recycling and incentives for resource efficient technologies) can thus be integrated to deliver on seven targets simultaneously, also reducing pollution, environmental impact and improving human well-being.

Another example of sustainable consumption and production as a cross-cutting goal is evident in policies and actions taken in relation to the design and implementation of sustainable food systems. Not only do these measures support the SDG target 2.4 on sustainable food production systems, but they also provide cross-cutting support to targets in other goals under review at the HLPF in 2018. These include, in particular, water use (6.4) and sustainable resource management (12.2), and the environmental impacts cluster of water quality (6.3), food waste (12.3), biodiversity (15.1 and 15.9), and land degradation (15.3). Increasing water quality, limiting food waste, and conserving biodiversity and reducing land degradation, in turn have positive implications for human well-being and health. Sustainable food systems is the precise focus of one of the six accelerator programmes of the 10YFP.

The clustering of such SCP-related targets, and design of smart sets of policies, innovations and related incentives to achieve them, will create synergies, as well as more coherence and multi-stakeholder collaboration in the implementation of Agenda 2030. The promotion of SCP-based solutions to address other Goals and targets in the 2030 Agenda also requires further innovation, action and investment.

UN Environment Programme and SCP: achievements to date

UN Environment Programme is the lead UN agency for the majority of the targets in SDG 12, and serves as the Secretariat of the Ten-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns (10YFP), mandated by Rio+20 to support this shift. The six sustainable consumption and production programmes

offer a range of advisory and technical support, including guidance, tools and solutions, to governments and other stakeholders in the implementation of SDG 12, and key targets in other goals. The Programmes involve 130 national focal points in national governments, as well as 600 other partners in governments, local authorities, civil society, international organisations, scientific and technical organisations, and businesses.

Governments are being supported in policy development and implementation, incentivizing more sustainable and cost-effective practices through policies, regulations, certifications, standards, as well as procurement, monitoring and education practices and curricula. Interventions so far have facilitated coordination and synergies, involving actors across the value chain: government, companies, research institutions, the waste management sector and the consumer. They have led manufacturers to re-think some of their business strategies, innovate and redesign business models that allow for more durable, repairable and recyclable products. They have promoted consumer awareness and engagement as essential pre-conditions to change consumption patterns and increase demand for sustainable goods and services. The impact indicators, developed in collaboration with the International Resource Panel and the Life Cycle Initiative, highlight the long term desired changes that Sustainable Consumption and Production contribute to, including resource efficiency, climate change, biodiversity and human well-being.

The EU funded SWITCH to Green Programmes in Africa, Asia and the Mediterranean support countries in drafting and adopting Sustainable Consumption & Production National Action Plans or to mainstream Sustainable Consumption & Production into existing policies and plans. UN Environment supports the implementation of various programme components in all three regions from regional policy support, networking facilities to green business development and piloting, enabling small and medium enterprises to adopt more sustainable and resource efficient practices. The programmes work in various sectors ranging from agriculture, tourism, waste management, manufacturing, and others.

[The One Planet Network](#)

In a world where clarity and brevity are keys to being understood, the 10 Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production (10YFP) has reviewed its communications and branding in 2018. The formal Midterm Review conducted in 2017 found that the importance of “communication and visibility to the 10YFP” was ranked as 8.6 on a scale of 10. The same survey found that the 10YFP’s current brand recognition was ranked as 4.4 on a scale of 10. The global SCP community has repeatedly said that general awareness of the need for sustainable consumption and production (and SDG12) have posed a significant challenge to gaining the momentum and scale of action required by the 10YFP mandate. Guided by the 10YFP Board and the entire 10YFP network, a new visual identity and narrative voice was developed for this global movement.

To create a more meaningful social connection to the substance of the 10YFP, and to help take this initiative to scale, the implementation network of its national focal points and partners in the programmes is now known as the **One Planet Network**. The aim is to make this network, and its objectives (those of the 10YFP), more accessible to a

wider range of audiences - including the private sector. The One Planet nameplate speaks both to the fact that we have just one planet with its resource base and ecosystems, and of coming together as a single community, to act on the ground. This new branding does not change the official name of the framework but is designed to help others find an entry point and place themselves within the global SCP movement.

Partnerships for Sustainable Consumption and Production

The six programmes assemble more than 600 institutional partners in the One Planet Network and represent a broad delivery system for international capacity strengthening and cooperation on SCP.

Government agencies account for 21% of the partners, civil society organisations for 38% and business for 17% - UN agencies and intergovernmental organisations account for a further 8% of the 600 partners. These partners have an array of skills, capacities and needs for the shift to SCP, and have joined one or more of the six programmes given their specific priorities and mandates. The partners have implemented 227 projects since the beginning of 2013. Support provided includes 198 trainings, 538 awareness-raising activities, 396 resources and tools for the shift to SCP, and the establishment of 26 monitoring instruments and 40 coordination mechanisms.

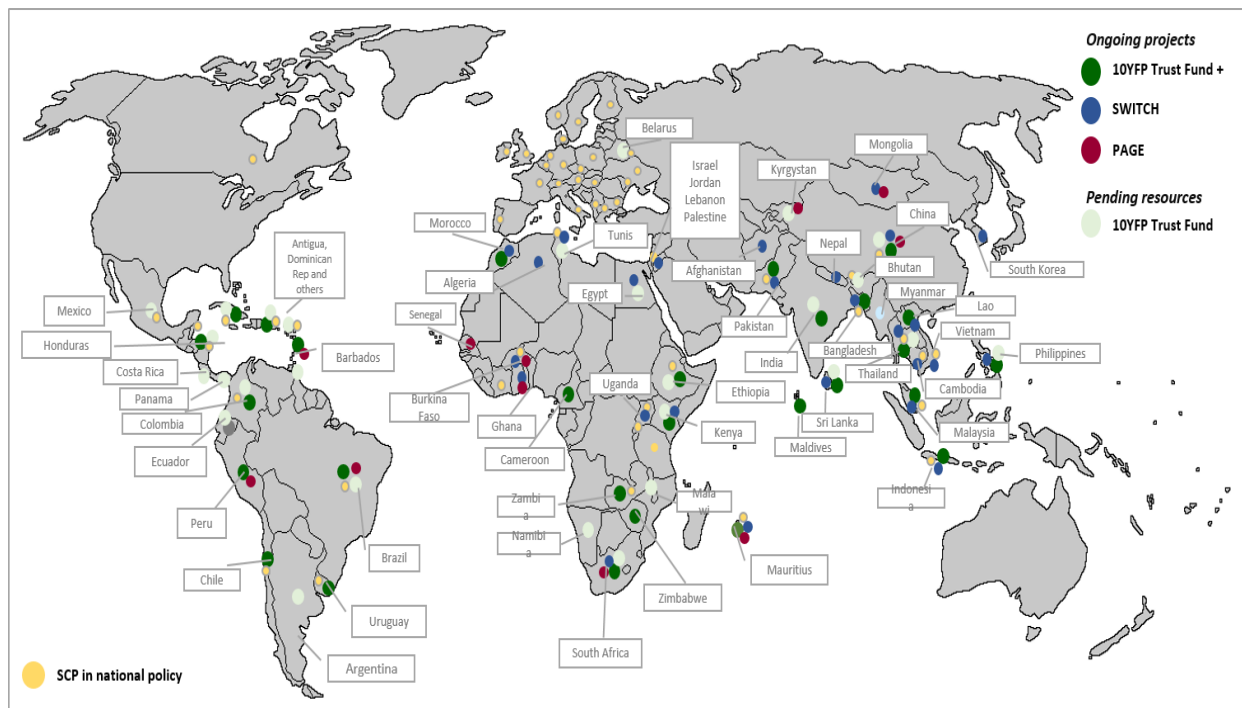
<p>Who we are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An implementation mechanism of Sustainable Development Goal 12 • The One Planet network, a multi-stakeholder partnership for Sustainable Development • A network that leads the shift to sustainable 		Sustainable Food Systems PROGRAMME		Consumer Information PROGRAMME
		Sustainable Lifestyles & Education PROGRAMME		Sustainable Tourism PROGRAMME Committed to drive the change
		Sustainable Buildings & Construction PROGRAMME		Sustainable Public Procurement PROGRAMME

There are eleven government agencies across the leadership of the programmes, with at least one in each programme, and UN Environment Programme co-leads two of them (on public procurement and buildings and construction). Other UN agencies and NGOs also have leading roles. These partnerships allow for productive collaborations across stakeholder groups, fostering innovation and the pooling of resources which allows for the implementation of projects at a greater scale. In addition to the various types of activities noted in the section on achievements to date, 447 core activities have been developed and implemented as collaborative efforts through the One Planet Network.

However, these activities are small compared to what is required. Implementation activities on SCP under this framework, and more broadly, are still only “scratching the surface” of the enormous task of promoting the necessary global shift to sustainable consumption and production patterns.

The map below highlights the location of the nearly 40 projects (almost all at national level) supported by the 10YFP Trust Fund. It also points to activities of Switch and the

Partnerships for the Green Economy, (PAGE) all three of which are now being brought together at the country level to increase the joined-up impact of these programmes.



What has been learned

Five years into that mandate have generated many lessons on what works and what does not, and an array of best practices and policies, implemented on a very limited scale. Institutions and partnerships have been created, including with the private sector, which have proved the concept and many of the benefits - economic, social and environmental - which flow from the shift to those patterns. For example, it has been demonstrated that companies employing eco-innovation measures show an average of 15% growth, even when markets are flat². Approaches such as circular economy have supported SCP policies and actions in both the public and private spheres. Start-ups and big companies alike are promoting innovative business models to embed circularity in their systems. The finance community is also becoming more interested in sustainable consumption through their engagement on circular economy. Cities around the world are also increasingly promoting this objective in their planning.

Much more is required to make an impact at global scale

The objective of sustainable consumption and production remains *far from being embedded* in the policies of governments, the business models of the private sector, and the choices and lifestyles of people. There is a need to integrate the objective of sustainable consumption and production across government plans and policies, the strategies and practices of businesses and the choice of consumers. This task, which unfolds primarily at national level, entails substantial inter-ministerial coordination, and

² [The Business Case for Eco-innovation](#). UNEP. 2014

lengthy policy design and implementation. The 10YFP is now fully embarked upon this task, in this the year that SDG 12 is reviewed at the High Level Political Forum.

SCP initiatives still urgently require visibility and additional resources to achieve the scale and pace to achieve the task set out in Agenda 2030. The Dalberg Report (July 2017) on the “System-Wide Outline of Functions and Capacities of the UN Development System” noted that:

“SDG 12 on sustainable consumption and production is the least well-resourced of all SDGs.”

SDG 12 was allocated only USD 90 million in 2016, comprised of spending spread across 15 UN Development entities. UN Environment has the largest expenditure on this goal within the UN development system. In 2016, however, the report assessed UN Environment’s total expenditure on SDG 12 as only USD 31 million, or 6.5% of its total expenditure.

It is evident that much more is required to enable sustainable consumption and production to serve as the means to address pollution but also be this enabling and broad global movement to serve as the *cross cutting and grounded partnership* for the achievement of the SDGs and Agenda 2030. The growing general momentum and interest around SCP is evident and serves as an opportunity to engage more partners, resources and investments in supporting this transformation.

Contact:

Ligia Noronha, Director Economy Division, ligia.noronha@un.org

Charles Arden-Clarke, Head of Secretariat, 10YFP, charles.arden-clarke@un.org

Dirk Wagener, Coordinator Resource Efficiency, dirk.wagener@un.org