

Build on the Positive Trends - next steps in the global effort for sustainable production and consumption

Discussion paper from the Danish 92 Group¹

92 Group

Danish Environmental Protection Agency

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¹ Danish 92 Group – Danish Forum for Sustainable Development is a network of 19 Danish environment and development organisations who work together on, among other issues, the follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, 2002. Information about the Danish 92 Group is available at www.92grp.dk.

This discussion paper focus on the effort for the next few years. Thus, it is not a position paper with an exhaustive description of means and ends for the long-term protection of the environment.

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Summary

At the UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, 1992, the nations of the world pointed to an unsustainable pattern of consumption and production, especially in industrialised countries, as the major cause of global environmental problems. In Rio, it was decided that the effort in favour of sustainable production and consumption should be advanced in particular by developing national policies and strategies in the industrialised countries.

Rich-country governments have attempted to live up to this decision to varying degrees, though a series of concrete initiatives have been taken in all countries. And thanks to significant contributions from governmental as well as non-governmental actors- significant results have been achieved throughout the past decade.

- The political consumer has manifested himself as a force to be reckoned with.
- Private firms have become partners.
- Investors have begun to take on responsibility for promoting sustainable development.

Nevertheless, there is still a long way to go before the transition has been accomplished. Despite encouraging results in various fields, the increase in production and consumption has, in the aggregate, stepped up the pressure on the environment.

Against this background, at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg 2002 the world's nations decided to accelerate the shift towards sustainable production and consumption, and to involve all countries, relevant international institutions, the private sector and other actors in this endeavour. The summiteers resolved to focus more on international cooperation, for instance by drawing up a ten-year framework for programmes addressing this area.

The UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) should, as soon as possible, lay down the overall objectives for the next ten years of work. The ambition ought to be to accomplish the following goals, which obviously need to be fleshed out as part of the work ahead to establish the ten-year framework.

- The world should be on a course towards meeting, or meeting in excess, the relevant development goals of the Millennium Declaration.
- The rich countries should be able to present an array of examples of sectors in which it has been possible, over some years, not just to maintain the decoupling of environmental degradation and economic growth, but also to reduce markedly the stress on the environment.
- An effective system should be in place to ensure the transfer of environmental technologies from industrialised to developing countries.

- It should be standard practice to build decisions upon a holistic assessment of the effects, whenever choosing the means to an end. Environmental outcomes must be seen from a life-cycle perspective, and social impacts from a global perspective, i.e. the outlook cannot be confined to the national sphere.
- A binding set of global rules for the social responsibilities of corporations must be developed and implemented, including provisions for damage liability.
- An effective system should be in place to prevent extensive environmental problems from arising with the launch of new products or methods of production.

All countries and a series of international organisations, such as the EU, OECD, UNEP, UNESCO, World Bank and WTO, alongside other actors, should set out immediately to develop detailed programmes for their contributions. Thereafter, the CSD should lay down the objectives for the endeavour in the medium term.

However, it is important -in the here and now- to build upon the momentum created through the work of the past ten years. International organisations can and should accelerate the shift towards sustainable consumption and production.

This paper presents 13 proposals for initiatives, which can be implemented in a short term. The initiatives are divided into three categories. The green box consists of proposals aimed at promoting particular types of consumption. The proposals in the amber box set out to convert production and consumption from less to more sustainable. While those in the red box seek to phase out certain types of production and consumption altogether.

The proposals in the green box are:

1. Reassessment of privatisation in the water sector (World Bank and others)
2. Flexible rules for developing countries to enable the promotion of self-sufficiency in food (WTO)
3. Realisation of the EU's partnership initiatives on water and energy through additional funding (EU)

The proposals in the amber box are:

4. World commissions on the production of raw materials (UNEP and World Bank)
5. Sector-specific objectives for sustainable production and consumption (OECD)
6. Experiments with international environmental taxes – tax on aviation fuel (OECD)
7. Stronger implementation of guidelines for multinational companies (OECD)
8. Development of technology-transfer programmes (EU, WTO)
9. Global initiative for training of product designers (UNESCO)
10. Impact assessment of future technologies (OECD and UNEP)

The proposals in the red box are:

11. Global information system on nationally-banned goods (UNEP, WTO)
12. Global effort against illegal logging (EU and others)
13. International hearings on harmful products or technologies (CSD)

1 From Rio to Johannesburg

The decisions on sustainable production and consumption at the World Summit in Johannesburg 2002 must be seen in the light of experiences gained since the UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro 1992.

In Rio, the nations of the world resolved to give priority to the effort for sustainable production and consumption.ⁱ An unsustainable pattern of production and consumption was identified as the major cause of global environmental problems:

”While poverty results in certain kinds of environmental stress, the major cause of the continued deterioration of the global environment is the unsustainable pattern of consumption and production , particularly in industrialized countries, which is a matter of grave concern, aggravating poverty and imbalances.”ⁱⁱ

In Rio, it was decided that the effort in favour of sustainable production and consumption should be advanced in particular by developing national policies and strategies in the industrialised countries.ⁱⁱⁱ

Rich-country governments have attempted to live up to this decision to varying degrees, though a series of concrete initiatives have been taken in all countries. And thanks to significant contributions from governmental as well as non-governmental actors- significant results have been achieved throughout the past decade.

- The political consumer has manifested himself as a force to be reckoned with. Many consumers are willing to take account of environmental concerns in their shopping, and in a number of specific cases, consumers have reacted jointly in order to promote more sustainable patterns of production.
- Private firms have become partners. Whereas the business community used to express itself mostly as an opponent of environmental regulations, many companies have begun to work seriously on reducing their own stress on the environment, just as a great deal of firms have made a determined bid to develop new products and services that are less harmful to the environment than those marketed before.
- Investors have begun to take on responsibility. In recent years, some major investors have been addressing the long-term need to promote sustainable development in connection with the allocation of their investments.

Nevertheless, there is still a long way to go before the transition to sustainable patterns of production and consumption has been accomplished, in view of the following points:

Only a few industrialised countries have drawn up detailed strategies for the effort in favour of sustainable production and consumption.

- Only a small minority of consumers, including public and private buyers, frequently take environmental considerations on the occasion of their purchases or in the use and disposal of products.
- Only a small minority of companies have a long-term plan for their contribution to the environment.
- Only a fraction of investors let sustainable development enter substantially into the equation.

Nor is research and development, whether private or public, particularly geared towards devising less environmentally harmful products. More generally, the result of the effort can be characterised as summed up by the ministers of industrialised countries in the UNECE region in 2001:

"The movement towards less resource intensive and polluting industries, a growth in service sectors, and progress in eco-efficiency and cleaner production processes has resulted in less pollution and waste per unit of product produced and consumed in developed countries. However, in the region, total increases in production and consumption and growing road and air transport have resulted in increased environmental impacts and continued pressures on natural resources and eco-systems."^{iv}

The recognition that initiatives have so far been insufficient is also reflected in the resolutions on sustainable production and consumption at the World Summit in Johannesburg. As the Plan of Implementation has it:

"Fundamental changes in the way societies produce and consume are indispensable for achieving sustainable development".^v

Governments at the summit agreed that all countries, the relevant international institutions, the private sector and other actors should play an active role in changing the patterns of production and consumption.^{vi}

However, in contrast to Rio, the summiters in Johannesburg set significant store by the international effort in this field. It was thus decided to develop a ten-year framework for programmes in support of regional and national initiatives aimed at accelerating the shift towards sustainable production and consumption.^{vii}

Below is an outline of general ideas on what should be the overall objectives for the next ten years of work at the global level, and on the appropriate institutional set-up. Moreover, the paper singles out a number of specific initiatives, which the international community ought to take in the short term in order to build upon the experiences and the momentum created over the past ten years.

The suggested initiatives are divided into three categories. The green box consists of proposals aimed at promoting particular types of consumption. The proposals in the amber box set out to convert production and consumption from less to more sustainable. While those in the red box seek to phase out certain types of production and consumption altogether.

2 Ambitions for the next ten years of work

The World Summit in Johannesburg produced a commitment to stepping up efforts in favour of sustainable production and consumption over the coming ten years. If this is to bear fruit, there is a need for a vision of how far the world community should advance in the course of such a period.

Unfortunately, it has to be acknowledged that completing the shift to sustainable production and consumption is unrealistic within ten years. For example, the international community has limited its ambition to halving the proportion of poor people by 2015. This goal can and must be attained, but it is nevertheless likely that hundreds of millions of people will remain extremely poor in 2015. Their consumption will not be sustainable, simply because it will be insufficient.

The rich countries are also facing a major challenge in reconverting their societies. In the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the countries of the world adhere to the goal of avoiding dangerous man-made climate change.^{viii} If this is to be fulfilled, drastic reductions in the rich countries' emissions of greenhouse gases will be required. And yet the Kyoto Protocol's target is confined to cutting back emissions by approximately 5% in about 10 years.^x

Although the global transition to sustainable production and consumption is a challenge of unparalleled proportions, much progress can be made if the nations of the world live up to their commitment from Johannesburg to cooperate. It is thus feasible to reach the following goals, which obviously need to be fleshed out as part of the work ahead to establish the ten-year framework.

- The world should be on a course towards meeting, or meeting in excess, the relevant development goals of the Millennium Declaration (see section 4 below).
- The rich countries should be able to present an array of examples of sectors in which it has been possible, over some years, not just to maintain the decoupling of environmental degradation and economic growth, but also to reduce markedly the stress on the environment.
- An effective system should be in place to ensure the transfer of environmental technologies from industrialised to developing countries.
- It should be standard practice to build decisions upon a holistic assessment of the effects, whenever choosing the means to an end. Environmental outcomes must be seen from a life-cycle perspective, and social impacts from a global perspective, i.e. the outlook cannot be confined to the national sphere.

- A binding set of global rules for the social responsibilities of corporations must be developed and implemented, including provisions for damage liability.
- An effective system should be in place to prevent extensive environmental problems from arising with the launch of new products or methods of production.

3 Framework for programmes

In Johannesburg, it was discussed whether to develop one global programme for sustainable production and consumption. This was rejected. Instead, a more flexible decision was reached. The trick will be to prevent this flexibility from becoming a pretext to shirk responsibilities, using it instead to create space for dynamism and creativity.

The decision in Johannesburg implies, firstly, that a new framework for programmes should be drawn up, secondly, that all countries and international institutions should play an active role. In order to move forward, it is necessary to clarify under whose auspices and in what manner the framework is to be developed.

The UN Commission on Sustainable Development is the body responsible for the overall follow-up to the World Summit, and in this capacity it is the most logical institution in which to place responsibility for developing the framework.

However, the CSD has discussed sustainable production and consumption before. A series of decisions have also been taken, of which very few can be said to have had major practical implications. In other words, there appears to be a need for a fresh approach.

The route to such an approach lies in taking advantage of the flexibility of decisions from Johannesburg. The CSD should thus, as soon as possible, lay down the overall objectives for the next ten years of work on sustainable production and consumption. At the same time, it should be decided that a series of specified international organisations have to develop, by a clearly defined deadline, a particular programme for their own contribution towards achieving sustainable production and consumption, just as they ought to launch activities able to make a notable difference in the short term too. The countries of the world should draw up national programmes for sustainable production and consumption within the same time-frame.

Once the countries and international organisations have conceived their programmes, the CSD should discuss sustainable production and consumption again, among other reason to develop medium-term objectives for the effort and in order to table proposals for stronger cooperation between the various actors.

The EU has a special role to play in this enterprise. Together the EU member states make up the territory with the second-largest production and consumption in the world. The EU is also the world's greatest trading power, and the top donor of development assistance. In other words, the EU's decisions on how to accelerate the shift towards sustainable production and consumption have major global implications. This carries with it an obligation. The EU has to take the lead.

4 Initiatives in the green box: consumption to be promoted

Today, 800 million people are undernourished. There are 1.1 billion people without safe drinking water. More than 2 billion do not have access to modern power supply. And hundreds of millions live in urban slums in developing countries.^x

There are thus vast unmet needs for food, water, energy and housing. A shift to sustainable patterns of production and consumption demand that these basic needs be satisfied. In other words, particular types of consumption should be promoted.

The world community's long-term effort in this area is especially about accomplishing the goals of the Millennium Declaration, for instance the target for 2015 of reducing by half the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day, reducing by half the proportion of people suffering from hunger, and reducing by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water.

However, it seems only natural that a host of international organisations, as an integral part of their work, take various initiatives contributing towards short-term increases in poor people's consumption of water, food, energy, etc. Here are three proposals.

Proposal 1: Reassessment of privatisation in the water sector (World Bank and others)

Over the past decade, the World Bank and other donors of development assistance have advised and supported privatisation within the water sector in a number of developing countries and former Eastern Bloc countries. The privatisation has been based on a fundamental assumption that private investors would ensure a more efficient water supply.

However, various side effects of privatisation have shown up in some cases, including sharp price rises, making it harder to get access to safe drinking water. This raises doubts over whether privatisation really contributes to sustainable development, which is why the World Bank, ideally in cooperation with other donors, should carry out a reassessment of its policy in this field. Representatives of poor people in developing countries should be directly involved in such work.

Proposal 2: Flexible rules for developing countries to enable the promotion of self-sufficiency in food (WTO)

The vast subsidies for agriculture in rich countries have massively distorted the world market for food and agricultural produce. Prices are pushed to the bottom to the detriment of farmers in developing countries. The sale of rich countries' surplus production with direct export subsidies results in even more unfair competition for many developing countries.

Artificially low prices of foreign food undermine the possibilities of developing countries to build their own food security, and to develop their own potential for food production. Their chances of feeding themselves and their growing population deteriorate.

Many developing countries have today opened their markets to foreign agricultural produce far more than rich countries. This has happened as part of reform programmes and conditions attached to loans from the IMF and World Bank.

Developing countries are also, to some degree, bound by their commitments under the WTO. The extent of the developing countries' obligations is subject to negotiations in the ongoing WTO round on trade liberalisation.

In these negotiations, the introduction a so-called 'food-security box' in the WTO's agreement on agriculture should be swiftly agreed, giving developing countries the option of protecting and supporting vulnerable food markets.

Proposal 3: Realisation of the EU's partnership initiatives on water and energy through additional funding (EU)

In Johannesburg, the EU launched partnership initiatives aimed at expanding access to water and energy in the world.

The partnership on water targets Africa and the former Eastern Bloc. The initiative is meant to contribute to reaching the goals of the Millennium Declaration on safe drinking water, and those of the Johannesburg Summit on access to sanitation.

The partnership on energy seeks to contribute towards providing poor people in developing countries with modern sources of energy, and thereby help to halve the proportion of poor people in the world. Both initiatives may thus potentially contribute to sustainable consumption in the world. However, it is crucial to ensure permanent and substantial financing of these initiatives. Moreover, the funding must be additional, i.e. not merely charged to the budgets already allocated to promoting sustainable development.

Furthermore, a coherent relationship should be established between the EU's partnership initiative and the club of countries who committed themselves in Johannesburg to quantitative targets for the expansion of renewable sources of energy. The funds of the EU's energy initiative should be spent with a clear intention to contribute to meeting these quantitative targets.

5 Initiatives in the amber box: shift in production and consumption

So far, an important element in national and international efforts towards sustainable production and consumption has been the use of political instruments aimed chiefly at shifting production and consumption from more to less environmentally harmful products, rather than promoting or halting particular types of consumption.

The need for massive work in this area will continue into the future, although it is generally important to focus not solely on the products' environmental damage, but also on other consequences for sustainable development, not least if the products improve or worsen the living conditions of poor people.

Proposal 4: World commissions on the production of raw materials (UNEP and World Bank)

Developing countries are still, to a great extent, fulfilling the role as suppliers of raw materials for rich countries. In recent years, increasing attention has been paid to the side effects of commodity extraction. Mining, oil-drilling and logging are examples of activities that frequently cause damage to the environment and communities in developing countries.

In 2000, the World Commission on Dams (WCD) published a reassessment of the global expansion of hydroelectric power.^{xi} The commission, composed of a group of experts and stakeholders, estimated the positive and negative effects, issuing recommendations on precautions to be taken on the occasion of future dam-building. One of the parties behind the initiative was the World Bank, which also contributed financially to its work.

The same model should be pursued to set up world commissions tasked with assessing the production of raw materials in developing countries. It will probably be most appropriate to let the UNEP and the World Bank organise the commissions together. UNEP could follow up on the commissions' work by developing sector-specific guidelines for environmental protection, which could serve as inspiration for commodity producers as well as environmental authorities in developing countries.

Proposal 5: Sector-specific objectives for sustainable production and consumption (OECD)

As mentioned, one ambition of the ten-year framework for programmes of sustainable production and consumption should be that rich countries can present an array of examples of sectors in which it has been possible, over some years, not just to maintain the decoupling of environmental degradation and economic growth, but also to reduce markedly the stress on the environment.

If this is to be achieved, cooperation must be started very swiftly to bring about measurable changes at the sector level in rich countries. Such a joint

enterprise would be a natural extension of the OECD's effort towards sustainable development.

Establishing international cooperation on the selection of sectors, objectives, policy tools, etc. brings with it practical benefits for authorities as well as businesses. For firms about to invest in producing less environmentally harmful products, international cooperation has the advantage of preserving their competitiveness, since the producers of other countries will have to incur the same expense. For those firms that deliver environmental goods and services, an international effort has the benefit of expanding the potential market for their products.

In connection with the selection of sectors, definition of objectives, etc., it is important to assess and take account of consequences for the environment and development in developing countries. In this regard, it should be estimated if the measures give rise to special needs for transferring environmental technology to developing countries.

Among the essential tools are clear recommendations to public purchasers and other consumers. Such recommendations may also serve to involve local authorities meaningfully in the effort for sustainable production and consumption.

Proposal 6: Experiments with international environmental taxes – tax on aviation fuel (OECD)

The polluter-pays principle has long been recognised as a desirable goal of international environmental policy-making. Nevertheless, the world community has scant experience of international levies on environmentally harmful activities. Moreover, no agreement has been reached on phasing out subsidies to environmentally harmful production and consumption.

Aviation fuel is among the most obvious candidates for a system of international environmental taxes. Unlike the fuel for wheeled traffic, aircraft fuel is rarely subject to any particular duties, but the damage to the climate is much greater in the air than on land. Since the emission of nitric oxides (NO_x) in the higher layers of the atmosphere and the condensation trail also contribute to global warming, the overall greenhouse effect of flying is 2-4 times greater than the effect of the aircraft's CO₂ emissions.^{xii}

In order to introduce international environmental taxes, a world-wide system should not be attempted from the outset. Duties on aircraft fuel in all OECD countries, or just in the EU, will probably make a significant impact and be feasible to administer.

It is also relevant to establish international environmental taxes in other fields, e.g. on industrial greenhouse gases (HFCs, PFCs and SF₆) or on extraction of rare raw materials.

Proposal 7: Stronger implementation of guidelines for multinational companies (OECD)

In the long run, binding global rules should be introduced to enforce corporate responsibility for sustainable development. Today, there is merely

an assortment of voluntary guidelines. The most important set of guidelines was passed by all OECD countries at a ministerial meeting in 2000.

‘The OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises’, cover the enterprises’ activities all over the world. According to these guidelines the companies should, for instance: respect human rights; respect the workers’ right to form unions; contribute to fighting child labour; establish and maintain a system of environmental management with measurable objectives; spread environmentally-optimal technology to all parts of the company and keep the population informed; refrain from giving bribes; and refrain from seeking exemptions from national rules on environment, working conditions, taxation, etc.^{xiii}

Although the guidelines are voluntary, a contact point exists in every OECD country which receive complaints on companies that are believed to violate the rules. If the guidelines are to make a real difference, the authorities have to start vigorously publicising the rules, monitor their compliance, and seriously address concrete complaints.

The OECD governments may take the opportunity to demand adherence to the rules in connection with the use of public subsidy schemes, such as export credits. It would also be natural to require pension funds, which often enjoy tax privileges, to seek to ensure that the companies in which they invest are abiding by the OECD’s guidelines.

Under the auspices of the OECD, specific agreements should map out an ambitious and coordinated effort among the countries to promote observance of the guidelines.

Proposal 8: Development of technology-transfer programmes (EU, WTO)

In Rio, the rich countries committed themselves to transferring environmental technology to developing countries on favourable terms.^{xiv} This pledge was confirmed at the summit in Johannesburg.^{xv} At the WTO’s Ministerial Conference in Doha, the rich countries also committed themselves to providing financial and technical assistance to those least-developed countries, which may experience problems as result of new environmental and health standards in other countries.^{xvi}

A handful of rich countries have long tried to live up to the commitment from Rio. For example Denmark, which has a separate programme of environmental aid for developing countries since 1993. One experience of this programme is that developing countries are keen to gain access to modern environmental technology. At the global level, the Montreal Protocol’s multilateral fund is systematically promoting the transfer of technology to developing countries, just as some effort is being made under the aegis of the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) and international environmental conventions.

If developing countries are to be constructively engaged in global environmental work, it is crucial that rich countries live up to their commitments to transfer environmental technology. Given its prominent environmental profile and development assistance to virtually every developing country, it is natural for the EU to take the lead in this area. Thus, EU should establish a separate environmental aid programme, which supports technology transfer, demonstration projects and corresponding capacity

building to all developing countries on the basis of the countries own assessment of needs. At the same time, steps must be taken to flesh out and widen obligations under the WTO.

Proposal 9: Global initiative for training of product designers (UNESCO)

In Rio, all countries undertook to integrate teaching in environment and development into all levels of their education system by 1995.^{xvii} Unfortunately, not all countries have complied with this commitment.

It is beyond comprehension that some rich countries are still not systematically teaching their future product designers to consider environmental concerns. In order to promote less environmentally harmful products, it is important to ensure that designers, engineers, architects, builders, etc. are solidly grounded in environmental issues. Obviously, they should also be taught to assess the social impact of their designs in developing countries.

The UN General Assembly has proclaimed a Decade of Education for Sustainable Development starting on 1 January 2005. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) carries overall responsibility for organising this. It seems obvious to take the opportunity to launch a global initiative which should ensure that future product designers are trained in paying attention to sustainable development. Experiences should be exchanged between the countries, while deadlines must be set for incorporation into educational curricula. Rich countries should have ample time to complete this before the start of the decade. Moreover, objectives should be laid down for assistance to ministries of education and to educational establishments in developing countries.

Proposal 10: Impact assessment of future technologies (OECD and UNEP)

International environmental policy-makers set great store by the reductions in environmental damage to be enabled by future technological progress. Despite this optimistic approach, there is no international cooperation to continuously assess the environmental potential of future developments within a wide range of technologies.

Such cooperation should be established to contribute to setting research priorities, ensure faster dissemination of less harmful technologies, and avoid investment in technologies conducive to greater environmental risks.

It will probably be most appropriate to set up two separate bodies of cooperation, one to monitor technological development, primarily directed towards the industrialised countries, and another to promote technological development, mainly aimed at servicing developing countries. It appears relevant to place the former under the auspices of the OECD, and the second within the UNEP.

6 Initiatives in the red box: production and consumption to be phased out

The modern environmental struggle has lasted four decades. One lesson of this long-standing effort is that certain types of production and consumption are so damaging to nature and human beings, or carry such risks, that the activity needs to stop altogether. Among the examples are the use of ozone-depleting substances and a range of other chemicals, products made of endangered species of animals and plants, and nuclear power.

Fortunately, the world community has developed international rules and forums of cooperation which take care of some of the most problematic, i.e. highly unsustainable products and activities.

However, regulations can still be circumvented, not least due to a trend in rich countries to worry only about 'their own' environment. In some instances, rich-country authorities have long ago intervened to halt harmful production, but have been unconcerned about how to help other countries get rid of the same problem. In other cases, production and consumption in rich countries are based upon raw materials or other inputs from developing countries which are produced in highly problematic ways.

In the coming ten years, international regulation should be expanded. PIC and POP conventions must be put into force; the number of substances which are regulated in the conventions should be increased; and the rules for integration of new substances in the conventions should be made more flexible. The use of mercury and other heavy metals should be regulated in an international environmental convention.

Other initiatives exist, which international organisations could and should take immediately. Among the most obvious next steps are the following three.

Proposal 11: Global information system on nationally-banned goods (UNEP, WTO)

Most rich countries have built comprehensive systems enabling bans on chemicals and other products deemed to be harmful, for instance by posing risks to the environment, health or accidents. Such bans are often informed by a national tunnel vision.

The most blinkered national outlook is when the country only takes steps to stop the domestic use of a product, but still permits extensive exports. A milder form is when the authorities fail to inform their counterparts in other countries about the reasons behind the ban, the expected consequences and alternatives to the product.

The issue of nationally-banned products has previously been raised by developing countries at the WTO. Moreover, under the auspices of the UN, a relatively manual, low-tech information system has been functioning.

It seems natural to draw on modern information technology to ensure rapid and effective information to all countries about bans on chemicals and other products. It will probably be most appropriate to leave the United Nations Environmental Programme, UNEP, in charge of the work to collect and disseminate data. Cooperation with the WTO should be agreed, since member countries are obliged to notify technical trade barriers, such as import bans to the WTO.

Proposal 12: Global effort against illegal logging (EU and others)

Illegal logging is a major problem in many timber-producing countries, and one of the main reasons of deforestation. Unauthorised felling of wild trees is widespread in tropical countries as well as in Russia and Eastern Europe. It is estimated that up to half the wood imported into the EU is of illegal origin.^{xviii} At present, there is only very limited regulation of international trade in timber. In practice, it only covers the tree species contemplated by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

Illegal logging is a broad concept, covering a wide range of activities in connection with forestry: (1) illegal conversion of forest for other purposes; (2) illegal activities inside the forest by the forest owner or concession holder; (3) theft and smuggling of timber; and (4) corrupt practices in the logging business.

It is estimated that 90% of the world's 1.2 billion poorest people are directly affected by the adverse impact of deforestation, and that the world's timber-producing countries lose a combined sum in the order of US\$ 15 billion a year as a result of illegal logging.^{xix}

It is imperative to put an effective stop to the international trade in wood and wood products originating from illegal logging. These should be the aims:

- Timber-importing countries reject wood and wood produce which cannot be proved to come from legal forestry.
- Foreign assistance targets better enforcement of forest legislation in timber-producing countries, enabling developing countries to uphold their own laws on logging.

The EU Commission is currently working on an action plan aimed at shoring up the enforcement of forest legislation, promoting efficient forestry, and curbing international trade in illegal wood. Steps should be taken to ensure that this action plan leads to consistent EU rules, which effectively put paid to the import of all wood that is not guaranteed legal. National governments should lead by example by demanding that all timber used in the public sector can be proved to originate from legal forestry.

An EU intervention would be a direct extension of the decision at the Johannesburg summit to take immediate action against illegal trade in forestry produce, and to further the enforcement of forest legislation.^{xx} International forums such as the Biodiversity Convention, the International Tropical

Timber Organisation (ITTO), and the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) should also follow up with a special effort against illegal logging.

Proposal 13: International hearings on harmful products or technologies (CSD)

Prevention is better than cure. This applies to sustainable development as well. It is often difficult to act against a technology or product, once vast sums have been invested in production, jobs have been created, and the end product possibly spread to numerous markets. Consequently, an effort should be made to establish a more proactive, global intervention practice.

The UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) should play a key role in this context. The CSD's long-standing record of involving stakeholders from the private sector as well as popular organisations makes up a good foundation for turning the commission into a centre of hearings on problematic types of consumption and production.

It should thus become an integral part of the CSD's work to conduct hearings on products and technologies, which some members of the commission find so harmful that the activity ought to stop altogether. The hearing should be followed by debates on the appropriateness of expanding international cooperation in the area concerned.

One subject suitable for a CSD hearing is, for example, the terminator technology. The biotechnological industry is inserting genes into plants in order to make them sterile, i.e. hindering their reproduction. This would make it impossible for farmers to get next year's seeds from this year's harvest.

The issue is whether the use of such technology is in the interest of anyone other than the biotechnological industry. This technology does not provide any agricultural advantages, but it can be used to protect seed companies in the developing countries. 15-20% of the World's foodstuffs are cultivated by peasants that save seeds for next year. These peasants provide 1,400 million people with food^{xxi}.

7 Conclusion

Over the past ten year years, thanks to the efforts of governmental and non-governmental actors, a series of significant results have been achieved in the shift towards sustainable patterns of production and consumption. However, there is a long way to go before the transition has been completed. Despite promising results in various fields, the combined increase in production and consumption has intensified the pressure on the environment.

Consequently, it is encouraging that the nations of the world used the World Summit on Sustainable Development to give greater priority to the shift towards sustainable production and consumption, for instance through stronger international cooperation and the development of a ten-year framework for programmes in this area

The UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) should, as soon as possible, lay down the overall objectives for the next ten years of work. The ambition ought to be, inter alia, meeting the goals of the Millennium Declaration, a marked reduction in environmental stress caused by a series of sectors in rich countries at home as well as globally, and establishing an effective system for the transfer of environmental technologies to developing countries.

All countries and a series of international organisations, alongside other actors, should develop detailed programmes for their contributions. Thereafter, the CSD should lay down the objectives for the endeavour in the medium term.

However, it is important -in the here and now- to build upon the momentum created through the work of the past ten years. International organisations can and should accelerate the shift towards sustainable consumption and production by deciding to launch activities realisable in the short term.

Notes

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- ⁱ United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (1992): Agenda 21, afsnit 4.9.
- ⁱⁱ Agenda 21, para. 4.3.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Agenda 21, para. 4.8 and 4.15-4.27.
- ^{iv} United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (2001): Ministerial Statement for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, 25.9 2001, para. 34 (a).
- ^v World Summit on Sustainable Development (2002): Plan of Implementation, afsnit 13.
- ^{vi} Plan of Implementation, para. 13.
- ^{vii} Plan of Implementation, para. 14.
- ^{viii} UNFCCC (1992): United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, article 2.
- ^{ix} UNFCCC (1997): Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, article 3.1, see also annex B.
- ^x United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (2002): Implementing Agenda 21 – Report of the Secretary General, 2nd preparatory session 28.1-8.2 2002.
- ^{xi} World Commission on Dams (2000): Dams and Development - A New Framework for Decision-Making. The Report of the World Commission on Dams. London, Earthscan.
- ^{xii} Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (1999): Summary for Policy Makers - Aviation and the Atmosphere, special report by IPCC Working Groups I and III.
- ^{xiii} OECD (2000): OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises.
- ^{xiv} Agenda 21, para. 34.18.
- ^{xv} Plan of Implementation, para. 99.
- ^{xvi} Implementation-Related Issues and Concerns, Decision of 14 November 2001, World Trade Organization, Ministerial Conference, Fourth Session, para. 3.6 and 5.4.
- ^{xvii} Agenda 21, para. 36.5(b).
- ^{xviii} European Commission (2002): Forest law enforcement, government and trade, workshop Brussels - 22-24 April 2002, Synthesis of discussions.
- ^{xix} WWF (2002): The timber footprint of the G8 and China - Making the case for green procurement by government.
- ^{xx} Plan of Implementation, para. 43(c).
- ^{xxi} Marte Rostvåg Ulltveit – Moe: Ei endomsrett til livet. Article in Vore Hender/ Tiden (1999): Hva kan gjøres – Håp og styring på en liten klode.

