

Side Event Title:

**Building knowledge and partnerships to deliver
resource efficiency for a green economy**

Wednesday, 24 February 2010, 13.00-14.30, Hibiscus Room

Objective

The aim of this side event is to discuss UNEP's ongoing efforts to build a critical mass of knowledge and partnerships to deliver a green and resource efficient economy.

Structure

The side event will be organized into two parts focused on delivering a green and resource efficient economy:

- 1) Making the scientific and economic case
- 2) Promoting and supporting partnerships

For UNEP, a "green economy" is a system of economic activities related to the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services that results in improved human well-being over the long term, while not exposing future generations to significant environmental risks and ecological scarcities. It implies and requires decoupling of resource use and environmental impacts from economic growth. The Resource Panel seeks to demonstrate that this is not only possible, but indeed necessary. UNEP's activities on Resource Efficiency and the Green Economy are all promoting a response to change the current drivers leading to environmental degradation. The Resource Panel provides assessments of the resource consumption and environmental impacts associated to these drivers, and examine the sustainability of potential policy and technology responses such as biofuels. The Green Economy Initiative complements this work by assessing and illustrating the economic potential of investments in green sectors. Combined efforts of these UNEP led activities are expected to build a common understanding of how to break the links between economic growth, resource use and environmental degradation and to change the economy by substantially increasing investments in green sectors.

Part 1 "Making the scientific and economic case"

This part of the side event will focus on UNEP's activities to generate international scientific and technical consensus with respect to sustainable resource management. Research on the decoupling of resource use and environmental impacts from economic growth is spearheaded by the UNEP International Panel for Sustainable Resource Management, which was launched in 2007. The Panel aims to provide independent, coherent and authoritative scientific assessments of the drivers and pressures associated with resource consumption and of the sustainability of potential technology solutions and policy responses. In October 2009, the panel issued its first report, entitled "Towards sustainable production and use of resources: assessing biofuels". Additional reports on decoupling, environmental assessment, mineral flows and water will be released over the next biennium and will highlight challenges, opportunities and alternative options for more sustainable resource management.

This part will also consider UNEP's activities to make the economic case for ensuring sustainable resource management, including the development of the UNEP Green Economy Report (GER). The GER will provide in-depth macroeconomic assessments of potential sectors for green investments, including cities and buildings, transport, waste management, renewable energy, agriculture, forests, water, fisheries, tourism and clean technology. The report will include economic analysis, modeling and policy recommendations to help identify areas with potential environmental and economic returns on investment. In other sections of the report, the broad range of national and international policy measures necessary to support the transition to a green economy will be reviewed.

Part 2 "Promoting and supporting partnerships"

The second part of the side event will focus on UNEP's activities to promote and support partnerships in the transition to a green and resource efficient economy. Under the auspices of the UN Chief Executives Board, nine "joint crisis initiatives" were launched in April 2009 to respond to risks posed by the financial crisis. UNEP was appointed lead agency for a "Green Economy" joint crisis initiative. In this role, UNEP issued a joint statement and coordinated the development of a framework of action with various UN agencies calling for a global transition to a green economy. The aim of this framework is to ensure close collaboration between the organizations in the delivery of their green economy activities. In this context, UNCTAD and ILO will present the results of their efforts under this joint framework of action.

Possible Invitees

- Sylvie Lemmet, Director DTIE/UNEP: welcome and introduction
- Prof. Gusti Muhammad Hatta, Minister for the Environment of Indonesia (TBC): Opening statement - (5 min)
- Ms Joyce Mabudafhasi, Deputy Minister Environment, South Africa, *"Making the scientific case and building the knowledge" (7min);*
- Mr. Timo Makela, Director for International Affairs, DG Environment, European Commission: *"From scientific assessment to policy relevance" (7min);*
- China, Ministry of Environment Protection: *"Promoting a green and resource efficient economy: China's efforts and effectiveness" (7min)*
- Peter Poschen, International Labour Organization: *ILO's contribution to JCI-4 (7min)*

The presentations and discussion at this Side Event will explore the following key issues:

- What scientific assessments can make the concept of decoupling relevant and operational for policy makers?
- What is needed to stimulate, speed up and scale up investments in green sectors from the government and industry side?
- What is needed for inducing and supporting the shift to a Green Economy in terms of policy reform and market instruments, as well as knowledge, capacity building and communication/advocacy;