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Item 2 (f) of the provisional agenda

**PROVISIONAL AGENDA OF THE SIXTH MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE  
“ENVIRONMENT FOR EUROPE”**

**PARTNERSHIPS**

**SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION**

Proposed Category I document<sup>1</sup>

Submitted by Sweden as one of the lead countries in cooperation with UNEP<sup>2</sup>

**I. INTRODUCTION**

1. Promoting sustainable patterns of production and consumption is a key way to address environmental problems such as climate change, degradation of natural resources and loss of biodiversity, and environmental damage caused by emissions and waste.
2. The United Nations has several times addressed at the global level the challenge of achieving sustainable consumption and production patterns. The Johannesburg World Summit on

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<sup>1</sup> Documents for possible action by Ministers (signature, endorsement, approval, adoption, discussion) submitted through and endorsed by the WGSO (ECE/CEP/AC.11/2006/5, Section II).

<sup>2</sup> This document was submitted on the above date because of resource constraints.

Sustainable Development (WSSD) recognized that “fundamental changes in the way societies produce and consume are indispensable for achieving global sustainable development”. All governments were called upon to promote sustainable patterns of consumption and production. The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) called for the “development of a 10-year framework of programmes in support of regional and national initiatives to accelerate the shift towards sustainable consumption and production patterns that will promote social and economic development within the carrying capacity of ecosystems”. It also called for actions, including the development and implementation of necessary policies, measures and activities to promote sustainable patterns of production and consumption, in all countries by all major groups and at all levels.

2. The Kiev Declaration (paras. 27 and 28) states,

“We will encourage national efforts to promote sustainable production and consumption as well as corporate environmental and social responsibility and accountability. We underline the importance of the shift towards sustainable production and consumption patterns and encourage regions, subregions and countries, as appropriate, to devise programmes to accelerate this shift. As decided at WSSD, we will encourage and promote the development of a 10-year framework of programmes in support of this, taking them to our next conference. Countries should decide which tools will be of most use to them in these efforts.”

3. The so-called Marrakech process was initiated as an implementation of the JPOI by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) at the international level to coordinate activities in support of regional and national initiatives for the 10-year framework of programmes. Marrakech meetings identified key needs, such as:

- (a) Mainstreaming of sustainable consumption and production (SCP) by increasing awareness and obtaining political commitment at all levels;
- (b) Integration of the environmental, social and economic dimensions of sustainable development (SD) into SCP policies, and ensuring integration of SCP into national SD strategies and, where applicable, poverty reduction strategies; for this, SCP activities should be related to other major goals and programmes (including those related to health, poverty, gender and employment), the Millennium Development Goals and targets of the JPOI;
- (c) Involvement of stakeholders at all levels, with extensive promotion of partnerships including government, international organizations, development agencies, industry and civil society;
- (d) The need for governments to specify their priorities in the area of SCP;
- (e) Institutional and social infrastructure and capacity-building for development and diffusion of sustainable technologies and of financial means for implementing policies

and programmes; mainstreaming of niche markets should be used to spread innovations; development of infrastructure is essential; and

- (f) Information dissemination and effective use of practical tools, including awareness-raising, education, training, media and advertising.

5. The Governments of Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom are leading thematic task forces in the 10-year framework of programmes for SCP. Other countries of the region, including the United States of America, are highly supportive of and active in these initiatives. The Marrakech process is open-ended, inviting all countries worldwide (including countries of South-Eastern Europe (SEE) and Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA)) to be active and take the role of lead country, as appropriate.

6. The issue of sustainable consumption and production is now firmly established on the global policy agenda, although consultations at the pan-European level have not yet taken place. Programmes are being developed and activities are planned or ongoing in many parts of the region.

7. The European Union has already integrated SCP as one of the seven key challenges in its renewed EU Sustainable Development Strategy, adopted in June 2006. The European Commission is preparing a SCP Action Plan to be presented in 2007. Fact-finding exercises and analyses of consumption and production patterns and their effects on the environment have been carried out in some Western European countries and in new EU member States, including the Baltic countries, the Czech Republic and Hungary, addressing different topics and with different geographical scopes (some local and some national). Various countries in Europe (the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Hungary, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom) are undertaking nation-wide initiatives to promote SCP and have developed or are developing national strategies and action plans for SCP. Subregional initiatives for promoting SCP have also been undertaken (e.g. by the Nordic Council of Ministers). In SEE and EECCA, initial kick-off events to increase awareness of SCP have been organized in SEE and the Russian Federation by governments and UNEP, in collaboration with cleaner production centres, NGOs and industry associations. International cooperation could be a driver in the development of SCP programmes and activities. In the United States, Executive Order 13423 will strengthen federal environmental, energy and transport management by setting aggressive goals for the federal community. The improved efficiency and effectiveness of governments' resource use is expected to prompt the market to make environmentally sound products more affordable and available to the general public.

8. To provide an overview of rapidly changing consumption and production patterns and trends, along with information on ongoing initiatives and good practices, and to highlight current gaps and potential areas for future action, UNEP and the European Environment Agency, in collaboration with national and local authorities, industry, NGOs and researchers, have prepared a report on SCP in SEE and EECCA countries as a Category II document for the Belgrade Conference.

9. Although some of the challenges faced vary from country to country in SEE and EECCA, there are also commonalities in areas such as increasing road traffic, old heating systems, increasing waste production and old stores of pesticides. Development of more sustainable mobility systems, actions and strategies for energy efficiency, opportunities to reduce and recycle waste, and

measures for more sustainable agriculture are examples of areas where countries could benefit from regional and subregional cooperation and diffusion of good practices and of partnerships. Urbanization, including transport systems and renewal of production systems and housing, represents special challenges.

10. Governments have significant purchasing power, which means that procurement policies have economic, social and environmental impacts. Incoherence of policies and adverse incentives as well as a lack of practical information and training are identified as obstacles for achieving SCP. Such examples are proliferating throughout the region. Sharing of best practice among countries, joint expert meetings and participation in the Marrakech process task force led by Switzerland on sustainable public procurement are important in this respect.

11. To fulfil the Johannesburg commitments and respond to the needs of countries, technology transfer, capacity-building, information sharing and awareness-raising are needed and could be developed within coherent policy frameworks for SCP at the national, regional and global levels.

## **II. RECOMMENDATIONS**

12. The ministers may wish to subscribe to the following recommendations and commit themselves to ensuring and supporting their follow-up:

13. ***Development of strategies and/or action plans at the national level where such strategies or plans do not already exist.*** Making consumption and production patterns more sustainable requires country-specific plans and policies, with regional activities providing for experience and information sharing. Such strategies or action plans should be integrated into or complementary to national strategies for SD. These policies should stimulate SCP and innovations by using long-term objectives. Policies and plans could promote resource efficiency and management of material flows, and could facilitate life-cycle analyses, consumer information (including eco-labelling) and corporate social and environmental responsibility. The policies could include financial incentives and encourage increased product information at every stage of the production and marketing process in order to promote SCP, including the best possible management of waste. Integration of SCP concepts into sectoral policies is an important component. Also, the development of general and sectoral indicators and targets, including evaluation processes, could be useful.

14. The development of such strategies and plans should be carried out based on a multi-stakeholder approach. A crucial step in tackling SCP issues is to identify the key agents from the various levels of government and from civil society stakeholder groups, such as local authorities, businesses, trade unions, academia, consumer associations and environmental, youth and other NGOs, and to create opportunities for dialogue and facilitate the establishment of partnerships, with the objectives of identifying needs and deciding priorities for action to promote SCP in a particular context. Aspects of SCP should be incorporated into national poverty reduction strategies and other national development plans as well as into development cooperation strategies and projects.

**15. Capacity-building/training and demonstration projects at the national and local levels in SEE and EECCA countries.** There is a need for up-to-date information and know-how on SCP on the one hand and for promotion of SCP goals applied locally on the other that could be met through capacity-building targeted at government officials, including local administrations, industry and civil society. Life-cycle-oriented thinking is crucial and should be promoted. Since municipalities struggle with SCP challenges on a daily basis and play an important role in providing a basis for sustainable lifestyles, the capacity-building target group should also include officials from local authorities. The business sector should be a major focus of capacity-building and technology transfer, including diffusion of best practices and technologies, which could be facilitated by various partners, including cleaner production centres. It is important to raise awareness through civil society regarding consumption patterns and increasing possibilities for sustainable solutions. Technical assistance and financial support are needed for such activities. NGOs and local communities could be actively involved in this work.

**16. Sharing of practical information, knowledge and experiences.** Many innovative approaches and practices are being used in many parts of the pan-European region. Sharing information, tools and success stories and learning from one another are crucial for enhancing capacity and diffusing technology and best practices through discussions among experts and the use of new and existing Web-based systems such as the UNEP/OECD/CEI/Austria “EST Goes EAST” clearing house,<sup>3</sup> the European Union’s EMUDE<sup>4</sup> and the US sustainable development partnership site.<sup>5</sup>

**17. Linking of SCP and education for sustainable development.** Education and culture shift are paramount for achieving SCP. A stronger link should be facilitated in SEE and EECCA countries between education for sustainable development and education and awareness-raising regarding sustainable consumption, in formal, non-formal and informal educational settings. Information campaigns and initiatives targeted at a broader public should be part of this effort.

**18. Development and establishment of a pan-European collaborative framework and subregional frameworks to support and facilitate the implementation of the recommendations for national action and information sharing.** This framework could be part of the Marrakech process and include:

- (a) Organizing SCP consultations in all parts of the region to raise awareness and identify priorities;
- (b) Building strategies and mechanisms for implementation;
- (c) Implementing projects and partnerships;
- (d) Developing general and sectoral indicators and targets; and
- (e) Monitoring and evaluation.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://esteaest.unep.ch>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.sustainable-everyday.net/EMUDE/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.sdp.gov>