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Action plan on sustainable consumption and production for China recommended

Changsha Venue



The “First China Forum on Sustainable Consumption and Production” has resulted in a call for a comprehensive action plan to be implemented over the next ten years. The plan should be part of China’s efforts to establish a so-called “circular economy”. China should also strengthen its international co-operation.

These are the main conclusions of an expert meeting, held in Changsha, China, from 6-8 December, 2003. Other recommendations from the over 400 participants, coming from governments, business, academia and civil society,

include to seek help from UNEP, the European Union and other international organizations and donor countries to develop the required expertise through awareness raising, information sharing and training programmes. Among the specific areas of interest for China are UN programmes such as the Millennium Development Goals, the Global Compact and the UN Guidelines on Consumer Protection, as well as UNEP programmes on life cycle management (Life Cycle Initiative) and Cleaner Production.

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China Forum: “Circular or cowboy economy”?

To achieve China’s target of quadrupling its economic growth by 2020, a new mode of growth is needed, using renewable materials, reducing consumption of natural resources and reducing pollution through a “circular economy”. This said Wang Yuqing, China’s Vice-Minister on Environmental Protection in his opening address of the First Forum on Sustainable Consumption

and Production, held in Changsha, this December (see lead article in this issue of SC.net). Economic growth, he added, is needed to eradicate poverty and to improve the quality of life, sustainable consumption should be promoted. Product waste should be re-used.

▶ *Continued on page 2*

(...) Action plan on sustainable consumption and production for China recommended

“China has the need and potential to quadruple its economic growth over the next decades in a new, sustainable way” according to the final document, “it is increasingly becoming evident that traditional consumption and production would exhaust the resources and overwhelm existing capacities”. New paths for development need to be found in order to achieve a new balance between mankind, nature and technology. Gaps between the rich and the poor need to be diminished.

The “circular economy” is a model for sustainable growth that emphasizes prevention, re-using and recycling of materials and resources in various fields of economic activity. The resulting closing of loops is also the philosophy behind the international Life Cycle Initiative, and programmes such as integrated product policies (IPP), carried out by the European Union.

Awareness raising campaigns, directed at target groups such as women and youth, were considered important, as well as supporting civil society

and establishing mechanisms for public access to information. Laws and regulations need to be improved, with attention to enforcement and punishment of misconduct.

Zhang Yue, CEO and Chairman of Broad Air conditioning - one of the world’s leading “sustainable enterprises” - presented proposals for global awareness raising and information campaigns on sustainable consumption.

Among the political and scientific leaders that addressed the conference were China’s Vice-Minister of Environmental Protection, Wang Yuqing, the Vice-President of Chinese Political Consultative Conference, Zhang Huaixi, the President of Chinese Society for Environmental Sciences, Ye Ruiqiu, and Qian Yi, academician of Chinese Science Academy. UNEP was represented by its Beijing Office co-ordinator, Xia Kunbao, and its Paris based Division of Technology, Industry and Economics (Bas de Leeuw and Xingji Xiao). Among the invited international organizations were the Asia Pacific Roundtable for Cleaner

Production, the European Commission, the North American Sustainable Consumption Alliance, Consumers International, Greenpeace, and the European Association of Communication and Advertising Agencies.

The meeting was organized by the Chinese Environmental Protection Administration (SEPA), the government of Hunan Province, China Science and Technology Association, Chinese Society for Environmental Sciences, and UNEP.

The Chinese government was invited to report the outcomes of the meeting to the next Global Ministerial Environment Forum, to be held in the Republic of Korea, 29-31 March, 2004, as well as to the next meeting of the Commission on Sustainable Development (April, 2004) and other relevant international, regional and national meetings.

More information with Xingji Xiao or Bas de Leeuw, to be reached through sc@unep.fr or Penny Jiang, jiangyanping64@hotmail.com

(...) China Forum: “Circular or cowboy economy”?

The Vice-Governor of Hunan Province stated that “the 1.3 billion people of China must do their share for the protection of the environment. Sustainable consumption is an important topic, but we still have a long way to go. Public awareness campaigns will create an atmosphere for environmental policies”.

Mrs. Qian Yi, Chinese Science Academy, recalled the fact that China is the third consumers country in the world and facing water, waste and air pollution problems now sees improved awareness and knowledge of its people. The aim should be quality of life, she stated, and not “let us first become rich and do the clean-up later”. The Western way of developing is a wrong track. She stressed the need for environmental ethics and respect nature by saying “mankind is not the centre of the Earth”. All people should take care of their country and its individuals. The “upper part of the river should take care of the lower end of the river”.

Ms. Changhua Wu, president of Professional Association for China’s Environment (PACE) commented that

the media have a big role to play in promoting sustainable consumption as counter-weight for their promotion of expensive lifestyles. “TV shows show those lifestyles, but the audience does not understand the influences of those consumption patterns on the environment” said Ms. Wu. She criticized developed countries that have chosen to first improve their living standards before they started to implement sustainable consumption policies. Rather than these open “cow boy” economies, developing countries should establish more closed, circular economies, in which environmental costs are reflected in the product prices and where consumers consume “efficiently” rather than “less”.

Xia Kunbao, co-ordinator of UNEP’s China office, added that we are experiencing a globalization process in

which China is exploring a sustainable way for its economic development. Despite noticeable achievements made, China is yet to be on the track of reversing the trends of the loss of environmental resources and degradation of eco-systems. “China” he said “has a historic opportunity to leapfrog traditional polluting

technologies and to adopt sustainable consumption and production policies”. UNEP supports China’s efforts to establish a “circular economy” and to adopt a sustainable mode of industrialization.



Zhang Huaixi, Vice Chairman of the Chinese Political Consultative Conference, stressed the need for market based instruments, promoting clean investments, and making the polluter pay.

More information about this conference in this SC.net issue or by writing to sc@unep.fr

Chinese CEO proposes Sustainable Consumption awareness campaign

“Mother Earth could become beautiful again within 20 years. People all over the world who are passionate about life, can start today to take action against the crisis”. This is the vision of Zhang Yue, CEO and Chairman of BROAD Air Conditioning, a technologically advanced and environmentally conscious manufacturing plant with its Head Quarters in Changsha, China.



Zhang Yue

Mr. Zhang Yue outlined his draft proposal at the occasion of the First Forum on Sustainable Consumption and Production in China, held in Changsha from 6-8 December, 2003 (see lead article in this issue of SC.net).

Mr. Zhang Yue, who combines the management of his enterprise (1400 employees, market leader in China, USA, France and other countries) with a passion for the environment, believes it is timely for mobilizing all actors in society for the environment. After all, he writes, due to global warming *“the glaciers will melt, the sea level will rise, thousands of cities will be submerged, and many species will be extinguished. Heat waves, hurricanes, deluges and droughts will plague the world. Then, mankind will not be able to escape skin cancer caused by ozone depletion and will suffer from lung, liver and stomach cancers caused by industrial waste, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxide, and pesticides. Moreover, we are facing the threat of thousands of nuclear*

power plants, whose reactors are each 1,000 times more destructive than the atomic bomb in Hiroshima”.

His proposal includes specific action for all groups in society. Consumer should enjoy a rich but moderate life. Factory workers need to ensure product quality in order to minimize failure and to prolong life span. Farmers should collect organic waste in cities instead of using fertilizer. Building consultants should design central energy control systems in such a way that home owners can shut off the air conditioning and other electric appliances with one button upon leaving the house. Product designers should make product's life span a priority. Scientists should treat synthetic materials and genes cautiously, and devote them selves to the study of recyclable and biodegradable natural materials. Teachers should teach children concern for environmental protection. Journalists should praise those who sacrifice their personal resources to protect the environment. Commuters

should move close to the company instead of commuting through traffic jams and suffering from exhaust fumes. Mayors should listen to citizen's requests instead of just listening to economists and investors, and develop culture, sport, education and medical care. *“Even if the economic growth does not increase, the citizens will be more satisfied, which will be remembered as your most outstanding achievement by future generations”.* Parents should consider not to have second children, because the Earth cannot sustain its 6 billion people, and will not be able to feed, provide shelter and a safe and healthy environment to 10 billion.

For more information, a copy of the full proposal and comments and suggestions please contact: international@broad.net

Link(s)

- [Broad Air Conditioning](#)

CO2 emissions per unit of happiness discussed in Tokyo consumption workshop

“In order to establish a sustainable society, it is not enough for producers to provide products and services in a sustainable manner. It is crucial for consumers to accept these products and services”, said Atsushi Inaba, director of the Japanese center for Life Cycle Assessment/ AIST at the 2nd International Workshop on Sustainable Consumption at the Tokyo International Exhibition Center, December 12-13, 2003.

Several researchers presented their latest results. Arnold Tukker (project manager of SusProNet, TNO, the Netherlands) suggested *“one has to concentrate on the functions Shelter, Transport and Food, and the direct energy use within the functions Clothing and Personal Care”*, since they cover almost 75 % of the energy used in the Netherlands.

Patrick Hofstetter (BAO, Switzerland) and Toshisuke Ozawa (AIST) stated that *“existing products and services are not replaced by the new and more efficient alternative. Consumers, they said, have no intrinsic motivation to reduce energy consumption but to maximize ultimate utility”*. Therefore they proposed an approach that allows identifying consumption activities with lowest CO2

emissions per “unit of happiness”.

Gregory Norris (Sylvatica/ Harvard School of Public Health) made clear that an *“analytical framework for sustainable consumption must address alternative patterns of consumption in terms of their acceptability to decision makers, who are generally concerned with not only environmental impacts of alternatives, but their economic and potentially their social impacts as well”*. He presented a static approach to integrating socio-economic pathways to human health impacts in life-cycle analysis.

270 participants participated in the workshop, which was part of an international research project sponsored by METI through the SNTT and AIST on

life cycle approaches to sustainable consumption. The project has two main goals:

- 1) to establish environmental efficiency indicators to evaluate both CO2 emission reduction and consumer acceptance and
- 2) to present ways of utilizing such indicators in the environmental tools and policies.

For more information contact Guido Sonnemann at sc@unep.fr or Tomoko Kobayashi at tomoko-kobayashi@aist.go.jp

Link(s)

- [AIST](#)

North American web-database on Sustainable Consumption and Production launched

The North America Sustainable Consumption Alliance (NASCA) has just launched, 17th December 2003, a web-database of initiatives and activities on Sustainable Consumption and Production in Mexico, United States and Canada.

The Web-database contains over 200 entries that address a wide range of issues such as advertising & marketing, children & youth, Cleaner Production, consumer products, lifestyle choices, organic products, poverty, procurement, tourism, trade, transport, and waste.

The database main objective is to facilitate co-operation among organizations in Canada, United States and Mexico. For the first time, Internet users can access a single Website to find information about sustainable

consumption and production initiatives and programmes throughout North America. The Web-database is also intended as a resource for citizens to learn about projects or initiatives that they can support, join, or replicate in their own community.

This Web-database is an initiative of the North American Sustainable Consumption Alliance (NASCA), working together in partnership with the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC), the Canadian Centre

for Pollution Prevention, Environment Canada, the Lowell Center for Sustainable Production, Integrative Strategies Forum, the University of Sonora, and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

Everyone is invited to register and submit activities to www.p2win.org NASCA

For more information, contact Adriana Zacarias at sc@unep.fr

Link(s)
• [NASCA](#)

Latin American Regional Council on Sustainable Consumption and Production established

The Forum of Environmental Ministers of Latin America and the Caribbean established a Regional Council on Sustainable Consumption and Production, during the XIV Meeting of the Forum, held on 24th and 25th of November 2003, in the city of Panama.

The Forum decided to raise financial resources required for its operation, in particular to develop a 10-year programme on sustainable consumption and production for the region.

The proposal for the creation of a regional council was one of the outcomes of the first and second meetings of Latin American and Caribbean Governmental Experts on Sustainable Consumption and Production held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and in Managua, Nicaragua, respectively.

The Regional strategy includes the following issues:

1. To establish a Regional Council of Governmental Experts in Sustainable

Consumption and Production and to raise the financial resources required for its operation.

2. To carry out an inventory of the major activities on sustainable production and consumption in each country of the region and analyze these activities with a view to identifying best practices and lessons learnt and share them within the region.
3. To promote the strengthening of institutional capabilities of governments by means of the continuous exchange of information, among institutions from different sectors as well as to carry out workshops, training, and technical assistance.
4. To promote the production and financial sectors by means of capacity building for workshops, trainings,

information and technical assistance.

5. Carrying out campaigns to increase awareness and knowledge of sustainable production and consumption at all levels of society.
6. Implementing pilot projects on sustainable production and consumption for industry and service sectors taking into account the wide variety of such sectors in the region.
7. Promoting the supply and demand of sustainable products and services.
8. Creating opportunities for dialogue between the various national and sub-regional initiatives on sustainable production and consumption.

For more information, please contact Diego Masera (dmasera@mail.rolac.unep.mx) or Adriana Zacarias (sc@unep.fr).

UNEP wants to reinforce partnership with advertising industry

At the occasion of the Consultative Meeting on Advertising and Communication (November 17th, 2003) Monique Barbut, UNEP DTIE, stressed the importance of reinforced partnerships with the advertising sector to promote sc patterns.

The meeting gave the opportunity to the members of the UNEP Advisory Committee on Advertising to provide an update on their activities since the last meeting, which was held in Paris in January 2003.

Among its plans for 2004, the European Association of Communications Agencies (EACA) forecasts the launch of its CSR publication targeted to advertising agencies probably in London in the first trimester 2004. Moreover, EACA introduced its international online survey

on ethics for *advertisers* and advertising/*communications agencies*, which aims to help the association develop an ethical code for the advertising sector.

MPG International unveiled the first findings of its "Sustainable Motivation" survey, funded by the World Association of Research Professionals (ESOMAR). The preliminary results were mostly based on North America and Western European countries due to a lower rate of responses from developing countries.

Futerra, a UK based consultancy firm specialised on sustainable communications, presented a new international survey carried out with UNEP and targeted to universities, which aims to determine in what extent CSR and sustainability issues are included in marketing and advertising courses.

For further information, please contact Solange Montillaud-Joyel at sc@unep.fr

Upcoming Events

International Workshop "Driving Forces of and Barriers to Sustainable Consumption"

5-6 March 2004, Leeds, U.K.

The workshop aims to address the following themes:

- Behavioural and institutional change for sustainable consumption: from niches to mass movement
- Governance for sustainable consumption
- Measuring social, economic and environmental effects of lifestyle changes

Please submit an abstract (300 words) by January 10, 2004 and the full paper (min.2000 words) by February 25, 2004.

Sustainable Enterprise Summit

17-18 March 2004, Washington, D.C., USA

The World Resources Institute (WRI) organises the 7th Annual Summit "Today's Challenges, Tomorrow's Markets" inviting nearly 200 business executives to learn from experts about best practices for implementing leading sustainable business strategies.

ENCOS 2004, 1st European Networks Conference on Sustainability

1-3 April, 2004, Berlin, Germany.

The following topics will be examined:

- Modelling and gaming for sustainability
- New forms of knowledge production
- Communication of environmental information
- Competencies for sustainability management
- Education for sustainability
- E-communication and e-learning
- EU-enlargement and sustainability

Design: Green workshops

New York (27 March 2004), Minneapolis (24 April 2004) and Chicago (17 June 2004)

Contact: Kakee Scott,

kscott@greenmarketing.com

The *Bremen Initiative* is looking for initiatives, business ventures, projects, and technologies to tackle tomorrow's environmental challenges. With the 'bremen partnership award' the City of Bremen wants to support this. Submit application online until April 2004
Contact: Eike Meyer at eike.meyer@ecolo-bremen.de

Friends of the Earth in Hong Kong calls for rational consumption

Hong Kong Chinese University conducted a survey on the attitude and behaviour of Hong Kong citizens on environmental responsible consumption. Hong Kong people spend too much, 30 % say they feel more satisfied when they buy more. They do not, or seldom, weigh a product's usefulness before they buy it. Friends of the Earth announced the survey results on "Buy Nothing Day" with the hope to raise awareness of the public against overconsumption.



Housewives in particular show a contradictory behaviour. On the one hand they are more environmentally conscious, more willing to buy refillable products. On the other hand they are more easily tempted by products, which they don't need.

Stephen Jang, clinical psychologist of the Christian Family Service Centre, says that being addicted to consumption can turn you into a shopaholic.

Students are also keen consumers. They are the least environmentally conscious and are the most skeptical with regard to environmentally friendly products.

Mei Ng, Director of FOE Hong Kong, criticized Hong Kong government for proclaiming cliché statements on sustainable development, whereas overconsumption - the core problem - has not been touched on.

Hong Kong people think more positively about green products now and they believe that green products will become more popular in the next three years.

For more information, contact Hahn Chu, hkchu@foe.org.hk

Link(s)

- [Friends of the Earth, Hong Kong](#)

New Publications

NC, nouveau consommateur

New French magazine on responsible consumption

The purpose of "NC", whose first issue was published in November 2003, is to help citizens get informed choice about their purchases, while respecting the diversity of consumption patterns

I buy Different

A joint campaign from WWF and Center for American Dream - aimed at youth.

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