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SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

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PARTNERSHIPS

**PARTNERSHIPS TO SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY**

SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Promoting sustainable patterns of consumption and production is one of the major ways 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 challenge of achieving sustainable consumption and production patterns has been addressed several times at the global level by the United Nations. The Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) recognised 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 developing and implementing necessary policies, measures and activities aimed at promoting sustainable patterns of production and consumption, in all countries by all major groups and at all levels.

3. The Kiev Declaration (Para 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, sub-regions 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.”

4. The so-called Marrakech process was initiated as an implementation of JPOI by UNEP and 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, for example:

- (a) mainstreaming Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP), by raising 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 in national Sustainable Development strategies and, where applicable, in poverty reduction strategies as well as national economic development plans. For this, SCP activities should be related to other major goals and programmes (including health, poverty, gender and employment), Millennium Development Goals and targets of the JPOI;
- (c) involvement of stakeholders at all levels; promotion of partnerships including government, international organisations, development agencies, industry and civil society should be used extensively;
- (d) 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 innovation: development of infrastructure is essential.
- (f) information dissemination and effective use of practical tools, including awareness-raising, education, training, media and advertising

5. The governments of Finland, France, Italy, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, and UK are leading thematic task forces within 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, to be active and take the role of lead country (including SEE and EECCA countries).

6. Sustainable consumption and production has become an issue, now, firmly on the global policy agenda although consultations at the pan-European level have not yet taken place. However programmes are developed and activities are planned or on-going in many parts of the region.
7. The European Union already integrated SCP as one of the 7 key challenges in its renewed EU Sustainable Development Strategy adopted in June 2006. The European Commission is now 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 new EU member states including Baltic countries, Czech Republic, Hungary addressing different topics and with different geographical scopes (some locally and some nationally). Several countries in Europe are undertaking nation-wide initiatives to promote SCP and have or are developing national strategies and action plans for SCP (Czech Republic, Finland, Hungary, the UK, Sweden, Norway, France). Sub-regional initiatives for promoting Sustainable Consumption and Production have also been undertaken, one example being Nordic Council of Ministers. In East Europe (SEE) and Eastern Europe, Caucasus, Central Asia (EECCA), initial kick-off events for awareness raising for SCP were organised by governments and UNEP, in collaboration with Cleaner Production centres, NGOs, and industry associations, in South East Europe and the Russian Federation. International cooperation could be a driver in the development of SCP programmes and activities. In the USA, Executive Order (E.O 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 catalyse the market to make environmentally sound products more affordable and available to the general public.
8. In order to provide an overall picture of rapidly changing consumption and production patterns and trends, information on on-going initiatives and good practices, and to highlight the gaps and potentials for the future UNEP and EEA, in collaboration with national and local authorities, industry, NGOs, and researchers have prepared a report on Sustainable Consumption and Production in SEE and EECCA countries as a Category II document for the Belgrade conference.
9. Although the situation varies from country to country in SEE and EECCA in terms of some of the challenges they face, there are also commonalities as regards e.g. increase in road traffic, old heating systems, increase of 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 a more sustainable agriculture are examples of issues where countries could benefit from regional and sub-regional cooperation and diffusion of good practises and of partnerships. Urbanisation including transport systems and renewal of productions systems and of housing represents special challenges.
10. Governments have a big purchasing power which means that procurement policies have economic, social and environmental impacts. Incoherence of policies and adverse incentives as well as lack of practical information and training are identified as obstacles for SCP. Such examples are spreading over 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 is 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 is needed and could be developed in coherent policy frameworks for SCP at national, regional and global levels,

II. RECOMMENDATIONS

12. The Ministers may wish to subscribe to the following recommendations and commit themselves to ensure and support their follow up:

13. Developing strategies and/or action plans at the national level if 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 sustainable development. 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 facilitate life-cycle analyses, consumer information including eco-labelling and Corporate Social and Environmental Responsibility. The policies could include financial incentives and encourage an increase in product information, at every stage of the production and marketing process in order to promote sustainable production and consumption including 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 to tackle 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, environmental, youth and other NGOs and to create opportunities for dialogue and facilitate the establishment of partnerships, with the objective of identifying needs and deciding priorities for action to promote SCP in a particular context. SCP aspects should be incorporated into national poverty reduction strategies and other national development plans as well as in development cooperation strategies and projects.

15. Capacity Building/Training and Demonstration projects at 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 promotion of SCP goals applied locally on the other that could be met through capacity-building targeted at government officials, from local authorities, industry, and civil society. Life cycle thinking is crucial and should be promoted. Since municipalities struggle with SCP challenges on a daily basis and play an important role to provide bases for sustainable life styles, the capacity-building target group should also include officials from local authorities.

16. Encouraging the private sector to take action. The business sector has an important role in establishing sustainable production methods and products. Corporate social responsibility should be encouraged. The business sector should be the important 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. Awareness raising through the civil society regarding consumption patterns and increasing possibilities for sustainable solutions is important. Technical

assistance and financial support for such activities are required. NGOs and local communities could be actively involved in this work. Consumer groups are important players as well.

17. Sharing practical information, knowledge and experiences. There are many innovative approaches and practices undertaken in many parts of the pan-European region. Sharing information, tools, success stories and learning from each other is crucial in order to enhance capacity and diffuse technology and best practices through experts discussions and use of new and existing web-based systems, for example UNEP/OECD/CEI/Austria 'EST goes EAST clearing house'¹, the EU's EMUDE², and the US sustainable development partnership site³.

18. 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 sustainable consumption education and awareness raising both in formal, non-formal and informal education. Information campaigns and initiatives targeted at a larger public should be part of this effort.

19. Development and establishment of a Pan-European collaborative framework and sub-regional 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 oversee:

- (a) organising SCP consultations in all parts of the region to raise awareness and identify priorities;
- (b) building strategies and mechanisms for implementation;
- (c) implementation of projects and partnerships;
- (d) developing general and sectoral indicators and targets; and
- (e) monitoring and evaluation.

¹ <<http://esteast.unep.ch>>.

² <<http://www.sustainable-everyday.net/EMUDE/>>.

³ <<http://www.sdp.gov>>.