

**FOURTH UNECE REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION MEETING ON
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

GENEVA, 1-2 December 2009

**Agenda item 9. The 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and
Production Patterns**

Intervention by the World Society for the Protection of Animals¹

Thank you Mr. Chair.

Regarding the first question about SCP objectives and themes to be considered, I'd like to argue for sustainable animal production to be on top of the list. Current trends in animal production are very unsustainable indeed. We're using already about one third of the planet's land surface for animal production and the FAO expects animal production to double in the next four decades or so. Forests are cleared to make way for grain fields to feed livestock. Manure containing nitrogen and phosphorus leads to water pollution. The heavy use of antibiotics threatens human health as does over-consumption of animal productions. Moreover, industrialization carries heavy social costs, for humans - and for animals as industrial farming is by far the biggest single cause of animal suffering. Yesterday we already talked about the chemical pollution caused by current agricultural practices. Last but not least, animal production is one of the major contributors of greenhouse gasses. In the FAO report *Livestocks Long Shadow* it was calculated that 18% of all human induced greenhouse gas emissions can be attributed to animal production. According to a recent report of the World Watch Institute this is even a staggering share of 51%.

The carrying capacity of the planet is simply not enough. Mr. Soprano already brought this issue up. But I like to stress that livestock numbers and efficiency must be addressed to ensure environmental space for humans and animals alike. This is not to saying that poor or malnourished people should be further disadvantaged. If a modest increase in consumption of animal products by the poorest people in developing countries is the best way to improve their nutrition, this should be facilitated. But then this should be offset by greater reductions in consumption by those better off and better fed.

We fully support the EU emphasis on social values, mainstreaming SCP, sustainable public procurement, cross cutting education and transparent consumer information. Concerning the latter, I'd like to draw attention to another very promising EU initiative, the Welfare Quality Project, which aims at improving animal welfare focusing on consumers, consumer information, but also on production methods. To integrate social values and environmental values, this EU initiative should be taken into account.

To conclude, a key SCP objective to be considered within the 10 year framework is for fewer animals to be reared in industrial systems and to employ sustainable, humane and economically viable farming methods, which benefit not only the animals, but people, communities, and the environment.

Dirk Verdonk, on behalf of WSPA.

¹ The text is presented as received from the author.