

## International Panel on the Sustainable Use of Natural Resources

### **Pre-Panel Brainstorming Meeting: A Summary**

**8 December 2006**

**DG Environment, Brussels, Belgium**

#### **Participants**

Getachew ASSEFA	Royal Institute of Technology Stockholm, Sweden.
Valentin BARTRA	Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, Peru.
Stefan BRINGEZU	Wuppertal Institute for Climate Environment and Energy, Germany
Marina FISCHER-KOWALSKI	Institute of Social Ecology, Austria
Luiz Fernando Krieger MERICO	Ministry of Environment, Brazil
Yuichi MORIGUCHI	National Institute for Environmental Studies, Japan
Hiroaki TAKIGUCHI	Ministry of Environment, Japan
Eric ROBINSON	Mission of Canada to the EU.
Guomei ZHOU	State Environmental Protection Administration, China.
David STANNERS	European Environment Agency (EEA)
Lars Fogh MORTENSEN	European Environment Agency (EEA)
Christian AVEROUS	Organization for Economic Co-operation & Development (OECD)
Timo MAKELA	European Commission (EC)
Klaus KÖGLER	European Commission (EC)
Anne-France WOESTYN	European Commission (EC)
Werner BOSMANS	European Commission (EC)
Bas de LEEUW	United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
Inhee CHUNG	United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

#### **Introduction**

A pre-panel meeting was organized as the first main activity of UNEP and European Commission (EC) led project titled “International Panel on the Sustainable Use of Natural Resources (Resource Panel)”. The aim of this meeting was to brainstorm with experts on potential topics for consideration by the Panel.

A total of 18 participants were present at the meeting, with *12 experts (speaking mainly in their personal capacity) from Ethiopia, Peru, Germany, Austria, Brazil, Japan, Canada, China, European Environment Agency (EEA) and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)* taking part in the discussions. The meeting was chaired by the European Commission (EC) with UNEP acting as facilitator and rapporteur.

Mr. Timo Makela, EC’s Director of Sustainable Development and Integration from Directorate General (DG) Environment, opened the meeting with a brief explanation of the project background. This was followed by a roundtable introduction of pre-panel participants (see Annex 2 for the full list of participants) and a debriefing of the Bruges conference on Sustainable Resource Management, held on 6-7 December 2006 (conference website: <http://www.coleurope.eu/template.asp?pagename=chairtoyotaconfbruges2006>). The informal brainstorming exercise with the pre-panel experts immediately followed, which continued until the end of the meeting.

Table below crystallizes the main points discussed during brainstorming segment of the pre-panel meeting.

## Issues for consideration

Participant	Views and Comments
Yuichi Moriguchi / Hiroaki Takiguchi.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interested in material cycles: natural resources management linked to recycling policy in Japan.</li> <li>• The Panel should rather focus on tangible resource flows (such as metal, minerals etc.) than on intangible aspect of resources (such as biodiversity and ecosystem services).</li> <li>• Need a common understanding of fundamental underlying concept, principle and vision when considering natural resource use.</li> <li>• Scientific assessment of environmental impact important for both primary and secondary resource use, hence the importance of recycling.</li> <li>• Need for more compatible international database (improved basic statistics).</li> </ul>
Marina Fischer-Kowalski	<p>The Panel should be guided by an overarching vision that is general enough to capture various activities and perspectives, and specific enough to characterize its unique nature. Some elements of such an overarching vision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deal with the systemic interrelations of the use of materials, energy, water and land. Such systemic interrelations are constituted and modified by technologies and particularly infrastructures, and they change in the course of industrial transformation. Leap-frogging the materials and energy intensive historical path of industrial transformation may require very innovative infrastructure design.</li> <li>• Sustainable natural resource use should be considered from various perspectives (such as security of supply, economic requirement, equity, need satisfaction / quality of life requirement, environmental impact).</li> <li>• Link methodology on energy efficiency into mass flow indicators to include energy coming from food/feed.</li> </ul>
Luiz Fernando Krieger Merico	<p><u>Technical issues</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Important to include soil into the analysis in ways that address the maintenance of soil quality (as it affects productivity) and the relationship between soil and water (considered important in the desertification process).</li> <li>• The sustainable use of the underground water, which should include overexploitation, contamination and the replenishment of aquifers.</li> </ul> <p><u>Social and geographical trends</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider examining the relationship between the use of natural resources and social conditions of countries. Does increased resource efficiency and economic growth go in parallel with poverty alleviation? In this vein, biofuel and biodiesel (“social fuel”) topic is of great interest. Should perhaps consider involving Petrobras in the biofuel work.</li> <li>• Analyze international trade and consumption of natural resources to identify where and how the externalities (positives and negatives) are occurring.</li> </ul> <p><u>Vision of the future</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to go beyond just providing scientific assessment and policy advice and develop a vision of the future, suggesting alternative ways of producing and consuming and pointing towards a new form of economic development. Measuring progress (indicators) will also be an important element to this work.</li> </ul>

Participant	Views and Comments
Stefan Bringezu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concentrate on resources used for economic-industrial processes; consider including impacts of material flows that are also indirectly induced by those processes (for example, mining waste).</li> <li>• Consider problems that are not yet dealt by other institutions (hence topics such as water and fisheries should not become priority topics).</li> <li>• Priority issues should have a global impact and dynamics which indicate rising pressure: for example metals and biofuels. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Metals: global demand is growing and impacts of mining and refining are rising disproportionately. Recycling has to be managed internationally. Because recycling alone will be not sufficient for sustainable resource use, material and resource efficiency programmes need to be developed at national and international level.</li> <li>- Biofuels: net benefit to global warming seems to be rather limited and there is an increasing pressure to natural ecosystems due to the land use competition and expansion of arable land for non-food biomass production. There is trade-off with regard to biodiversity.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• To understand the causal relationships, the driving forces of resource use need to be analysed. A systems approach need to be applied, which can detect possible problem shifts (between regions, between different material flows and impacts, and over time).</li> <li>• Carry out forward-looking studies on options for technological, organisational and jurisdictional change for increasing resource efficiency and lowering absolute demand for resource use and related impacts.</li> <li>• Description of business as usual scenario and alternative scenarios of sustainable resource use. For the latter, visions of a desired possible future need to be outlined and made concrete in terms of material supply, use, recycling and disposal for the major resource groups (biomass, fossil fuels, metals, minerals).</li> <li>• Data and information gathered need to be combined and translated into practical recommendations for policy development at the national and international level.</li> <li>• Study the priority issues for the case(s) of example regions where the environmental and socio-economic pressures are highly burdensome and/or the approaches for improvement seem rather promising and may serve as a model for other regions.</li> </ul>
Getachew Assefa (Ethiopian expert)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the African continent, resource use and extraction are linked to poverty issues (number of jobs etc.) as well as social stability and conflict prevention especially in resource rich countries (such as Angola, Sierra Leone, Congo, and Nigeria).</li> <li>• Topics for the Panel could include biofuels, waste recycling, eco-labelling, eco-design and biodiversity (Africa is a hotspot for biodiversity).</li> </ul>
Guomei Zhou	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Circular economy framework in China aims to achieve resource efficiency while decreasing environmental load. Legislation on circular economy has been launched by the National Peoples Congress with focus on resource use and extraction and application of life-cycle thinking.</li> <li>• EC-funded project titled “PRODEV” is currently being implemented in Guiyang city that aims to develop a policy package geared to implement the circular economy framework at the local level.</li> <li>• Policy analysis that spells out different options (scientific scenario</li> </ul>

Participant	Views and Comments
	analysis). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports capacity building efforts in developing countries.</li> <li>• Involvement of stakeholders, such as National of Development and Reform Commission (NDRC).</li> </ul>
Eric Robinson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Geographical balance in the Panel needed.</li> <li>• Industry representative should be included in the Panel.</li> </ul>
Valentin Bartra	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outreach and education important for next generation.</li> <li>• Need to connect with existing institutions (e.g., environmental conventions) so that the Panel fills the gaps and not duplicate already ongoing work.</li> </ul>
David Stanners / Lars Fogh Mortensen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information flow exists in multiple layers.</li> <li>• Capacity building should be a key activity (within the 30 EU country context)</li> <li>• EEA is ready and willing to support the works of the Resource Panel</li> <li>• Challenge will be working with many different levels of the issue (scientists, businesses, governments etc)</li> <li>• Systematic approach encouraged: combine national capital (tangible) with ecosystem services (intangible) when assessing environmental impacts.</li> <li>• Use of resources linked to consumption patterns (mainly household but public consumption also an issue).</li> <li>• Panel should focus on concrete short-term topics and at the same time provide an outlook for long-term.</li> </ul>
Christian Averous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic thinking is important for policy dimensions.</li> <li>• OECD's work will fit well with Resource Panel activities which can build from the kind of work OECD is doing to a global level. The Panel should aim to provide a blueprint for an international framework on relevant topics.</li> <li>• Need to include in the overall package, namely the economic aspects (pricing of natural resources and internalizing externalities etc. which can influence consumption patterns). Linked to the concept of natural resources rent etc.</li> <li>• Short-term: focus on flow of metals.</li> <li>• How to construct a viable (economically) recycling investment framework, nationally and internationally.</li> <li>• How to reduce distortion and obstacles to supply, trade and demand of materials.</li> </ul>

## **Conclusion**

The outcome of the pre-panel brainstorming session directed the work of the Panel on two levels: First, to *focus on a few issues that have immediate international policy relevance*, such as global material recycling and increased interest in biofuels, *so that once the scientific case has been made, the issues can be objectively considered by policy-makers.*

Second, to *consider presenting a global vision on alternative scenarios of resource supply and use, taking into account their socio-economic implications.* This would constitute a longer-term work of the Panel.

-----