

**REPORT OF THE SECOND ASIA-PACIFIC
REGIONAL EXPERT MEETING ON
SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION
Seoul, Republic of Korea, 6-7 November 2003**

I. Introduction

1. The Second Asia-Pacific Regional Expert Meeting on Sustainable Consumption and Production was held in Seoul, Republic of Korea, on 6-7 November 2003. It was sponsored by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Energy of the Republic of Korea and organized by the Korean National Cleaner Production Center in cooperation with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for Sustainable Development, and the United Nations Environment Programme, Division of Technology, Industry and Economics. The meeting was attended by 32 experts from 12 countries of the Asia-Pacific region and two international organizations. The participants included experts from government agencies, universities, civil society organizations, industry, a regional organization and international organizations.
2. The meeting was opened by Mr Kyung Huh of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Energy of the Republic of Korea. Opening statements were also made by Mr Bas de Leeuw of the United Nations Environment Programme and Mr Ralph Chipman and Mr Tarcisio Alvarez-Rivero of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs.
3. The meeting had before it a number of documents, including: the report of the First Asia-Pacific Regional Expert Meeting on Sustainable Consumption and Production, held in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, in May 2003; the report of the International Expert Meeting on a 10-Year Framework of Programmes for Sustainable Consumption and Production, held in Marrakech, Morocco, in June 2003; chapter III of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, on "Changing Unsustainable Patterns of Consumption and Production, from the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in August-September 2002; and a Background Paper on Sustainable Consumption and Production prepared for this meeting by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the United Nations Environment Programme.
4. Mr Chipman presented the background for the meeting, noting that the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development had called for a 10-year framework of programmes in support of regional and national initiatives to accelerate the shift towards sustainable consumption and production. The Summit noted that fundamental changes in the way societies produce and consume were indispensable for achieving global sustainable development, and that all countries should promote sustainable consumption and production patterns, with the developed countries taking the lead and with all countries benefiting from the process. An international expert meeting had been organized in June 2003 in Marrakech, Morocco, in order to develop the 10-year framework. That meeting launched the "Marrakech Process" including periodic international meetings as well as regional meetings and meetings on specific themes within the scope of sustainable consumption and production.

5. Mr Bas de Leeuw provided an overview of sustainable consumption and production and UNEP's work in the area, particularly in sustainable consumption. He noted the importance of consumer awareness and education as well as the role of the media and advertising. UNEP was working with Consumer's International to promote application of the United Nations Guidelines on Consumer Protection, with a focus on the new section added in 1999 on sustainable consumption.

6. Mr. Susanto Sutoyo, of the Department of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, presented the report of the meeting in Indonesia. The report noted that the Asia-Pacific region was becoming the main manufacturing hub of the world and that current consumption and production patterns would lead to enormous pressure on the environment and natural resource base of the region. To address those pressures, the meeting recommended that governments establish integrated policies and strategies for operations, investment and planning, with greater involvement of stakeholders in policy making. The meeting called on the business community to conduct self-assessments, define strategies addressing economic, social and environmental issues, provide credible product declarations, and develop and apply codes of conduct.

7. Mr Tarcisio Alvarez-Rivero presented information on two regional meetings for the Latin American and Caribbean region that had been held in Argentina and Nicaragua. He noted that regional meetings for Africa, West Asia and Eastern Europe were also being planned, and the reports of the regional meetings would be presented to the Commission on Sustainable Development and the next International Expert Meeting on Sustainable Consumption and Production, planned for 2005.

8. Mr Joong Woo-Ahn, Director of the Environmental Research Center of Yuhan-Kimberly, a major paper product company in the Republic of Korea, presented a case study of supply chain management for cleaner production, undertaken with financial support from the Government. Of 150 small suppliers, 15 had been selected for initial assistance in cleaner production, with the programme to be expanded later to include more.

9. Detailed discussions on how further work on sustainable consumption and production in the Asia-Pacific region should be organized were conducted in three working groups. A working group on issues for government was chaired by Mr Joselito Bernardo of the Philippines; a working group on issues for industry was chaired by Dr Olivia la O'Castillo of the Philippines; and a working group on issues for civil society was chaired by Mr Rajan Gandhi of India. The reports of the three working groups were presented and discussed in the final plenary session. Those reports, taking into account the comments made in plenary, are included below.

II. Report of the Working Group on Issues for Government

Some examples of government activities in support of sustainable consumption and production

10. The Working Group was chaired by Mr Joselito Bernardo (Philippines) and included Mr Choviran Ken (Cambodia), Mr. Desh Deepak Verma (India), Mrs. Tri Widayati (Indonesia), Mr.

Jamil Ahmad (Pakistan), Dr. Ji Yun Kang (Rep. of Korea), Mr. K. H. J. Wijayadasa (Sri Lanka), Dr. Pongpisit Viseshakul (Thailand), Mr Ralph Chipman (UN).

11. Members of the Working Group mentioned a number of activities in their countries that had been effective in promoting sustainable consumption and production.

12. Policy development and coordination through inter-agency and multi-stakeholder processes have been successful in cases where the processes are supported by administrative mechanisms and legal authority. In the Philippines, the Council for Sustainable Development, with participants from different government agencies, business and NGOs, has the authority to review government policies relating to sustainable development and make recommendations to the government. In Thailand, a council on sustainable development has been established with the Prime Minister as chairman.

13. Most developing countries of the region have problems in enforcing command-and-control regulations, which are therefore often ineffective by themselves, and may lead to bribery and corruption. Countries are therefore now combining regulations with economic instruments, technical assistance and education. Such measures tend to be more effective in promoting environmental protection while increasing productivity and maintaining business activity and employment. Some countries had reduced subsidies that encouraged unsustainable consumption and production. Public awareness and education can promote public support for legislation and regulatory enforcement.

14. Efforts to promote cleaner production, in particular through national and local cleaner production centres, have been successful in a number of countries. These have generally been set up with government support and have worked effectively with industry. It has been demonstrated that many cleaner production techniques make industry more productive and competitive and provide environmental benefits.

15. Public awareness and education have been effectively promoted in India and Sri Lanka through school-based programmes. In India, about 70,000 school eco-clubs have been established in a programme started nearly three years ago. In Sri Lanka, environmental brigades have been established in schools. Such programmes can undertake environmental improvement activities, promote environmental behavior by their members, and disseminate environmental awareness to consumers and producers in general.

16. A number of countries have addressed polluting industries by relocating them to new sites with environmental protection infrastructure such as effluent treatment facilities, thus assisting them in meeting environmental standards.

17. Some countries have reduced air pollution by encouraging the use of compressed natural gas (CNG) as a fuel for vehicles, including government fleets. Subsidies have been used to promote the conversion, which is attractive because CNG is less expensive than petrol. Efforts were also being made to shift to lead-free and reduced sulphur fuels.

18. In Thailand, energy-efficiency labeling for refrigerators and air conditioners have resulted in a major shift to energy-efficient products. In a programme initiated by the government, standards were developed in consultation with industry, and labels were awarded by the electricity generating authority. Initial standards that were fairly easy to meet encouraged producers to participate in the programme, which was initially voluntary. As the labels became accepted by consumers, energy-efficiency standards were made mandatory and gradually raised. The labeling programme thus affected both producers and consumers. Indonesia and the Philippines are now starting programmes for energy-efficiency labeling of appliances and labeling of refrigerators as CFC free.

19. In the Republic of Korea, solid waste management has been improved through a system of waste separation in the home and a requirement that waste must be discarded in special bags for which there is an extra charge, thus financing the waste management system and encouraging waste reduction.

Elements for action at the national level

20. Members of the Working Group mentioned a number of elements as possible priorities for future work at the national level.

21. On changing production patterns:

- Adoption of policies on sustainable green procurement;
- Promotion of various environmental management tools, such as cleaner production, through standards and regulations for emissions and effluents, and through incentives and other market-based instruments;
- Integration of energy efficiency and renewable energy into programmes on transport, industry and agriculture;
- Support for eco-friendly technology for sustainable agriculture and industrial production through appropriate policy measures and economic instruments and incentives;
- Support for research and development on cleaner production technology.

22. On changing consumption patterns:

- Support for consumer movement activities;
- Organization of youth into eco-clubs or brigades to enhance their awareness and participation in sustainable consumption and production activities;
- Promotion of information, education and communication for various consumer groups;
- Strengthening regulations for consumer protection and adding sustainable consumption issues.

23. On integrating consumption and production programmes:

- Mobilize civil society, including religious organizations where appropriate, to promote sustainable lifestyles and livelihoods, including through traditional practices and values;
- Fully mobilize the major media in information, education and communication campaigns for sustainable consumption and production;
- Develop indicators and databases for monitoring consumption and production in all relevant sectors;
- Promote recycling and waste minimization in production and consumption in cooperation with the private sector and civil society
- Developing national labeling schemes for selected products to promote sustainable consumption and production and to support green procurement programmes.

Priorities for regional programmes

24. The Working Group identified a number of priorities for regional programmes and activities:

- Strengthening means of implementation, including capacity building and transfer of technology, particularly for major polluting industries;
- Capacity building for the development of policies, legislation, regulation, economic instruments (taxes and subsidies), social policies and training;
- Preparation and dissemination of guidelines on tools for sustainable consumption and production, including environmental management tools such as life-cycle assessment (LCA) and environmental management accounting (EMA), by UN organizations;
- Provision of appropriate training and technical assistance to civil society to enhance their capacity for promoting initiatives to change consumer behaviour patterns;
- Integration of sustainable consumption and production issues into the programmes of regional organizations such as ESCAP, ASEAN, ECO, SACEP and others;
- Development of regional networks and partnerships with centres of excellence for exchange of information and experiences and cooperation on sustainable consumption and production that could support and promote efforts at capacity-building and technology transfer activities;
- Documentation of best practices on sustainable consumption and production at the global and regional level and dissemination of this documentation through the networks;
- Assistance for the development of indicators and databases for monitoring consumption and production in all relevant sectors.

Needs for assistance

25. The Working Group identified a number of specific needs for assistance in addressing the above issues:

- Technical and financial assistance from concerned UN agencies and programmes and other multilateral and bilateral donors, NGOs and business organizations;

- Information and training material for creating awareness and support for changing unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, including information on success stories and best practices, and information on the benefits for economic growth and competitiveness of sustainable consumption and production, available through international websites;
- Transfer of technology, particularly for solid waste and hazardous waste management;
- High-level commitment from regional and sub-regional organizations such as ESCAP, ASEAN, ECO, SACEP and others.

Conclusion

26. Members of the Working Group believed that the priorities identified for regional programmes are all relevant to their respective countries and that their governments would most likely participate should these programmes be implemented.

III. Report of the Working Group on Issues for Industry

27. The group was chaired by Dr Olivia la O'Castillo, Philippines, and included Mr Qihong Sun (China), Dr. R.R. Khan (India), Mr. Tri Tharyat (Indonesia), Mr. Takuki Murayama (Japan), Dr. Joon-Woo Ahn (Rep. of Korea), Mr Tarcisio Alvarez-Rivero (UN), and Mr Niclas Svenningsen (UNEP)

28. This report reflects the general discussion of the group. Additionally, the group considered past experiences from initiatives on sustainable consumption and production (SC&P) in the region (table 1). While there are several examples of successful (and less successful) initiatives, the experience of addressing consumption issues is rather limited.

29. Based on the review, a number of areas were identified as priorities for initiating the desired change in production and consumption patterns in Asia (table 2). The areas were ranked based on their relevance for the region and the feasibility of initiating action in each area. Specific actions were suggested for each area, as was a focal point to take the lead in implementing the recommendations. It was noted that while some areas may be of higher priority for individual countries, the ranking reflects a regional perspective. Finally, some recommendations for assistance that would be required to implement specific action were mentioned.

30. Participants mentioned that the industry sector is a key stakeholder for development in almost all countries in the region. Industry's role, however, is dual. While industry acts as the main economic engine in most economies, generating jobs and income, providing services and products, etc, it is also a significant cause of pollution, waste generation and depletion of natural resources. On the other hand, industry is also part of the solutions for these problems. The challenge for industry is, of course, to generate the benefits while minimizing the negative impact.

31. Sustainable consumption and production must be attractive from an economic perspective. The ability of industry to respond to sustainable development issues is closely linked to how such responses can be justified and presented in economic terms (e.g. to the financial

stakeholders of individual companies). It is therefore important that governments' policies and strategies for sustainable development are in accordance with the economic conditions in the market. Such conditions can be influenced by Governments by applying economic instruments, such as soft loans for sustainable development investments, pricing of natural resources, and phasing out unreasonable subsidies for commodities having a negative impact on the environment.

Economic incentives should be designed so as to promote improvement above and beyond the minimum requirements set by legislative standards.

32. Lack of access to financing for sustainable development investments remains a barrier to sustainable consumption and production. Support to companies for identifying and approaching sources of funding, as well as support to financing institutions to evaluate and target sustainable development investments, is a critical issue for removing this barrier.

33. Participants also mentioned that waste generation from production and consumption is rapidly becoming a major barrier to Asia's thrust towards sustainable development. Industry recognizes the shared responsibility between producers and consumers, as well as the government's key role in designing and implementing appropriate waste management strategies. The solution to the waste issue should include the recycle-reuse-recover hierarchy and may be supported by the use of life-cycle assessments and product design. Partnerships among consumers, producers and governments to work out suitable approaches to waste minimization and management is recommended as a preferred alternative to the control and command approach.

34. While a market economy provides the venue for consumers' choice between sustainable goods and other products, the market for "sustainable products" is limited by the perception and understanding of sustainable development issues among the public. Basic education and information of the public on these issues would encourage business to develop "green markets" for sustainable products. Furthermore, such public education and information would also enable individuals to act responsibly in their roles as consumers, business operators, politicians, and officials.

35. Increased transparency and accountability of officials, as well as improved governance and higher standards set by the business community for the business community itself are basic conditions to create the "level playing field" for all companies that is necessary for sustainable development.

36. Small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) constitute a major part of industry in Asia-Pacific, typically providing 50% to 90% of GDP, jobs, and environmental impact from industry. Nevertheless, with few exceptions (e.g. in Japan and the Philippines), they largely remain unaffected by efforts to improve their performance, whether economic, social or environmental, or by the government, international organizations or local non-governmental organizations. Unless the SMEs of the region are reached and activated on issues relating to sustainable development, the goal of sustainable development will be cumbersome to achieve in the region.

37. Lack of access to competitive and sustainable technologies remains a key barrier for industrial development in many Asian countries. Transfer of technologies is not only needed for “hard technologies” (machinery and equipment), but also for “soft technologies” (e.g. human skills and management systems).

Table 1: Past successes and failures

	Successes	Failures
Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CP with supporting framework • Waste minimization circles • Public rating of companies • Economic tools (+ and -) • Legislation that is sufficiently supported by enforcement (needed for level playing field) • Government standards (e.g phasing out of leaded gasoline, mercury) • ISO 14.000 for large companies • Voluntary industry-Government partnership (settlement of non-compliance outside court) • Greening of supply chain • Internalisation of environmental cost • Environmental Cost Accounting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CP without support • ISO 14.000 for small companies • Copying of foreign standards • Lack of integration among ministries
Consumption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use service level instead of sales volume as economic indicator • Corporate Green PR • On-line Green Procurement database (initiated from legislation and consumer pressure) • Environmental reports • Eco-labelling (long-term) • Media & advertising for green image • Cool green products • Corporate social responsibility campaigns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask for higher price for green products • Eco-labelling (short term) • Boring public education campaigns

Table 2. Areas of priority and recommended actions

Issue	Regional Priority 3 = highest	Specific action needed	Focal point	Support needed
PRODUCTION				
Promote Government-industry partnerships for achieving environmental goals (negotiated agreements)	3	Develop guidelines for government-industry partnership before entering into negotiated agreement	Government & industry associations	Technical
Facilitate access to funding for green investments including technology transfer	3	Provide training for officials at financing institutions	UNEP/UNDP, ministries of finance & environment	Technical
Institutionalise public green procurement practices.	3	Establish legislation	Central government	Technical
Promote Environmental Management Accounting as an integrated tool in day-to-day business operations	3	Training & awareness workshops for all industry sectors	UNEP, UNDESA etc	Technical + financial
Develop a regional database for eco-products and eco-materials	3	Set up web site for the regional database	UNESCAP/ UNEP/APO/ APRCP	Technical + financial
Train Government officials and other stakeholders on SC&P	3	Organize training workshops	CP Centres, APO, APRCP etc.	Technical
Encourage local waste exchange programs and integrated waste management strategies	3	Set up a working group to develop guidelines & framework to initiate such programmes	Government, industry & NGO	Technical
Restrict dumping of outdated technologies in developing countries	3	Establish/implement policies on restricting import/export of outdated technologies	Government	Technical

Eliminate subsidies that have adverse environmental effects and adopt realistic pricing of natural resources	2	Identify subsidies that have the most adverse environmental impact and phase out subsidies	Governments + NGO	Technical
Develop economic incentives supporting companies' sustainable behaviour	2	Establish working groups from all sectors to identify areas suitable for economic instruments	All stakeholders	Technical
Establish regional supply chain environmental management initiatives	2	Undertake SCEM programmes among industries	industry / UNEP / APRCP / APO etc	Technical
Build capacity in industry and government for developing bankable project proposals and for approaching potential sources of funding	2	Organize training workshops	CP Centres, APO, APRCP etc.	Technical
Improve corporate awareness by sharing green success stories	2	Document & share success stories with all stakeholders, esp. ith media	industry / NGO / media	
Encourage eco-design as a tool to promote SC&P	2	Develop and distribute eco-design handbook	UNEP + APO	Technical
Develop programmes to adopt corporate good governance	2	Organize awareness and training workshops	Industry + NGO + media	Technical
Promote voluntary initiatives and codes of conduct	2	Organize awareness and training workshops	Industry + NGO + media + UNEP	Technical
Facilitate public administration for green companies by developing "one-stop shops" for permitting etc.	2	Set up working group to develop guidelines	Concerned Government agencies	Technical
Device communication strategies for engaging SME's in SC&P issues	2	Develop radio and TV programmes	Media, Industry, NGO	

Develop national implementation plans for achieving maximum benefit from eco-synergies at all levels in business (circular economy)	2	Undertake consultation with stakeholders to gather relevant and important inputs	Government + all stakeholders	Technical
Develop/support CP policies and CP legislation by i.a. building capacity on CP audits at local level and by developing supporting sector standards for CP	2	Establish a working group that include all stakeholders to draft relevant CP legislation .	Government	Technical
Strengthen capacity for enforcement of legislation	2	Ensure sufficient financial resources to enforce legislation effectively	Government	Financial
Develop national pollution inventories	2	Mandate industries to submit required data	Government	Technical
Support adoption of ISO 14.001 certification for larger companies and non-ISO 14.000 EMS for SMEs	2	Provide incentives (government to industry and industry to industry) to industries that adopt EMS	Government+ industry	Technical
Support common waste & effluent treatment plants for SME's	2	Develop financial mechanism for setting up such facilities	Local Government	Financial and technical
Make EIA compulsory for all larger investment projects	1	Establish legislation and provide training on EIA	Government (min. of environment)	Technical
Apply integrated land use planning as a strategy to ensure sustainability of resources and industry investments	1	Enhance coordination among concerned government agencies & bodies	Concerned ministry	Technical
CONSUMPTION				
Develop cool green consumer campaigns as part of corporate green PR and/or CSR	2	Start with developing campaigns with media (TV, newspaper, radio)	Industry / media / NGO	Technical

Integrate environmental and sustainability in the curricula at all levels in formal and informal education	2	Include environmental and sustainability courses at all levels in education	Ministries of education and environment + NGO	Technical
Target the financial markets/actors with awareness campaigns on SC&P	2	Training workshops	NGO + UNEP + academe	Technical
Implement mandatory segregation programmes as part of waste recycling & reuse campaigns	2	Establish appropriate regulation to initiate such programmes and provide training to local governments.	Government + NGO + media	Technical
Undertake R&D on how to best integrate industry activities with local society and culture	2	Encourage academe and industries to collaborate on R&D programmes	Academe & industry	Technical
Support R&D, including sector specific R&D, on LCA and LCI	2	Encourage academe and industries to collaborate on R&D programmes	Academe & industry	Technical
Promote Extended Producer Responsibility	2	Encourage industries to adopt EPR	NGO + Government	Technical
Develop demand side management programmes for industry (energy etc)	2	Initiate industry collaboration to undertake such programmes	Government + Industry	
Develop emergency response capacity at the local level in areas with high-risk industries, e.g. through APELL, Responsible Care	2	Provide training for concerned authorities and industry	UNEP+ Governments + Industries	Technical

IV. Working Group on Issues for Civil Society

38. The Working Group was chaired by Mr Rajan Gandhi (India) and included Mr Susanto Sutoyo (Indonesia), Mr Vicente Paragas (Philippines), Prof. Tak Hur (Republic of Korea), Mr Uchita de Zoysa (Sri Lanka), Mr Sirithan Pairoj-Boriboon (Thailand) and Mr Bas de Leeuw (UNEP).

1. What approaches have proven effective/ineffective

39. Participants agreed to focus on the issues as highlighted in the outline. They briefly discussed the role of civil society in general and observed that civil society can in general influence public opinion and governmental policies, for instance in environmentally sensitive issues such as mining and logging. They can also mobilise consumers and the public at large, and assist governments in monitoring progress (for example, the “Eco-watch” group in Indonesia).

40. Participants discussed the definition of “civil society”. The difference between civil society, NGOs and stakeholders in general was considered to be not very clear. Civil society should be non-profit, and NGOs can also make profits as consultants, as one of the participants noted. For the work of this group, it was decided to exclude business associations and labour unions from the definition of civil society, since they do not, in general, represent general interests. It was also noted that consumers are not only the purchasers of goods, but are also responsible for using products and disposing of waste. Their choices in all these phases can be influenced by civil society.

41. Participants observed that civil society’s efforts in influencing political agendas have often been successful, while slower progress has been observed on consumer protection issues and in influencing consumers in general. As one participant observed, the expertise of NGOs is normally of a general nature, suitable for an “activist” role. Detailed expertise needed to influence consumption patterns is lacking. The example of eco-labeling was mentioned. NGOs can promote eco-labels, but need to be trained and educated to explain the system to consumers. The potential role of NGOs is large since the public sees them as credible.

42. Some participants noted a deteriorating reputation of NGOs, due to suspicions that these are not truly representing what people want, and due to negative associations with anti-globalist movements. One participant, however, called for a more active position of NGOs, towards a more politically oriented approach.

43. Concerning relationships between civil society and government, and between civil society and industry, participants agreed in general that stakeholders have accepted each other’s roles. The degree of interference in each other’s business and mutual expectations in that respect, however, is debated. Conflicts can sometimes arise from issues such as corporate social responsibility and product marketing. Independent watchdogs to monitor business performance with respect to consumer protection issues were called for by some participants.

2. Exchange of specific experiences

44. Very recently in Sri Lanka, the “Consumer Authority” was established as a response to pressure from civil society. In the Philippines, a Consumer Council was established ten years ago to consider consumer protection issues. In Indonesia, consumer protection has been an issue for about three decades, and the role of civil society has been increasing. National laws and regulations have been enacted in Indonesia, and many are now calling for full and effective implementation. In India, there is a Ministry of Consumers Affairs. NGOs in India have played a major role in amendments to legislation such as the revised Consumer Protection Act and a new Competition Commission; they could also influence eco-label criteria, but have no further active responsibilities.

45. Thailand does not have many NGOs working on consumer rights. Business associations (not seen as part of civil society by the participants, but rather as part of the industry group) play an active role in production issues, such as cleaner production in the leather industry. Civil society plays a role in Thai eco-labelling schemes. For the domestic consumers market, it is not a success, but the production sector is asking for eco-labels for export markets. The Thai World Environment Centre has mainly been working with industry. The Korean Consumer Protection Agency deals with protection issues in general (prices, quality). Products with eco-labels in Korea were, in the past, perceived by the public as low-quality, because of a lack of understanding. Education is therefore considered to be very important, and eco-product exhibitions are being organized, as in Japan. In general, past lobbying efforts to establish protection laws and institutes are considered to be rather successful.

3. Future work

46. Participants concluded that the influence of civil society in the development of national and regional strategies for sustainable consumption and production need to become more prominent and more effective. This could be achieved by better representation in decision-making processes and by preparation of clear activity plans.

47. The capacity of civil society to play roles such as watchdogs (for example, checking products by carrying out life-cycle analysis) and to assist in policy monitoring should be enhanced, for instance by establishing linkages with research institutes and academia. A few participants stressed that such research should be carried out before products appear on the market.

48. Social instruments (based on voluntary cooperation through education, awareness raising, voluntary partnerships and negotiation) and monitoring and evaluation were considered to be the priority tasks for civil society. Influencing regulation (including legislation and institutions) also continues to be a task for civil society, as demonstrated in the past, for instance in India. Most participants felt that influencing economic instruments (fiscal tools) was important as well, although this might differ among countries, as many participants felt. Regulatory and economic policies, however, are primarily the responsibility of governments.

49. All participants expressed the firm view that there should be a multi-stakeholder body or “help centre” to facilitate progress in the national and regional implementation of sustainable consumption and production. Participants agreed that such a help centre should have the following functions: information clearing house, development of guidelines, setting of targets, liaison from the regional to the international level, capacity building, monitoring progress and facilitating networking. There was an extensive discussion on which body at the regional level should play a lead role. Many participants proposed that the UNEP Regional Office for Asia Pacific (ROAP) be asked to initiate such a help centre, involving UN DESA and relevant (national) stakeholders. UNIDO would need to be involved as well. One participant suggested asking UNESCO to host the help centre, which should have an independent scientific character and deal with cultural change as well. Another participant suggested UNDP, whose activities at the national level are well-known, as the convening body, but their interest and expertise in sustainable consumption and production issues on the international and regional level was unknown. A view was expressed that the UN itself should propose a division of tasks in this respect. UNEP and UN DESA could be asked to consult relevant colleagues and make a proposal. One participant noted that national governments could initiate such a process. Some participants proposed to re-focus or expand existing regional institutions, such as the Asia-Pacific Roundtable on Cleaner Production, instead of creating new institutions. The Roundtable should be asked to broaden its scope to cover sustainable consumption and production and carry out the tasks listed above. One participant suggested asking national cleaner production centres (NCPCs) to broaden their activities to include consumption elements, and explore the feasibility of establishing a regional Consumption and Production Centre, consisting of an alliance of existing national cleaner production centres. Participants also briefly discussed the target group of such a body (civil society or all stakeholders) as well as other modalities of work.

50. On other priorities for future work, one participant mentioned capacity building on cleaner production and product and service design, and raising awareness of green products (for example in cooperation with retail trade through shop design and ways of presenting sustainable products. Civil society could help business with “marketing sustainability”. Most participants also mentioned strengthening education efforts. For capacity building, international and regional bodies would be among the prime movers.

51. Priorities for future work should also be based upon the priority areas as highlighted in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, according to one participant, who therefore proposed water resource degradation, air pollution, waste accumulation, deforestation, fisheries depletion, climate change, land degradation and desertification. Participants felt no need to re-prioritize these issues. One participant expressed the view that poverty eradication and globalisation should be added, due to their clear linkages with sustainable consumption and production in the Asia-Pacific region. Others felt that was not appropriate, as poverty eradication is an overarching and cross-cutting theme. Another participant argued that globalisation has both good and bad influences. It was agreed that poverty and globalisation were beyond the scope of this working group, since they are mentioned in other chapters of JPOI and have other forums to discuss them.

4. Support needed

52. Participants agreed to focus on the regional priorities identified in section 3 above: the JPOI issues, establishment of an integrated help centre to support the regional process, capacity building, eco-design and cleaner production, strengthening information, education and communication programmes (“selling sustainability”) and changing consumer behaviour (in particular through economic instruments). The establishment of national sustainable consumption and production stakeholder forums was added as priority at the national level.

53. Participants discussed the resources needed for the integrated regional help centre and thought that 1-2 staff would be sufficient, possibly by rotating secondments of staff from governments of the region to UNEP’s Regional Office for Asia Pacific or another existing organisation, such as UNESCAP. The character of the body should be voluntary and multi-stakeholder. The governments should take a lead role in initiating the process.

54. Discussions were also held about the national forums of stakeholders. One participant suggested involving existing national commissions on sustainable development. It was agreed that in principle each country should have at least a voluntary forum. Some participants felt that, depending on national circumstances, those forums could become authorities. In some countries, it is difficult to identify a focal point since a number of ministries have responsibilities in this area. Some participants felt that national governments should initiate the establishment of forums, while others felt that the initiative should originate from civil society. The forums should then initiate and inspire action on all levels, by performing functions such as an information clearing house, setting guidelines and targets, communicating findings of national groups to the regional level, capacity building, reviewing progress, development of programmes and networking.

55. Participants felt that the creation of national forums did not necessarily have to wait until a regional help centre had been established.

56. With regard to education, participants felt that civil society has a role to play, as in most countries, governments, industry and consumer groups are all able to provide information to schools. However, primary responsibility lies with the governments. One participant advocated inclusion of “consumerism” in curricula, in order to help young people handle influences from global media and advertising.

57. It was also recommended that governments should use fiscal incentives to promote sustainable products and services to producers or consumers, and to promote increased availability of information about the environmental aspects of goods. These incentives would stimulate the use of cleaner production techniques.

58. It was also concluded that there is considerable need for capacity building for developing countries in Asia, depending on the various levels of development, knowledge and experience.

5. Concrete actions and pilot projects

59. Two concrete projects have been described in the previous section: the establishment of a regional help centre, and the establishment of national forums. It was decided to ask UNEP and

UNESCAP to organise a meeting to discuss the modalities of the regional help centre, involving UNESCO and UN DESA. As a possible venue, Bangkok was mentioned. It was suggested that such a meeting might be organised back-to-back with the next Asia-Pacific Roundtable on Cleaner Production (mid-March 2004 in Kuala Lumpur) or in Bangkok. Initiatives for the formation of national bodies should start immediately.

60. Participants mentioned various other concrete initiatives, such as the start-up of a regional project on the UN Guidelines on Consumer Protection in cooperation with UNEP, the establishment of a website, a regional newsletter, and sharing the outcomes of studies (such as the Indian study on eco-labelling).

V. Conclusions of the Expert Meeting in Plenary: A Proposal for Continuity

61. Participants agreed that there is a need for further meetings on sustainable consumption and production at the regional level. Such meetings could serve various functions, including defining the mechanics of implementation of identified priorities for the region, and evaluation and monitoring, or benchmarking, to see what progress had been made.

62. Regional meetings to maintain momentum might be organized once or twice a year, perhaps every six months in the initial stage and less frequently later.

63. Participation in the meetings could be mostly from Government, as was the case with this meeting, but it might be desirable to have more participants from industry associations and civil society. There would need to be a focal point for coordination.

64. Initially at least, regional UN organizations should be included as well as multilateral organizations such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. Sources of support from outside the region, such as the Scandinavian countries, might also be invited.

65. The results of the regional meetings should be brought to the attention of ESCAP at the regional level and UNDESA at the international level.

66. There should be a secretariat or network that can assist national level initiatives, perhaps through financial support.

67. The Expert Meeting expressed its great appreciation to the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Energy of the Republic of Korea, and particularly to Mr Kyung Huh, and to the Korean National Cleaner Production Center, in particular to Mr Kim Jae Yoon and his team, for the support they had provided for the meeting, including the excellent meeting arrangements and the generous financial support for many participants.