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## Asia Pacific experts want help centre on sustainable consumption and production



There should be a secretariat or network that can assist national initiatives on sustainable consumption and production. This was one of the conclusions of the second Asia-Pacific expert meeting on Sustainable Consumption and Production, held in Seoul, Republic of Korea, on 6-7 November 2003.

Participants discussed regional priorities such as the establishment

of an integrated help centre, capacity building, eco-design and cleaner production, strengthening information, education and communication programmes (“selling sustainability”) and changing consumer behaviour. The establishment of national sustainable consumption and production stakeholder forums was addressed as well.

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## Argentina launches newsletter on Sustainable Consumption

Argentina has launched an electronic newsletter on “Sustainable Consumption for the XXI Century” (Boletín Electrónico “Consumo Sustentable para el Siglo XXI”). The newsletter will be published quarterly.

It has specific areas dedicated to case studies on sustainable consumption and sustainable enterprises, civil society and consumption.

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## European Roundtable on SCP asks for inputs and provides fun

The European Roundtable on Sustainable Consumption and Production (ERSCP), to be held in Bilbao, Spain, in May 2004, has revised its agenda. The organisation has decided to organise “explorative”

workshops as well as “information exchange” sessions. Abstracts can be submitted until 19 December 2003.

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## (...) Asia Pacific experts want help centre on sustainable consumption and production

Public awareness and education have been effectively promoted in India and Sri Lanka through school-based programmes. In India, about 70,000 school eco-clubs have been established in a programme started nearly three years ago. In Sri Lanka, “environmental brigades” have been established in schools.

Partnerships among consumers, producers and governments, to work out suitable approaches to waste minimization and management was recommended as a preferred alternative to the control and command approach. The solution to the waste issue may also be supported by the use of life-cycle assessments and product design. Transfer of technologies is not only needed for “hard technologies” (machinery and equipment), but also for “soft technologies” (e.g. human skills and management systems).

Other elements for national strategies included mobilizing civil society, including religious organizations, to promote sustainable lifestyles and livelihoods, through traditional practices and values. Major media should be fully

mobilized in information and education campaigns. Indicators and databases should be developed in all relevant sectors. National labeling schemes should be developed and consumer movement programmes should be supported.

Mr. Susanto Sutoyo, Department of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, presented the report of an earlier (the “first”) expert meeting in Indonesia and said that the Asia-Pacific region was becoming the main manufacturing hub of the world and that current consumption and production patterns would lead to enormous pressure on the environment and natural resource base of the region. To address those pressures, that meeting had recommended that governments establish integrated policies and strategies for operations, investment and planning, with greater involvement of stakeholders in policy making.

Mr Bas de Leeuw (UNEP) noted the importance of consumer awareness and education as well as the role of the media and advertising. UNEP was working with Consumers International to

conduct a regional training programme on the application of the United Nations Guidelines on Consumer Protection.

The Second Asia-Pacific Regional Expert Meeting on Sustainable Consumption and Production was sponsored by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Energy of the Republic of Korea and organized by the Korean National Cleaner Production Center in cooperation with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the United Nations Environment Programme. The meeting was attended by 32 experts from 12 countries of the Asia-Pacific region and two international organizations. The participants included experts from government agencies, universities, civil society organizations, industry, a regional organization and international organizations.

More information: write to UNEP’s Regional Office for Asia-Pacific, Mr. Niclas Svenningsen or Adriana Zacarias ([sc@unep.fr](mailto:sc@unep.fr)).

### Link(s)

- [Outcomes Seoul meeting on consumption and production](#)

## (...) Argentina launches newsletter on Sustainable Consumption

“Information is a tool that enables individuals to make the right choice in their purchasing.” This was the main motivation, of the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (SAyDS) of Argentina, to elaborate a strategy to promote sustainable consumption, said Silvia Salerno, member of the Direccion de Promocion Ambiental y del Desarrollo Sustentable, SAyDS-Argentina.

To achieve a change on consumer

behaviour in our societies, it is very important to inform consumers about the impacts that their actions generate on the environment. That is why SAyDS has brought together a lot of efforts to find various information tools with which we can reach the citizens/ consumers and provide them with relevant and useful information on sustainable consumption.

“We hope”, said Silvia Salerno “that many people read our newsletter

and help us to disseminate it among their colleagues, friends, groups and institutions interested in the topic of sustainable consumption. Likewise, we would like to promote the participation and invite all of those people working on the issue of sustainable consumption to share their material and ideas and write in our newsletter.”

### Link(s)

- [Argentina SC newsletter \(Spanish\)](#)

## (...) European Roundtable on Sustainable Consumption and Production asks for inputs and provides fun

Information exchange sessions will primarily consist of presentations. Explorative workshops will devote much time to discussion. Questions to be answered are: how to go over barriers in areas where the direction is not clear, what are advanced tools and methods that help us to move towards sustainable societies, and how to implement pilot experiences on a wide-scale to help improve the environmental, social and economic indicators of Europe in the

middle and long term.

Participants are invited to check the new website at [www.erscp2004.net](http://www.erscp2004.net), where they can also submit their professional profile in a “what’s in it for me?” section. In this way, according to the secretariat, “a fruitful interaction even before the Roundtable” is stimulated.

The organisers have also “not forgotten

about the fun part” of the roundtable. Various entertaining activities are being planned, so that all participants can enjoy Bilbao and the Basque Country. Excursion to the coast, a wine-tasting evening and a bike tour by the river bank are just some of the options for leisure time activities.

Further information: write to Bahar Keskin (advisor of the 9th ERSCP) email: [keskin@beco.nl](mailto:keskin@beco.nl)

## Philippine youth movement organises summer camps on sustainable lifestyles

The SAVEME movement - Students' Actions Vital to the Environment and Mother Earth - is a youth organization whose vision is a global culture where humankind can live sustainably in a healthy environment with a balanced eco-system.

Some of the programs of the movement that promotes environmentalism, sustainable consumption and lifestyle patterns are:

1. 10-day community full immersion programmes that allow young people to exchange knowledge, experiences and
2. Lecture series in different primary and secondary schools both at rural

culture highlighting youth involvement and participation in sustainable development. It also showcased the lifestyle differences of young people between urban and rural community.

and urban communities. The main purpose of this activity is to promote environmental awareness, sustainable consumption and lifestyle.

For more information contact Catherine Kamping at [catherine@youthlink.org](mailto:catherine@youthlink.org)

## Swedish research programme on integrated product policy launched

"FLIPP", a five year research programme on integrated product policy (IPP) was launched in Sweden early November.

Seven individual projects make up the programme focusing around life cycle thinking within industry, environmental management in supply chains, life cycle considerations within environmental legislation, environmentally driven procurement, integrated environmental information systems and corporate

strategies for end-of-life management.

FLIPP is financed by the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency and led by prof. Thomas Lindhqvist at the International Institute for Industrial Environmental Economics at Lund University (IIIEE) and prof. Anne-Marie

Tillman at Environmental Systems Analysis at Chalmers University of Technology (ESA).

For further information please send an email to [flipp@iiiee.lu.se](mailto:flipp@iiiee.lu.se)

## Restoring the links between consumers and nature in sustainable cities

If an alien from outer space were asked why on Earth cities exist, he or she would no doubt answer that its inhabitants use those to move around, mainly to practice the art of shopping. Look at any city centre in the world - increasingly showing the same brands on billboards and in shop windows - and that is indeed what is the most striking characteristic. Cities are the places where supply and demand come together. Happy consumers carrying their catch home. And happy retailers re-filling the hunting grounds. Supported by all means of transport, heavy trucks sometimes being restricted to show up only in the early morning hours.

Environmental and social damaging impacts of consumption and production patterns are either directly visible - air pollution and noise - or happening far away from the view of the consumers. Raw material extraction, food production and food processing, transport and all other phases of the supply chain of products and services are located in the countryside and far out of view of the city consumer. Separating the act of consumption from its sustainable impacts is indeed an effect of modern cities. Some children in developed countries do not even know where the vegetables come from that their parents buy in the supermarket. And the connection between the milk and the cow is sometimes not that obvious as well to those young consumers. The world behind the product, in short, is largely invisible.

The emergence of cities has broken the links between consumption and production. And what you don't see you don't care about, isn't it? So should cities be abandoned all together? A

ridiculous question since cities have so many beneficial effects as well, being the centres of employment and cultural exchange. All people returning to the country side and living in harmony with their own cattle may sound appealing to some romantic souls, but would not be feasible nor fit in today's society. A way forward would be to combine the best of both worlds. Cities should be places in which modern society can live together while at the same time keeping the connection to nature. Far more attention need to be paid to physical planning items such as green and "blue" spaces - parks, city forests, water - and attractions such as city farms, where children and students can re-discover the connection. Moreover, modern technology can help to keep mankind and his surrounding together. Information tools in the super market, such as logos and labels on products or screens, can visualize the "world behind the bottle of milk". In this increasingly virtual world, the Internet and other communication techniques certainly have a lot to offer to visualize

the impacts of our consumption patterns to the world around us. Imagine your portable phone advising you what brand of coffee to choose.

How can this be achieved? Based upon a thorough analysis of what functions cities have to consumers, apart from providing shelter, employment and cultural exchange, present consumption and production patterns that seem to fulfil those functions need to be critically analyzed. And alternatives need to be developed with due regard to all three pillars of sustainability: the economic, ecological and social dimension. This is not something that can be done by one societal group alone. Architects, designers, city planners, retailers, business, consumer groups need to sit together and stimulate each other to think "out of the box".

*(excerpt contribution to Triennale Catalogue Exhibition Sustainable Everyday)*

## Upcoming Events

### *SusProNet Workshop*

Gent, Belgium, 30 January 2004  
SusProNet is a network of industries and institutes focusing on the design of products and services for sustainable, competitive growth. Their workshops include topics such as:

- Materials & Chemicals
- Households
- Food & health
- Offices and
- Information & Communication technology.

Contact Arnold Tukker at [tukker@stb.tno.nl](mailto:tukker@stb.tno.nl)

### *E/E, International Eco-Efficiency Conference for Sustainability: quantified methods for decision making*

Leiden, The Netherlands, 1-3 April 2004

### *Towards Sustainable Product Design 9*

Farnham, Surrey, U.K., 25 - 26 October 2004

Creating and developing sustainable and responsible new business models, 9th International Conference

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Please consider the environment before printing this newsletter

## Environmental Communication Award awarded

*"Global communication is increasingly important and powerful. Whoever has developed a relationship of respect with nature should communicate the value that nature represents to him or her"* stated Klaus Töpfer, UNEP Executive Director, during the Third Environment Forum, at the occasion of the ceremony for the Environmental Communication Award (ECA), Magdeburg, Germany, 17-19 November 2003.

This year Luisa Schmidt, Environmental Sociologist at the University of Lisbon, Portugal, was among the winners. She has focused her research on public attitudes toward environmental issues. ECA also recognised a communication project developed and implemented by the Philippine-based Happy Earth organisation, which demonstrates the value of tropical rainforests to both children and adults.

Initiated by the Bellagio Forum for Sustainable Development together with the European Nature Heritage Fund, the Environmental Communication Award aims to recognize exemplary media work

in the fields of environment conservation and sustainable development. It targets representatives from the corporate sector, public institutions, journalists, artists, as well as from private organisations, multilateral institutions and NGOs.

New proposals for the Environmental Communication Award 2004 can be forwarded to Bellagio Forum ([info@bfsd.org](mailto:info@bfsd.org)) and/or to the European Nature Heritage Fund ([eca@euronatur.org](mailto:eca@euronatur.org)).

For further information, please contact Solange Montillaud-Joyel ([sc@unep.fr](mailto:sc@unep.fr)).

## New Publications

*Integrating social components into sustainable consumption programme*  
by Tania Briceno-Orduz

Overall, it is found that enhancing the social components of sustainable consumption programmes improves consumer satisfaction from consumption as well as acceptance and commitment to ecological principles and projects.

Acknowledging consumption as a social activity implies the need to integrate stronger social components into sustainable consumption programmes. Unsustainable consumption patterns are linked to issues of collective choice and to a lack of social and humanistic satisfiers in the prevalent socio-economic system. Consequently, sustainability projects and environmental policy need to re-evaluate their goals and working methods in order to bring changes at the group level and to address more efficiently and effectively fundamental human needs in their social context. Economic mechanisms cannot lead the way out of current environmental crises as they do not capture the complex and multi-dimensional aspects of the problems. Moreover, the strife for sustainability has to be legitimised by accentuating the environmental and social priorities that need to be

addressed in our societies. The particular programme of Product Service Systems (PSS) gives an interesting and promising working base to promote more socially-conscious sustainable consumption programmes. In principle, the concept of PSS incites more collective action and co-ordination throughout the process of consumption as well as more elaborate evaluations of our human needs and motivations for consumption. The case study of community initiatives employing PSS principles gives an insight of the experience of more socially-oriented and participatory programmes.

For more information, please contact Tania Briceno-Orduz, email: [taniuks@hotmail.com](mailto:taniuks@hotmail.com)

### *The Journal of Industrial Ecology*

A peer reviewed international quarterly published by MIT Press and owned by Yale University, has recently published a special issue on E-commerce, the Internet and the Environment. Through funding from the U.S. National Science Foundation, the entire special issue is available on the web

For further information, please contact Solange Montillaud-Joyel at [sc@unep.fr](mailto:sc@unep.fr)