

Green economy – not only technological fix

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Thank you chairman,

Good morning ladies and gentleman,

Green economy has become an important discussion point in different international and national multistakeholder fora. However there is no single agreed definition of green economy. Some speak about green growth and green economy on top of the brown economy, others talk about the need for the green economy to replace existing brown economic sectors or degrowth as the only way out of the existing multiple crises.

Some groups are working on supply side management – trying to make industries more ecoefficient; others focus on demand side – changing lifestyles and livelihoods of people.

We endorse governmental initiative to support green economy in the UN ECE region. We fully agree that we have to apply effective combinations of policy instruments to promote resource efficiency and life cycle approach, to build markets for sustainable products and services, to create green jobs, to promote green investment, to transfer environmentally sound technologies to various economic sectors and to support research, innovations, education and training to secure the achievements of a green economy.

However we believe that this will not automatically:

- lead to a **fair distribution of resources**, which is the base for an economic security and prosperity for all;
- change public **values, norms and behavior** patterns to ensure living within the **carrying capacity** of the Earth, and
- eradicate poverty and improve quality of life.

Green economy is not only about green jobs, green investment and green production in addition to the traditional brown economy. It should also be about eradication of existing destructive economic activities both in the demand and supply side (consumption and production) and fair distribution of resources.

Green economy has to recognize **social and biophysical limits** to economic growth. In the finite world there cannot be infinite growth of resource exploitation and pollution. It is still a fact that current lifestyles depend on **overuse of natural resources**. So even if the production becomes more eco-efficient, increasing global population and consumption leads to total increase in resource depletion. Therefore we have to reduce natural resource use not only in relative terms, but in **absolute amounts**. Scale effect should be integral part of the green economy, which has to define clear limits of natural capital.

For a green and fair economy we have to face this reality. Focusing on technological solutions and resource efficiency, will not be enough. We need to stimulate **societal change**, where material wealth is not seen as the only criteria of prosperity. We need to encourage values and norms for a sustainable way of living. These activities should be supported by integrating the ‘**sufficiency**’ concept into educational systems, credible eco-labelling schemes and awareness raising.

We need to establish a new set of measures, indices and indicators of progress beyond the current focus on increasing production, consumption and exports. Nature should be recognized as the foundation of our life and the precondition of **long-term wellbeing** of our societies, and not – as currently perceived – an unlimited resource for economic growth. **Development of human capital** should become the basis for our economic progress, moving away from natural capital extraction.

Policies on green economy should address the overarching objective of changing consumption and production patterns – highlighted at WSSD. Current government initiatives mostly focus only on one part of this objective – improving efficiency, while neglecting steps towards sufficiency. So we see here clear ‘**policy gap**’ when we talk about green economy. As current approach will not bring us to sustainable development if we don’t address both production and consumption patterns.

The UNECE region needs a policy framework and institutional mechanisms to define and implement green economy, involving not just governments but civil society and other stakeholders. We have to set up expert group to develop **regional framework and roadmap on sustainable production, consumption and the green economy** to develop plans and mobilize multi-stakeholder partnerships over the next decade. Such a 10-year framework could in turn implement the 2002 WSSD mandate to develop a 10 Year Framework of Programs. Also, the UN ECE region should play a leading role on the Green Economy towards RIO+20 and beyond, developing and implementing ambitious regional and national roadmaps on the green economy.

Thank you very much for your attention.