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New Panel must boost resource-efficient growth and innovation



Assessing the environmental risks of biofuel production and metal recycling are two of the issues likely to top the agenda of a newly formed global think tank on resource efficiency.

Launched this month at the World Science Forum (Budapest, Hungary), the new “International Panel for Sustainable Resource Management” will provide scientific assessments and expert advice on the use intensity, the security of supplies and the environmental impacts of selected

products and services on a global level.

“Climate change rightly tops the environmental agenda at the moment, but the world faces more inconvenient truths that must be addressed,” said Achim Steiner, UN Under-Secretary General and Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, which has established the panel.

▶ *Continued on page 2*

Pioneering projects receive environmental “life-cycle” awards



Sonia Valdivia of UNEP's Life Cycle Initiative (second from the right) with winners of the LCA Award

Pioneering new research to measure the environmental impact of sugar production in South Africa, newsprint paper production in Zimbabwe and new approaches to assess impacts on biodiversity in Brazil have been recognized by a new award from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

The “UNEP/SETAC Life Cycle Award” recognises work from academics and private companies in developing and emerging economies who have started visionary and innovative projects based

on the “cradle to cradle” or “life cycle approach”.

The “life cycle approach” concerns the impacts on the environment of a product’s production, use and disposal. “The growing attention to life cycle issues is a natural outcome of decades of UNEP work on cleaner production and ecoefficient industrial systems,” said Achim Steiner, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme.

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(...) New Panel must boost resource-efficient growth and innovation, UN Environment Programme says

“Economic growth in our modern times cannot be achieved with old consumption and production patterns - a point brought into sharp relief by our new Global Environment Outlook-4 which shows that collectively humans are over-utilizing the Earth's nature-based resources at a rate that is outstripping nature's ability to renew and replenish them,” he said.

“We need to provide a boost to resource-efficient growth and innovation. We need to break the links between economic growth and environmental degradation, and finding ways to achieve this “decoupling” is what the new resource panel is all about.”

Established by UNEP, with the support of a wide range of governments, the European Commission and representatives from civil society, the new scientific panel is part of an international partnership on resource management. It will look at the impacts on resources and materials used in all phases of their life cycle.

“Quadrupling resource-productivity worldwide (doubling wealth while halving resource use) is the smoothest avenue to sustainable development,”

according to Ernst Ulrich von Weizsaecker, Dean of the Donald Bren School of Environmental Science and Management at the University of California, and Co-chair of the Panel.

“We all agree that a lot more economic wealth is needed for six and a half billion people let alone nine billion people that we expect to live on earth by the middle of this century. On the other hand, we are already now overexploiting the earth. It is fair to say that we should reduce the consumption of carbon energy and other natural resources by roughly a factor of two. It is high time for the UN System to address the global resource challenges, and I feel honoured being invited to help on this exciting agenda”, he said.

“Humanity is facing its most serious challenge in how to interact with the ecosystems that support us and all forms of life,” said Ismail Serageldin, the other Panel Co-chair and Director of the Library of Alexandria. “We must find new and innovative ways to meet the needs of an expanding population, richer diets, and the appetite for energy. We must redesign the international and national policy environment so that it nurtures the development and promotes the introduction of these new ways

world-wide.”

The new International Panel for Sustainable Resource Management is expected to provide hard scientific and empirical assessments, written in a clear language about complex issues and reports which can be read by those who can take action.

It is hoped that the Panel will assess the situation at the global level and will advise which priority issues to address, for instance metal recycling (should we ‘mine or recycle’, and what are the environmental risks), or the complex issue of bio-based products (are we tackling climate change, or are we ‘burning our food’ as some say).

The Panel is supported by a Secretariat, hosted by the Sustainable Consumption and Production Branch of UNEP's Division of Technology, Industry and Economics, based in Paris.

For more information write to Bas de Leeuw and/or Inhee Chung at sc@unep.fr

Link(s)

- [International Panel for Sustainable Resource Management](#)
- [World Science Forum](#)

(...) Pioneering projects from Brazil, South Africa and Zimbabwe receive environmental “life-cycle” awards

“As pressure on the environment goes through mostly unsustainable production and consumption patterns worldwide, there is an urgent need to encourage life cycle thinking in developing and emerging economies,” said Arab Hoballah, Chief of the Sustainable Consumption and Production Branch in UNEP's Division of Technology, Industry and Economics.

“The new award that UNEP has initiated with the Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry supports relevant life-cycle research and associated activities in these countries” added Mr Hoballah, who presented the awards in Zurich on 28 August 2007.

The award ceremony was held back-to-back with the UNEP/SETAC Life Cycle Management 2007 conference. This year's winners of the new UNEP/SETAC Life Cycle Award include Kevin Harding and the Department of Chemical Engineering at the University of Cape Town, for their assessment of sugar production in South Africa,

Charles Mbohwa and his team from the Mechanical Engineering Department in the University of Zimbabwe for its earlier research on the life-cycle of newsprint paper, and Danielle Maia de Souza and the Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina for their work on adapting life-cycle approaches to measure the impacts of unsustainable practices on Brazil's biodiversity.

Three other projects concerned with waste in Taiwan, chocolate production in Ghana, and the creation of a “Brazilian Centre of Excellence on Life Cycle Thinking” were recognized as runner-ups.

In 2006, over 30 projects on life cycle approaches from developing economies were evaluated and 23 selected and supported with complimentary commercial software and databases made available by Pré Consultants (SimaPro), ifu Hamburg (Umberto), PE INTERNATIONAL (GaBi), Ecobilan (TEAM), ecoinvent Centre (ecoinvent Database) and IVAM (IVAM Database). During the award ceremony, the

new UNEP publication ‘Life Cycle Management: A Business Guide to Sustainability’ was also launched. “This publication is a contribution to UNEP's activities to promote more sustainable consumption and production patterns,” said Achim Steiner. “It is a next step in broadening the horizons of pollution prevention; a process which has gone from a focus on production processes, to products and then to product-systems and to sustainable innovation. It also contributes to the 10-Year Framework of Programmes mandated by the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002.

In the new publication, companies such as Airbus, Nokia and Ford explain how it is possible to expand their business while minimising the environmental and social burdens along their entire product life cycles

Link(s)

- [Life Cycle Initiative](#)
- [Publication “Life Cycle Management: A Business Guide to Sustainability”](#)

SCP a priority for Latin American and Caribbean region

SCP programmes and policies are clearly making inroads in the Latin American and Caribbean region, as evidenced by the outcomes of the 4th Regional Meeting on SCP, held on 18-19 October 2007, in Sao Paolo, Brazil.



The main outcomes of the meeting are: i) the regional SCP strategy was revised identifying sub-regional priorities, ii) 4 sub-regional action plans were developed, iii) the Regional Council of Government Experts on SCP

was strengthened and new member were elected, iv) the outline of the 10YFP was analysed and participants identified key programmes that according to the regional priorities should be included in the 10YFP such

as: national action plans, sustainable public procurement, sustainable products, education & sustainable lifestyles and SMEs. And v) a communiqué was developed and will be presented at the



LAC Forum of Ministries of Environment. The meeting also helped to strengthen the dialogue between governments, civil society and industry

The 4th Regional Meeting on Sustainable Consumption and Production in Latin America and the Caribbean was held 18-19 October 2007, in Sao Paolo, Brazil. The meeting brought together around 80 participants,

representing 24 countries, from various sectors: governments, business and industry, trade unions, NGOs, national cleaner production centres, development agencies, and academia, as well as

MERCOSUR and UN agencies, UNEP, UNDESA and UNIDO.

In September 2007, MERCOSUR released a proposed Plan of Action on Sustainable Consumption and Production which highlights the need for action on developing national SCP programmes, government sustainable procurement programmes and information and communication initiatives on SCP. At a meeting of MERCOSUR on 23 November 2007, Ministers of Environment will discuss among other things the implementation of the regional SCP action plan.

Information is available with Adriana Zacarias at sc@unep.fr

Link(s)

- [Marrakech Process - Regional Consultations](#)

Africa builds capacity for implementing national and local programmes on SCP

UNEP hosted a three-day regional workshop on national and local SCP programmes to build capacity for participating African country teams. Participants shared their experiences on their progress to date in developing the SCP programmes of their respective countries. During the various working sessions, participants worked with the resource persons in an interactive session designed to further the drafting process. Countries made good progress throughout the three-day session, highlighting the value of such training exercises in the process of developing sound SCP programmes.



The workshop also included plenary presentation sessions, during which, Mr. Matthew Bentley (UNEP) presented the international perspective and experiences based on the Draft Guidelines for National SCP Programmes that are being prepared by DTIE, while Mr. Desta Mebratu (UNEP) presented the Regional guidelines for the development of an SCP programme at national and local level. This was supplemented by a presentation from Mr. Michael Kuhndt from the UNEP / Wuppertal Collaborating Centre on SCP on key SCP policy instruments and experiences from other countries and a presentation by Ms. Josephine Bauer (UNEP) on the Marrakech Task Forces as supporting implementation mechanisms.

At the end of the working session, the

group agreed that the following five key priorities were important for taking action on SCP at the national and city level: energy and water efficiency, waste management, sustainable tourism, sustainable building and construction and education for SCP.

This regional workshop was principally supported by the German Task Force on Cooperation with Africa, with inputs from the UK-funded project to develop Guidelines for National SCP Programmes. Participants from government agencies, National Cleaner Production Centers (NCPCs), Universities and other partner institutions that are engaged in the development of SCP programmes in Mauritius, Mozambique and Tanzania attended the three-day regional workshop

at UNEP headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya from 9-11 October 2007.

For more information on this regional workshop, please contact Mr. Desta Mebratu at desta.mebratu@unep.org or Mr. Matthew Bentley at sc@unep.fr

Link(s)

- [National Sustainable Consumption and Production Programmes](#)
- [Presentation: International Guidelines for Developing National SCP Programmes](#)
- [Presentation: Development of National/ City 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production](#)

Mauritius makes sound progress on its SCP programme

In another 40 years or so, the world - and that also includes Mauritius - is likely to face an unimaginable chaotic situation if the present consumption and production trend continues unabated. The Mauritian Minister of Environment and National Development, Mr. Anil Bachoo, issued this warning at the opening of a two-day workshop on the development of a national programme on sustainable consumption and production for Mauritius on 25 October 2007.



Mauritian Minister of Environment and National Development, Anil Bachoo, speaking

The Minister underscored that *“bold policy decisions and firm actions are required to reverse the trends of consumption and production patterns or else it might just be too late. Future prosperity depends on decoupling economic growth from environmental degradation.”*

With the support of UNEP, the Government of Mauritius is developing a national programme on SCP to start to address these issues. This is a key demonstration activity to test the developing international Guidelines for National SCP Programmes. Mr. Matthew Bentley (UNEP) stressed in his opening remarks to the workshop the importance of soliciting involvement from all parts of society in order to solve such wide ranging issues and to seek to achieve

win-win solutions that have the greatest positive impact. Professor T. Ramjeawon, national consultant responsible for developing the programme, highlighted the findings of the background study to the project which calls for action in some key priority areas, which are sustainable industrial agricultural development, integrated waste management, sustainable mobility and sustainable buildings, energy and water use efficiency, education and sustainable lifestyles and sustainable tourism.

The national consultation was viewed as a constructive and important step on the road toward implementing a SCP programme for Mauritius. Participants conversed and shared experiences on the key priority areas for the programme, reflecting on what would be the best

short term measures to be acted on. Small working groups supported by the national consultant will now take these suggested actions forward and start developing detailed inputs for the programme. The draft materials will be reviewed by the national SCP advisory committee in the coming months. More than seventy participants from all sectors of society - including government officials, business, researchers and the media - attended the workshop in Port Louis, Mauritius on 25-26 October 2007. The event inspired very strong media coverage, which included reports and interviews in the main national newspaper, Le Mauricien.

The participants are continuing to be engaged through an email list serve that has been set up by the Ministry of Environment acting as secretariat for the development of the programme.

For more information about this project, please contact Matthew Bentley at sc@unep.fr

Link(s)

- [National Sustainable Consumption and Production Programmes](#)

Seeking SCP opportunities in South East and Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia

Many SEE and EECCA countries face similar problems and there is huge potential to share knowledge and experiences and work towards a common path to sustainability. Cities have acted as potential catalysts for change as shown by a large number of local sustainability initiatives. These were some key conclusions of a joint UNEP-European Environment Agency (EEA) report on SCP in the countries of South East Europe (SEE) and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA).

The joint UNEP-EEA report reviews the development of sustainable consumption and production (SCP) policies and the progress in implementation in several European, Central Asian and Caucasus countries.

The report was prepared for the Sixth Ministerial Conference ‘Environment for Europe’ held in Belgrade in October 2007. The goal of the report is to identify

opportunities for and barriers to more sustainable consumption and production in the SEE and EECCA countries, and to highlight relevant experience which could be replicated throughout the region.

The main part of the report provides detailed information and a review of SCP initiatives in key production-consumption areas: industry, food, buildings, transport and waste. The analysis in each of



these areas is illustrated by examples of implementation of SCP initiatives at local level, drawing on 18 city studies carried out for this report in 11 of the 18 SEE and EECCA countries covered.

Link(s)

- [Report: Sustainable consumption and production in South East Europe and Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia](#)

Young Environmentalists discuss how technology can harness the gifts of nature

The UNEP Tunza youth advisory council now has a wonderful new logo and 6 newly elected representatives! The election of the Youth Advisory Council took place at the third biannual Tunza International Youth Conference, held in the German city of Leverkusen from 26 to 30 August.

This year's conference was a strong impetus for the international environmental youth movement said former UNEP Communications Director Eric Falt. "New members who share the same passion for the environment have joined the community of young environmentalists."

The conference brought together more than 180 young people from 85 countries. Features of the conference were theatre and dance, a children's exhibition and a series of workshops including one on youthxchange. The Participants spent four days exchanging ideas on "Technology in Service of the Environment", this year's theme, and key global environmental issues such as climate change and the importance of renewable energies. They also gained firsthand experience



through visits to sites and external model environmental facilities in Germany.

They take new ideas for their environmental activities back home with them, and some have already formulated concrete action plans. Following a discussion in Germany, some Chinese participants are planning a pilot project to produce fuel from rapeseed oil.

During its two-year mandate, the Council will advise UNEP on better ways of engaging young people in its work, represent their peers in

international environmental fora and increase youth involvement in UNEP's work by informing young people in their regions about UNEP's programmes for youth.

Tunza advisors have been and continue to be great supporters of youthxchange. Thank you!

Link(s)

- [Conference Press Release](#)
- [Tunza 2007 conference](#)
- [youthXchange](#)

"Background Stories": Revealing Product Life-Cycles

For the growing number of consumers who are concerned about their social and environmental footprint, such issues often seem distant and disconnected from every-day life. There is no direct and transparent link between a product and its own background.

With social and environmental issues growing in both the corporate sphere and in the public eye, there is an increasing need for companies to be able to communicate their progress toward sustainability to consumers. Lengthy and technical Corporate Social Responsibility reports and eco-labels have traditionally served this niche. But as the market for sustainable products continues to grow and segment, consumers need a way to see behind eco-labels and into the true meaning of a company's product - in a way that prevents greenwashing.

Such transparency can double as a consumer learning tool: outlining the steps of the product's life-cycle. As evident in the food-labeling cases of Nutrition Facts and dolphin-safe tuna, educational communication can -over time- change consumer purchasing patterns. As a format for the evolution of the eco-label, "Background Stories" creates a structure to which companies can attach information that corresponds with the life-cycle of the product.

In one example of the system applied to chocolate bars (see link below), the user unwraps the product to reveal more detailed and graphical information about the background story of the main ingredient.

Here's how it works:

Companies voluntarily place information (expanding upon information already found on existing packaging) about where their product is produced, under what methods, and where it originates from, and so on, directly on the product. Presenting information positively, the design outlines the life-cycle of the product and provides a structure for which other certifications (organic, green dot, etc.) and steps the company is taking (optimized logistics, unionized workforce, etc.) can be listed. The design provides consumers information which they can peruse at their own pace. Reviewed by an external organization and functioning much like the USA's Nutrition Facts, the intent is to increase consumer awareness of the connections between this product and the world - gradually - to establish a personal relation over time.

Grown from a Masters thesis in the Netherlands, a pilot project is currently under development. More information is available on www.backgroundstories.com or by contacting arlene@arlenebirt.com.

Link(s)

- backgroundstories.com



Upcoming Events

RESPIRO Conference on Socially Responsible Procurement
3 - 4 December 2007, Lille, France

EthnoDesignFashionWeek (EDFW)
5 - 8 December 2007, Harare, Zimbabwe

Forum International pour le Développement Durable (Les Ateliers de la Terre)
7 - 8 December 2007, Courchevel, France

Planet Attitude, Sustainable Development Show
15 - 17 December 2007, Brussels, Belgium

Second India Roundtable on Sustainable Consumption and Production: Key Resources and Information Tools
19 - 20 December 2007, New Delhi, India

International conference on Waste and Climate Change
31 January - 1 February 2008, London, UK

Environmental Technology and Renewable Energy International congress and exhibition
31 January - 1 February 2008, Vienna, Austria,

Ecocity World Summit (7th International Ecocity Conference)
22 - 26 April 2008, San Francisco, USA

World Environment Day 2008 will be hosted by New Zealand with a focus on fostering low-carbon economies,
5 June 2008

Changing the Change: Design Visions, Proposals and Tools
10 - 12 July 2008, Turin, Italy

World Sustainable Building (SB) Conference
21 - 25 September 2008, Melbourne, Australia

International Conference on Hazardous Waste Management
1 - 3 October 2008, Chania, Greece

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Asia Pacific SCP Help Desk launched

The Asia Pacific Help Desk on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) was launched on October 17 2007 with a new website, <http://www.scp-help.org> and <http://www.apscp.org>

This new initiative has been developed to become a platform for exchanging information on SCP, reviewing the current status of SCP research, disseminating concepts of SCP, and providing services of SCP consultation and discussion for policy makers, suppliers, researchers, consumers and other target groups. The website lists news and events, resources, issues, initiatives and databases (projects, experts and products) related to SCP.

Other features to be made available include:

- Reliable and up-to-date information on SCP will be provided by regional

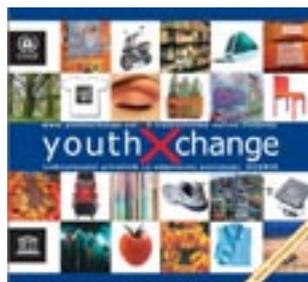
focal points and experts from UN organisations, governments of the member countries and other organisations;

- A SCP Newsletter will be released every two months, reviewing the current status of SCP in the Asia Pacific region;
- Databases of projects, experts and products on SCP will be established to provide information and service for most of the target groups.

Link(s)

- [Asia Pacific SCP Help Desk](http://www.scp-help.org)

New Publications and websites



The youthXchange guide is now available in Slovenian

The youthXchange network has started to publish its own regular bulletin. To subscribe to the YXC E-Bulletin, please visit youthxchange.net

Special Internet Exhibition on youthXchange launched at UNESCO's General Assembly

New UNEP CD-ROM on Life Cycle Management and Related Materials of the UNEP/SETAC Life Cycle Initiative (with content available in English, French, Spanish, Chinese, Portuguese and Japanese)

Global Environment Outlook 4 (GEO-4) is the fourth report in the Global Environment Outlook (GEO) series from UNEP

The World Sustainable Development Outlook 2007
Published by Greenleaf Publishing

Etat et avenir de la consommation durable, vers une gouvernance de la consommation ? conduite avec la participation de Gilles Lipovetsky (in French only)

"Managing Environmental Sustainability in the Food and Drink Industries" is a new report from the Confederation of the food and drink industries of the EU (CIAA)

Newsletters

Issue 11 of UNEP's LC.net

The latest newsletter of Australian Association ECO-Buy

The latest newsletter of "green is beautiful" (in French only)

The latest newsletter of EcoSTEPS Netletter

The latest newsletter of ChangeStar

The latest newsletter of Green Building Pages



Please consider the environment before printing this newsletter