

# THIRD INTERNATIONAL EXPERT MEETING ON SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION

Stockholm, Sweden (26 – 29 June 2007)

## Key recommendations from the NGO Community

### Summary

We, the NGOs<sup>1</sup>, make the following **6 recommendations** to the Marrakech Process Steering Committee which we believe will strengthen the follow-up to the 3rd International Expert Meeting on Sustainable Consumption and Production, held from 26 - 29<sup>th</sup> June 2007 in Stockholm. We make these recommendations from the perspective that the Steering Committee has a strong mandate to support regional and national initiatives, and facilitate actions to move towards sustainable consumption and production. We call on the Steering Committee to:

- 1) Focus on “**support for regional and national initiatives**”, identify and clarify the **specific programmes** to be provided by the UN 10-Year Framework, and how and when these programmes are intended to support national and regional initiatives before 2009.
- 2) Organize a comprehensive **multi-stakeholder review of efforts, success and failure since the Rio Earth Summit to implement the Agenda 21 objectives** and action commitments on production and consumption agreed to in 1992 by governments.
- 3) Conduct and report on the **analysis of the primary national concerns and barriers** (political, economic, cultural, etc.) within and among governments in and outside the Marrakech Process to (1) developing domestic policy frameworks to encourage the shift in production and consumption patterns, and (2) developing and instituting action plans to implement those policies. This should be started within a year after the Stockholm Conference.
- 4) Develop a clear set of **operational guidelines** ensuring civil society participation and public transparency for all existing and newly proposed Marrakech Task Forces on Sustainable Consumption and Production. These should clarify the ways and means by which NGOs can be more effectively included and contribute to the Marrakech Process inclusion and the means for their contributions need to be more clearly established.
- 5) Create the opportunity and means to widen **the dialogue** on sustainable production and consumption involving greater outreach towards all nations and stakeholders.
- 6) Establish a process to **define “corporate accountability,”** in its relation to corporate responsibility, highlighting the need for both voluntary and regulatory approaches in the transition to sustainable production and consumption.

The following provide greater detail and explanation to the NGO recommendations listed above.

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<sup>1</sup> These recommendations were prepared in the lead-up to the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Expert Meeting on Sustainable Consumption and Production. They have been refined during the NGO Forum on 26 June, 2006, in Stockholm, as well as through an online forum open to NGOs until Aug. 16, 2007. They reflect the views of many of the NGOs present at this expert meeting.

## **1. Identify the specific support programmes of the 10-Year Framework**

***Focus on “support of regional and national initiatives”, identify and clarify by 2009 the specific programmes to be provided by the UN 10-Year Framework, and how and when these programmes are intended to support national and regional initiatives.***

1. Focus primarily on the language about “support of regional and national initiatives”, rather than on “framework of programmes” or “framework”.
2. Draft a detailed list of international and regional cooperative programmes which the UN system aims to propose to the CSD, with detailed description of how these will provide technical, political and other types of support to the various action plans and initiatives of national governments and stakeholders working to achieve sustainable production and consumption<sup>2</sup>.
3. Define the objectives of each of the support programmes as well as how these will ultimately contribute to the broader Framework goal to improve the wellbeing of all people.
4. Identify some of the ways in which the draft Framework of Programmes will provide support to regional and national initiatives. For example, explain some of the ways these programmes will go beyond attempts to simply “green” individual consumer behaviour; how will these programmes help countries address the dynamics of reducing resource demand and waste through government action (through laws and policies) as well as by industry.
5. Identify what the Marrakech Process can do to support regional and national SCP initiatives *right away*, including how the UN agencies and Task Forces can help facilitate collaboration among stakeholders for them to work to this end.

### ***Rationale:***

*Although the Marrakech Process has a specific mandate (“Encourage and promote the development of a 10-year framework of programmes in support of regional and national initiatives to accelerate the shift towards sustainable consumption and production to promote social and economic development within the carrying capacity of ecosystems”), it is currently a process involving meetings discussing possible initiatives than the programmes to support them. The challenge is to find ways to encourage and support effective mobilization of action plans and initiatives by governments and other stakeholders to foster and achieve sustainable production and consumption patterns. Currently, there is excessive emphasis on the “framework of programmes” in discussions, while the other part of the mandate is to “support regional and national initiatives”. The “support” aspect, by being dropped from the language, is often overlooked, when it is the central element of the Marrakech Process.*

*To be most effective, the 10 year framework of programmes will build on what already exists—commitments already agreed to, policy ideas circulated for years, but not yet implemented. Whereas the responsibility of national and regional initiatives lies with governments and stakeholders, the responsibility for developing programmes supporting those initiatives involves a framework of international institutional cooperation among UN system bodies. These different roles and responsibilities need to be clarified.*

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<sup>2</sup> NGOs are highly frustrated and dissatisfied with the 2021 timeline that is being proposed throughout Background Paper 1 for the Framework of Programmes. We are at a point in history where the biophysical reality has to guide our action agenda, rather than the UN calendar. From the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment to the IPCC report, we are overshooting the carrying capacity of the planet with the result of global collapse in fisheries, climate change, freshwater scarcity, loss of agricultural land, spread of disease, etc. SCP is an urgent priority if these trend lines are to be reversed.

## 2. Review progress since Rio

*Organize a comprehensive multi-stakeholder review of efforts, success and failure since the Rio Earth Summit to implement the Agenda 21 objectives and action commitments on production and consumption agreed to in 1992 by governments, started within a year after the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Meeting in Stockholm.*

1. Identify some of the key research questions to be addressed by this review.
2. Identify relevant stakeholder groups involved in promoting production and consumption at and since Rio.
3. Conduct a literature search of studies in these areas.
4. Present a structured overview of key objectives, commitments and proposed activities detailed in Agenda 21, particularly Chapter 4 and related sections, focusing on promoting a shift in production and consumption patterns.
5. Consult with stakeholder groups on structure, themes and content, and engage them through consultation and other activities to provide a diversity of relevant perspectives and concerns as part of their input in the review.
6. Provide short profiles and histories of the development of selected production and consumption approaches to policy and practice (e.g., eco-labelling, procurement, reporting, eco-efficiency), especially those recommended in Agenda 21.
7. Present an outline and analysis of various key meetings and programmes that took place after Rio on production and consumption, identifying some of the key ideas and outcomes of importance.
8. Identify and provide analyses of some of the major obstacles and difficulties faced by these efforts.
9. Produce the report by the next International Meeting of Experts in 2009, to be presented at CSD in 2010; it should be accessible online along with related materials.

### **Rationale**

*The purpose of the World Summit on Sustainable Development was to review progress in the previous ten years in implementing Agenda 21. Despite progress in technology, awareness and behaviour, the social and environmental trends were worsening, due primarily to the increasing unsustainable production and consumption patterns. The original purpose of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) was to get agreement on a set of actions that would implement the objectives and commitments set in Agenda 21 in 1992. One of these actions was the “10-Year Framework of programmes in support of national and regional initiatives to accelerate the shift towards sustainable consumption and production” (Ch. III, 15). Thus, a proper review of progress on the 10-Year Framework should begin with an assessment of the history of efforts to implement the original Agenda 21 objectives and activities, and how programmes to support these efforts have or have not yet been designed as part of this framework. We know that what appear to be new ideas and discussions are actually older ideas now forgotten, and that the discussions around them do not draw on the lessons of the past. More importantly, many of the commitments made by governments in 1992 have also been forgotten. Part of the NGOs’ responsibility to the public lies in holding governments accountable to their commitments. Therefore, a review of this history and past commitments is essential.*

*We expect that, in 2010, the key Marrakech Process organizers will report on the history and accomplishments of the Process in organizing consultations and discussions about what that “framework” should be, and in presenting the draft outlines of a framework they will hope to be discussed and adopted in the CSD’s high-level policy session in 2011. However, this review needs to involve more than the consultations since 2002.*

*For the sake of transparency and accountability, this review also needs to take place using a **multi-stakeholder approach** which takes into account the differing interests and perspectives of the key stakeholder groups who also participated in that history and who may have different ideas about the nature of progress and obstacles involved.*

### **3. Identify and analyze the national barriers to developing domestic SCP action plans**

*Conduct and report on the analysis of the primary national concerns and barriers (political, economic, cultural, etc.) within and among governments in and outside the Marrakech Process to (1) developing domestic policy frameworks to encourage the shift in production and consumption patterns, and (2) developing and instituting action plans to implement those policies.*

1. Implement the Agenda 21 commitments to develop a domestic policy framework on sustainable production and consumption.
2. Develop and implement national policies and strategies on SCP, and do so by 2009, in time for the next International Meeting of Experts on SCP.
3. National SCP strategies should be aimed at eliminating poverty and achieving wellbeing of all citizens.
4. National SCP policies should move society towards a "one earth economy" that should include, at a minimum, sufficiency objectives, ecological fiscal reform, clean and eco-effective production, education for sustainable consumption and production.
5. Governments need to include all stakeholders in both the drafting of their Strategy as well as in the monitoring and evaluation of the strategy's effectiveness.
6. National SCP Strategies should counter the negative forces of economic globalization through internationally developed regulatory mechanisms, and to foster cooperation among countries of the world.

#### ***Rationale***

*We ask that governments make good on their commitment in Agenda 21 to “develop a domestic policy framework that will encourage a shift to more sustainable patterns of production and consumption” (4.17 [b]), as well as develop and implement national policies and strategies on SCP, and do so by 2009, in time for the next International Meeting of Experts on SCP. To this day, 15 years have passed since the original pledge was made, and there is no excuse for delaying action any further on this crucial point. We recognize that countries need support by the UN to overcome the challenge of developing national SCP strategies and action plans, and although the goal of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes that is currently being discussed is to do just that, the fact that this Framework is not yet available should not be used as an excuse to postpone action even further. Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation—as well as scores of other academic and other resources—offer more than enough guidance for countries to take the lead on drafting, developing and implementing a national SCP strategy on their own.*

*Progress on countries' efforts should be reviewed during the 2010 UN CSD cycle on SCP. The overarching goal of these national strategies should be to eliminate poverty while moving society towards a "One Planet Economy", and should include, at a minimum, a list of goals and support goals accompanied by clear targets and timetables, and a mechanism for monitoring and evaluation. For their effective implementation, governments not only need to include a wide range of stakeholders in both the drafting of their Strategy (some solid arguments are developed in the following paper for the OECD: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/50/21/1940033.pdf>), as well as in the monitoring and evaluation of the strategy's effectiveness. Governments also need to allocate specific budget lines for the various components of the strategy in their national budgets.*

#### **4. Develop operational guidelines for the Marrakech Task Forces**

***Develop a clear set of operational guidelines ensuring civil society participation and public transparency for all existing and newly proposed Marrakech Task Forces on SCP. NGOs' inclusion and the means for their contributions need to be more clearly established.***

1. All Task Forces should have operational guidelines based on greater global participation (currently, Task Force leadership comes from the EU).
2. Every Task Force set up by a government should invite governments from all the other regions of the world to join in order to have a fair regional representation.
3. Major Stakeholder Groups – specifically NGOs, trade unions, business, scientific community, media – representing all regions should be invited to participate in every Task Force that is set up.
4. A “Central Task Force Secretariat” to facilitate a participatory and transparent process should be set-up within the Marrakech Process.
5. A periodical review and reporting on the activities and outputs of the Marrakech Task Forces should be established.
6. We recommend that Governments from all regions take leadership in existing and any new Task Forces.

#### ***Rationale***

*There are currently seven taskforces within the Marrakech Process. These Task Forces are voluntary, and governments have come forward spontaneously on these issues to explore these topics in more detail, and offer information, promote actions, develop policy, support implementation and raise awareness, among many other goals, on their respective topic. We applaud the fact that certain governments have shown leadership on particular issues by creating thematic Task Forces, and we support that.*

*However, we are somewhat concerned about the fact that there are no rules or obligations for these Task Forces. We feel that process is as important as substance, and that for the Task Forces to be recognized and integrated as a legitimate part of the Marrakech Process, they should be subject to a minimum of rules and regulation concerning the way they function. There seems to be a wide discrepancy between the various Task Forces regarding the way they function: some are managed (and run) by one or a few people within the civil service, while others are transparent and open, and welcome stakeholders to take part in their activities to a varying degree. We feel the latter method is more appropriate and conducive to quality work. Also, the existing Task Forces cover a wide range of topics that are not only interesting in their own right, but necessary and important elements of SCP. Should future Task Forces be developed, we would like to see them address broader and more cross-cutting issues.*

## **5. Create space for a substantive dialogue on SCP**

*Create space for substantive dialogue to frame the context for the Marrakech Process (e.g. on equity, well-being, reduction / efficiency...), with greater outreach towards all nations and stakeholders.*

- 1) Support the proposal to set-up a global multi-stakeholder forum on SCP as an open, participatory mechanism of the Marrakech Process to promote the international SCP objectives.
- 2) Make information adequately available on sustainable consumption and production to all, and also ensure and include:
  - a. A broader right to know/right to information and knowledge (e.g. going beyond a discussion of “experts”);
  - b. The involvement of stakeholders into decision-making and into consultative structures; and
  - c. The development and provision of effective, transparent and verifiable consumer information tools relating to sustainable consumption and production.

### ***Rationale***

*SCP is the engine of sustainable development. It is not just another transversal or overarching theme; it is the very framework that will enable us to meet the consumptive needs--the MDGS, among others--of all within the ecological carrying capacity of the planet. SCP, however, requires a dialogue of all nations and of all people; discussions on SCP need to involve, and be taken up by, a much broader public in order to raise the profile of SCP at the national level, and develop widespread political support for effective action. For that, stakeholders need tools, resources and solid arguments to show that the world has more to gain than to lose by adopting sustainable production and consumption patterns. Good practices need to be shared, the barriers and obstacles to SCP need to be identified, and positive future scenarios of happy, fulfilling and ecologically sustainable lives and livelihoods that will serve as inspiration and guidance need to be developed jointly. The Marrakech Process is currently centred on regional and international meeting of experts on SCP, with the support of other mechanisms: Task Forces; Cooperation Dialogue; NGO and Business Forum, etc. Creating space within the Marrakech Process to allow for ongoing dialogue on SCP, how to mainstream it, how to deal with the costs of a massive transition towards a sustainable and one-planet economy, etc., seems both timely and necessary. The discussions of this dialogue are not only important in of itself, but it can also inform and contribute to the development of the 10YFP.*

## **6. Define corporate accountability**

***Establish a process to define “corporate accountability<sup>3</sup>,” in contrast to corporate responsibility, with a practical assessment of the different contributions of voluntary and regulatory approaches in the transition to sustainable production and consumption.***

1. Identify a body and resources to focus on this need to articulate the meaning of corporate accountability within the context of the broader effort to establish sustainable production and consumption patterns.
2. Include in this effort contributions and participation of all relevant stakeholder groups, including NGOs.
3. Examine the concept of corporate accountability with regard to Chapter 8 of Agenda 21, particularly regarding the improvement of legal and regulatory frameworks to promote sustainability.
4. Conduct a literature review and evaluation on the various codes of conduct and criteria for socially and environmentally responsible corporate behaviour, particularly as these apply to the different categories of unsustainable production and consumption.
5. Survey and report on research and efforts to develop ethical corporate guidelines for foreign companies operating in developing countries, with regard to key areas of unsustainable production and consumption.
6. Examine the arguments for and against independent monitoring of and mandatory reporting by corporations on key accountability and sustainability issues.
7. Study and report on regulatory and voluntary efforts to make advertising practices more socially and environmentally responsible and accountable.
8. Finally, produce a report recommending a useful definition of “corporate accountability” and the mechanisms available to implement this as part of the transition to sustainable production and consumption patterns.

### ***Rationale:***

*Within the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation the phrase “corporate responsibility and accountability” occurs three times. Yet in specifying what this means, only the term “corporate responsibility” is addressed, highlighting various voluntary initiatives which emphasize the non-regulatory side of sustainability strategies. However, the concept of accountability implies going beyond the purely voluntary, dealing with those aspects of governmental responsibility to develop and enforce legal and regulatory frameworks to monitor and ensure responsible corporate practices. This side of governmental responsibility and commitment needs to be more clearly articulated, particularly with regard to the transition of business and industry away from production and institutional consumption practices and policies resulting in social and environmental harm.*

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<sup>3</sup> This refers to small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) as well as larger corporations.