Sixth Meeting of the UNECE Steering Committee on ESD
Geneva, Palais de Nations
7-8 April 2011

Agenda item 6:
Panel discussion: taking stock and looking forward – ESD in the context of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

THE ROLE OF ESD IN SHIFTING TO A GREEN ECONOMY

Paolo Soprano
Director of Division for Sustainable Development
Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea of Italy
**United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/64/236**

- Decided to convene a United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012 (Rio de Janeiro, 4-6 June 2012);

- Conference at the highest possible level, including Heads of State and Government or other representatives;

- Two major themes: 1) A green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication (GESDPE); 2) Institutional framework for sustainable development (IFSD);

- The objectives are to secure renewed political commitment for sustainable development, assess the progress to date and the remaining gaps in the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits on sustainable development, and address new and emerging challenges.
United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/64/236

• Three preparatory meetings, one in May 2010 the second one in March 2011 and the third one immediately prior to the Conference itself;

• Three intersessional meetings will take place: one in January 2011, the second one in the second half of 2011 and the third one not later than eight weeks prior to the Conference;

• Member States elected at the First Preparatory Committee meeting in May 2010 a 10-member Bureau (2 representatives from each region) and Brazil as ex-officio member to steer the preparatory process;

• The Conference Secretary-General in his functions is supported by two Executive Coordinators and a team of special advisors.
Towards a ‘Green Economy’

Current global economic, environmental and social challenges are contributing to the growing sense that a different economic model is needed: sustainable investment, ‘green growth’ and ‘green jobs’.

Priority areas:

1. Investment in low-carbon energy, sustainable transport and infrastructures;

2. OECD/G20 recovery packages and green investment;

3. Fiscal and financial/corporate reforms based Rio principle 8, principle 15, principle 16 (e.g. financial/banking regulations, ‘socially useful’ finance, green markets; new business models/CSR);

4. Intergovernmental strategies (Rio+20), global studies and guidance on Green Economy (OECD, UNEP, UNDP, ILO, EC);

5. NGO/think-tank visions and wellbeing measures.
A Ten Year Framework of Programmes (10YFP) on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP)

Since 2003, the Marrakech Process has catalyzed most initiatives on SCP: thematic task forces, regional and national roundtables, pilot projects etc.

In 2011, at CSD 19, MS are called to adopt a 10YFP on SCP

At present: tinkering is not enough:

- ‘Relative decoupling’ shows no signs of becoming ‘absolute decoupling’;

- Developed economies are not reducing consumption;

- Global economy is be locked into a model of ever increasing energy and resource-intensive production and consumption (GDP versus other indicators of development);
**SCP and GESDPE: commonalities and differences**

• ‘Sustainable consumption’ debate has been very **Northern-focused** as for GESDPE. Both need to strengthen a **global ownership**;

• The focus on **SCP is perceived** as a **potential harm to producers** especially in developing countries and a risk for the **imposition of trade barriers**;

• Both SCP and GESDPE are **global issues** that go to the heart of **economic and social arrangements** of countries and their **interdependencies**;

• Both need **international mechanisms to manage the process** and avoid a ‘grab’ for resources. SCP, through discussions on a 10YFP at CSD19 is aiming for a global mechanism. GESDPE is in the hands of Rio+20.
SCP and GESDPE: commonalities and differences

• In both processes people need to participate fully in decision-making, locally, nationally and internationally through an increased ability to make informed choices, greater knowledge and awareness (role of ESD).

• In both processes the invisible hand of the market is not enough; it needs the guiding hand of society (Adam Smith);

• Change towards SCP definitely requires a shift to a ‘green economy’ model:

1. Economic resilience

2. Biosphere protection

3. Equity and social justice

4. ... and accountability for 1-3 above (Green Economy Coalition)
Main linkages between GESDPE and ESD

• Jevons paradox or rebound effect

• **Sustainable thinking**: reorientation of values and attitudes as a potential to unlock wide behavioral change in society;

• Role of education: provides knowledge, skills and ability to make informed choices, empowering individuals as key actors for change;

• **ESD strengthens a sense of ownership** of the process for all those who have to contribute to it: citizens, decision makers at all levels, civil society;

• **ESD: formal, non-formal and informal learning processes** in a life long perspective as a key driver for change at national, regional and international level.
Relevant international policy processes to promote ESD and its importance for greening the economy

- **Sixth Meeting of the UNECE Steering Committee on ESD, Geneva 6-7 April 2011** – has been introduced in the official calendar of event of the UNCSD process


- **Special session of the Regional Implementation Meeting (RIM), Geneva 1-2 December 2011, shifted into Rio+20 Regional Preparatory Meeting**

- **Intersessional Meetings of UNCSD 2012**

- **3rd PrepCom Meeting of UNCSD, Rio de Janeiro, May 2012**
Thank you for your attention!

Paolo Soprano
Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea of Italy
Director of Division for Sustainable Development:
soprano.paolo@minambiente.it