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## From APRCP to APRSCP: more than just a change of name

Our names are what identify us, they say. Each one of us has a name to let the next person know who we are. In the case of the Asia Pacific Roundtable for Sustainable Consumption and Production (APRSCP) however, its name is more than just an ID.

▶ *Continued on page 2*



## Second edition of consumer guidelines report published

A 2004 update of the 'Tracking Progress: Implementing sustainable consumption policies' report is now available for download. The joint UNEP/Consumers International report, which in 2002 included feedback from 50 countries on their progress in formulating sustainable consumption policies, now incorporates information from three new countries: Estonia, Finland and India.

▶ *Continued on page 2*



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## Catalan version of youthXchange guide launched

The Catalan version of the youthXchange guide is available now. The city of Barcelona is the first local authority to have endorsed and adopted this UNEP/UNESCO guide for young people as a communications tool to citizens and civil society organisations.

▶ *Continued on page 2*



### (...) From APRCP to APRSCP: more than just a change of name

► Asia Pacific Roundtable..for what? For those unfamiliar with the name, the Asia Pacific Roundtable for Sustainable Consumption and Production (APRSCP) is the new name adopted by the former Asia Pacific Roundtable for Cleaner Production (APRCP), a non-profit, non-governmental organization which aims to foster dialogue among various stakeholders in society about environmental issues, particularly those on Cleaner Production and related issues. Formed in 1997, the organization has held five Roundtables around the Asia Pacific region and actively promotes Cleaner Production (CP) via various media such as seminars/workshops, a quarterly newsletter and a website ([www.aprcp.org](http://www.aprcp.org)).

While Cleaner Production was fast gaining ground in and around the region, new “trends” were also emerging. Sustainable Consumption and Production

– which means to consume more efficiently and differently – takes into account the other half of the “equation”, of which the producer can also be an efficient consumer. In fact, at the Johannesburg World Summit 2002, it was decided that Sustainable Consumption and Production (SC&P) would be the focus to further implement and carry out Sustainable Development in all regions.

And with APRCP already doing its bit in fostering Cleaner Production, it seemed only natural to “cover all bases” by including Sustainable Consumption and Production in its goals. Thus came about the Asia Pacific Roundtable for Sustainable Consumption and Production (APRSCP).

The organization may have changed its name but it has not abandoned its original mission – as mentioned

above. In fact, it is merely widening its scope to include the “emerging issues” – SC&P and other related issues - in its objectives.

The APRSCP wants to become part of a dynamic and prosperous region committed to the principles of sustainable consumption and production by providing leadership and support that will enhance information flow, human resources development, and strengthen public/private partnerships to stimulate the promotion and implementation of SC&P strategies and technologies in the region.

If you want to know more, please contact Olivia L. Castillo at [aprcp@pltdsl.net](mailto:aprcp@pltdsl.net)

**Link(s)**  
• [APRCP](#)

### (...) Second edition of consumer guidelines report published

► Five years after UN General Assembly ratification, this update of the 2002 survey confirms the slow progress from governments on implementing the Sustainable Consumption Guidelines in the UN Guidelines for Consumer Protection.

In a joint assessment by UNEP and CI, the survey found that 40% of the governments responding were not even aware of the Guidelines’ existence. According to the survey, of the 53 governments that responded (150 governments approved the Guidelines in 1999), only 56% promote research on sustainable consumption with about

the same percentage using relevant economic instruments such as ‘green taxes.’ It also notes only 56% measure the progress of their nations toward more sustainable consumption patterns.

More encouragingly, the survey found that 80% of the governments that responded believe the guidelines are useful for policy making and the same number have initiated information campaigns on sustainable consumption in their countries. The report includes national case studies from Australia, Brazil, Chile, China, Germany, Japan, Mauritius and Senegal.

At the time of the release of the first edition, UNEP Executive Director Klaus Toepfer stated “*When it comes to policy guidelines, governments have made a start but clearly much more still needs to be done. This pioneering survey shows that governments, in developed, developing and transition economies, are interested and willing to implement policies outlined in the UN Guidelines.*”

For more information please contact Bas de Leeuw ([sc@unep.fr](mailto:sc@unep.fr)) or Bjarne Pedersen ([bpedersen@consint.org](mailto:bpedersen@consint.org)).

**Link(s)**  
• [Tracking Progress 2](#)

### (...) Catalan version of youthXchange launched

► The guide was launched in Barcelona on July 6th, 2004. Present were the Deputy Mayor of Barcelona, Imma Mayol, UNEP’s representative, Isabella Marras, and the representative of the Catalan youth council. A cocktail reception was organised at the house of youth. Organic catering was provided and serviced by young people in difficulty.

The translation into Catalan was carried out by an interdisciplinary team of youth groups, technical and communications experts. It was adapted for Catalonia by adding local case studies in different color boxes.

The 5000 copies of the guide will be distributed for free among youth and local NGOs.

For further information, contact Isabella Marras ([sc@unep.fr](mailto:sc@unep.fr)) or Helena Barraco Nogues ([hbarraco@mail.bcn.es](mailto:hbarraco@mail.bcn.es))

**Link(s)**  
• [Youthxchange](#)

## Can the return of the Olympic Games to Greece inspire a return to nature?

*“The return of the Olympic Games to Athens, where they originated some 2000 years ago, has sparked renewed interest in the historic reality of the competition,”* said Mr. Klaus Toepfer, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). *“Respect for nature was a feature of ancient Greek civilization.”*

*“In recent years, the environment has gained increased prominence within the Olympic Movement. It is officially recognized by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) as the third dimension of Olympism, alongside sport and culture. Environmental issues are now an important part of the review process of Olympic bids.*

*In those early Games, victors were crowned with an olive wreath. The olive*

*wreath remains as an Olympic symbol to this day, a reminder of the precious link between humankind and the natural environment that we must learn to better preserve and cherish,”* he said.

As part of its Sport and the Environment Programme, UNEP signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Athens 2004 Olympic Organizing Committee (ATHOC) on 3 June 2004 to implement a series of public awareness activities.



Excerpt from UNEP News Release 2004/37

For more information, please contact Eric Falt Spokesperson/Director of UNEP's Division of Communications and Public Information e-mail: [Eric.falt@unep.org](mailto:Eric.falt@unep.org)

### Link(s)

- [UNEP - Sport and Environment](#)

## Misleading green claims undermine consumer trust

“Natural, bio, traditional farming, animal welfare”, just some of the terms used on food labels that mislead and confuse consumers. Consumers International's new 8-country survey on self-declared green claims on selected food products shows there is a need for clear labelling and verified claims, to enable consumers to distinguish between real claims and marketing ploys.

The aim of this survey was to investigate whether a product's 'green credential' was valid - whether it was actually produced in the sustainable and ethical way that was claimed.

The 8 organisations purchased a list of basic foods, typical of a family's weekly shopping basket. They were then checked and evaluated against relevant national and international regulations. The survey discovered a proliferation of green and 'eco' claims on different foods. Many of the claims were unverified, confusing

and/or misleading.

Take eggs as one example: The 17 samples surveyed came up with 6 different types of claims relating to animal welfare, such as 'free range' and 'free running'. The claims could not be verified and were sometimes contradicted by other labelling information.

*“Consumers look to labels, logos and claims to help them choose goods which are produced in a sustainable way. These can only be helpful if the claims are valid*

*and trustworthy and do not mislead the consumer”* states Bjarne Pedersen, CI Principal Policy officer.

The CI report includes 12 recommendations to support consumer rights. The overarching recommendation is that self-declared claims on food labels should be clear and unambiguous - where they are not, enforcement action should be undertaken to ensure that they are.

### Link(s)

- [Consumers International](#)

## French consumers move away from mass consumption

In France “alternative” consumers are now estimated at no less than 25% of the population, whereas “ordinary” consumers who shop in big supermarkets represent 11%. These are the results of a recent survey.

The “hyper” consumers are those who like to watch big sports events on TV, visit theme parks and do their shopping at big super/hypermarkets. They buy large amounts of carbonated softdrinks, eat fast food and prefer processed cheeses.

The “alter” consumers hate advertising. They are prepared to pay more for products that are environmentally friendly. A car for them is only a means to get from A to B. They prefer cuts of fresh cheeses, look for authentic products and avoid sodas.

At the same time, higher prices have been blamed for the low levels of consumption. Sales of industrially produced Camembert have plummeted by 40% in the last 3 years. Ready-made meals have fallen by 6% since 2000. The supermarket chains are increasingly concerned by this phenomenon, all the more so as the reasons are not easily identified.

Producers are constantly innovating but consumers, who do not see any real benefits, are expressing their dissatisfaction with the brands.

A new way of consuming differently has been identified. The alternative consumer is not necessarily an “alter-globalist”. They shop with a certain ethic in mind. They distance themselves from advertising and brands. The alternative consumer is the opposite of the ordinary supermarket consumer who is constantly under the influence of shopping impulses and always looking for something new.

Excerpt of *Le Monde*, 15 July 2004

## Use of plastic shopping bags discouraged worldwide

There is a growing international movement to ban or discourage the use of plastic bags because of their environmental effects.

Countries from Ireland to Australia are cracking down on the bags and action is beginning to stir in the United States. The ubiquitous plastic shopping bag may be a victim of its own success. Although plastic bags didn't come into widespread use until the early 1980s, environmental groups estimate that 500 billion to 1 trillion of the bags are now used worldwide every year. Critics of the bags say they use up natural resources, consume energy to manufacture, create litter, choke marine life and add to landfill waste.

"Every time we use a new plastic bag they go and get more petroleum from the Middle East and bring it over in tankers," said Stephanie Barger, executive director of Earth Resource Foundation in Costa Mesa, Calif. *"We are extracting and destroying the Earth to use a plastic bag for 10 minutes. We should really be using canvass bags or crates or heavy duty reusable plastic bags - something you can reuse over and over again."* The foundation is calling for a 25-cent tax on plastic bags in California.

The plastics industry took a "proactive stance" by working with retailers to encourage greater recycling, rather than "putting on taxes to address the problem," said Donna Dempsey, executive director of the Film and Bag Federation, a trade association for the plastic bag industry.

The tax proposals are loosely modeled on Ireland's "PlasTax," a levy of about 20 cents that retail customers have had to pay for each plastic bag since March 2002. The use of plastic bags in Ireland dropped over 90 percent following imposition of the tax and the government has raised millions of dollars for recycling programs. Similar legislation was introduced in Scotland last month and is being discussed for the rest of the United Kingdom.

In Australia, about 90 percent of retailers have signed up with the government's voluntary program to reduce plastic bag use, committing them to a 25 percent reduction in bags this year and a 50 percent reduction next year. The government has threatened to impose a 25-cent tax on each bag if reduction targets are not met. The opposition Labor Party has called for a mandatory phase-out of plastic bags culminating in a ban by 2007. Some Australian towns have already banned plastic bags in all retail stores.

A law that went into effect last year in Taiwan requires restaurants, supermarkets and convenience stores to charge customers for plastic bags and utensils. It has resulted in a 69 percent drop in use of the plastic products, according to news reports. In China, plastic bags blowing around the streets are called "white pollution." In South Africa, the bags are so prominent in the countryside that they have won the derisive title of "national

flower." The sale and manufacture of plastic bags was banned in Bangladesh two years ago after they were found to have been the main cause behind choked drainage systems during the 1988 and 1998 floods that submerged two-thirds of the country.

The plastics industry says the solution to bag litter is to change people, not the product. *"Every piece of litter has a human face behind it. If they are a harm to the environment in terms of visual blight, then people need to stop littering,"* said Rob Krebs, a spokesman for the American Plastics Council.

One of the most dramatic impacts is on marine life. About 100,000 whales, seals, turtles and other marine animals are killed by plastic bags each year worldwide, according to Planet Ark, an international environmental group. Scientists examining the stomach contents of 382 dead seabirds in the Netherlands found scraps of plastic in 367 of them.

Excerpt of "Critics move to bag environmental nuisance", by Joan Lowy, Scripps Howard News Service, 20 July 2004, email [lowyj@shns.com](mailto:lowyj@shns.com)

### Link(s)

- [Scripps Howard News Service](#)

## Company case studies wanted for booklet on marketing

As a follow-up of the meeting jointly organised by UNEP and the Global Compact office last April in Paris, a joint publication is under preparation to gather successful stories of marketing and communication strategies to promote sustainability. Submissions of potential cases are welcomed.

At the Global Compact Policy Dialogue on Sustainable Consumption: Marketing & Communications (Paris, 5-6 April 2004), participants expressed the need of a comprehensive package compiling communications strategies to promote sustainable products/services. Hence the decision of UNEP and Global Compact to produce a booklet that will contain several business case studies on responsible marketing and communications from a selection of industry sectors. The objective is to share ideas with Global Compact participants

- as well as with other companies - and to give them recommendations on what works and what does not when it comes to selling a product on the sustainability platform.

UNEP is currently soliciting input from Global Compact participants that have launched a product/service on a sustainable consumption or a Corporate Environmental and Social Responsibility (CESR) approach as part of an overall organization-wide strategy. UNEP also encourage submissions of unsuccessful

campaigns in order to go beyond showing best practices and success stories by also introducing problems encountered in putting in place such strategies.

The initial phase of compiling the package booklet is already under way and is scheduled for completion by December 2004 and for distribution by early 2005. If you would like to send any submissions or are aware of any Global Compact participants that would be interested, please send an email to: [sc@unep.fr](mailto:sc@unep.fr) (attn. Ms. Solange Montillaud).

## Upcoming Events

Corporate Social Responsibility and the Electronics Sector: issues, products and supply chains  
13 September 2004, Bush Hotel Farnham, Surrey, U.K.

Smart ecoDesign: 1 day fast-track course, 23rd July and 14 September 2004, The Surrey Institute of Art and Design, Farnham, Surrey, U.K.

### *International Symposium, Greening events*

19-21 September 2004, Barcelona, Spain - Local governments implementing sustainability principles as hosts of international events

### *Workshop: Linking Sustainable Consumption & Production and Quality of Life*

22 September 2004, Barcelona, Spain

### *Seminar: "The challenge of sustainable growth: integrated societal expectations in business"*

Gent, Belgium, 27 - 28 September 2004 - organised by the European Academy of Business in Society and hosted by Vlerick Leuven Gent Management School

### *Eco-efficient Product Service Systems: A One Stop Showcase of All Relevant 5th Framework Program Projects*

13 October 2004, Brussels, Belgium, Concert Noble

### *Eco-Procurement and Moving Beyond*

14-15 October 2004, Aix-en-Provence, France - BIG (Buy it Green)-Net International Expert Seminar

### *CfSD Conference Sustainable Innovation 04, 9th International Conference*

25-26 October 2004

### *International Mayors Meeting*

Graz, Austria, 28-30 October 2004  
ICLEI and the City of Graz are organising the First International Mayors meeting on ECOPROFIT, a programme promoting sustainable economic development measures

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## Reports on the public understanding of sustainable development available

In the framework of the development of the United Kingdom's sustainable development strategy "Ensuring a better quality of life for everyone, now and for generations to come", COI, the UK government's communication expert was commissioned by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to undertake a study of the research evidence available on the concept of sustainable development in relation to the general public.

The study was designed to provide communicators in government and civil society with relevant information on which to develop effective sustainable development communications.

The outcomes of the study are presented as three reports:

- Report 1: The Impact of Sustainable

Development on Public Behaviour

- Report 2: Driving Public Behaviours for Sustainable Lifestyles
- Report 3: Summaries of Sources

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

### Link(s)

- [taking-it-on](#)

## School children collect used batteries in Portugal

More than 450 000 Portuguese school children collected 3 million used batteries, at the initiative of two hypermarkets which launched the program "Pilhas de Livros" (stacks of books).

The aim of this action was to promote the recycling of batteries whilst at the same time encouraging reading.

As part of the educational program to assist schools, "Pilhas de Livros" will reward the 100 schools which collected the most batteries. Over 9000 new books will be given to the libraries of all the participating schools.

*"The massive involvement of schools, children, families and friends in this action, as well as the number of batteries collected, reinforces our*

*intention of developing educational and environmental actions which we have always addressed", says Jose Fortunato, Marketing Director of Modelo Continente.*

The educational program to assist schools developed by Continente and Modelo hypermarkets seeks to play an educational role by promoting numerous environmental and educational activities.

For more information, please contact Sofia Macias, at email: [smacias@grupogoci.net](mailto:smacias@grupogoci.net)

## New Publications

### *The Role of Labour Unions in Sustainable Consumption and Production*

Study commissioned by UNEP DTIE, Ecologic and Dr Bernd Heins. Labour unions are in a key position for advancing current developments in the area of sustainable consumption and production. Case studies in Germany, the United Kingdom, South Africa, USA and Indonesia were investigated

### *ERSCP Bilbao*

Papers, abstracts and presentations

### *Green Food Claims, An international survey of self-declared green claims on selected food products*

Consumers International

*SusPronet newsletter # 6*, with a report on the second international conference 'Practical Value' which was held in Brussels, 3-4 June 2004

### *The New Consumers: the influence of affluence on the environment*

This new book examines the environmental impacts - focus on cars and meat - that have the most far-reaching effects



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