Sustainable Consumption and Production in the Proposed Sustainable Development Goals

A paper from the Inter-Agency Coordination Group (IACG) of the 10 Year Framework of Programmes on SCP (10YFP)
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***Abstract**: This note contributes to the discussions on sustainable consumption and production (SCP) in the context of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) and the current "Proposed SDGs" under discussion, highlighting actionable linkages and potential SCP-related targets.*

Members of the 10YFP Inter-Agency Coordination Group (as of 16 June 2014):

UNCTAD, UNDESA, UNDP, UNECLAC, UNEP, UNESCAP, UNESCO, UNESCWA, FAO, UN Habitat, UNICEF, UNIDO, ILO, ITC, UNOPS, UNU, UN Women, UNWFP, UNWTO

Introduction the relevance of SCP to the SDGs

Promoting sustainable patterns of consumption and production is one of the overarching objectives of, and essential requirements for sustainable development. This is a vital objective in a world in which human population is projected to be 9.5 billion by 2050, and in which about 1.2 billion people currently live in extreme poverty and deprivation. The High Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda noted that the MDGs failed to integrate the economic, social, and environmental aspects of sustainable development as envisaged in the Millennium Declaration, and also did not promote sustainable patterns of consumption and production. They further identified the need for an equitable and sustainable approach to managing consumption and production patterns, and joint mobilization of economic, social and environmental action, to *irreversibly* reduce poverty.[1]

Targets which embody the achievement of SCP patterns could be included in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and highlighted in a number of the proposed SDGs as per the Zero Draft[2], and are currently being discussed in the context of the Open Working Group on SDGs. The present note sets out the concrete linkages between a shift to SCP patterns and the achievement of the SDGs, in the context of some of the proposed SDGs currently under discussion, and in most cases offers some illustrative targets. Those illustrative targets will require the provision of adequate means of implementation, if they are to be achieved.

Proposed SDGs, linkages with SCP and potential targets

Proposed SDG 1: End Poverty in all its forms everywhere

Current consumption and production patterns impact disproportionately on poor and marginalized, including minority groups and women, which increases inequality. Indeed, poorer communities, depending directly on their local environment and associated natural resources, are the most vulnerable to the impacts of additional pressures on the planet's natural resources and life support systems. Ensuring the sustainability of consumption and production patterns has the potential to protect the poor and other vulnerable groups from the effects of environmental degradation. Embracing SCP policies, strategies and applications could offer opportunities to leapfrog to a more resource-efficient, profitable and cleaner development trajectory, enhancing net gains from economic activities,[3], especially if those policies are accompanied by related capacity building support.

Proposed SDG 2: End hunger, achieve food security and adequate nutrition for all, and promote sustainable agriculture

Challenges such as food security, hunger and overweight/obesity as well as food loss and food waste, require more efficient consumption and production patterns. Failings present in the food system should be addressed,

[1] High Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda. Report (May 2013). A new global partnership: eradicate poverty and transform economies through sustainable development (available at http://www.post2015hlp.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/UNReport.pdf).
[2] Introduction and proposed goals and targets on sustainable development for the post-2015 development agenda, 2 June 2014
[3] TST issues brief on SCP, January 2014

also to conserve the natural resource base which must supply food for future generations, inclusively. This will require substantial changes in production, consumption and quality of food, along the supply chain.

Possible targets integrating SCP (based on UN submission to the OWG co-chair, April 2014)

- All Food systems become more productive, sustainable, efficient and resilient – minimising adverse environmental impact, while changing unsustainable consumption patterns and improving food and nutrition security by xx; and
- More efficient post-production food systems (harvest, handling and storage, processing and packaging, transport and consumption) that reduce the global rate of food loss and waste by xx per cent.

Proposed SDG 4: Provide equitable and inclusive quality education and life-long learning opportunities for all

Education for SCP is a core component of education for sustainable development and is a condition for achieving the shift towards more sustainable lifestyles and livelihoods. SCP knowledge and skills are needed by people in all parts of society to become agents of change for the shift to more resource efficient and greener economies, as citizens, professionals and consumers. With an additional three billion middle-class consumers expected to enter the markets by 2030, education at all levels for SCP has to become an imperative.

Possible targets integrating SCP (based on UN submission to the OWG co-chair, April 2014)

- By 2030, all learners acquire knowledge, skills, values and attitudes for global citizenship and sustainable development, including education for SCP;
- By 2030, all countries strengthen, mainstream and implement Education for Sustainable Consumption (ESC) and Lifestyles in formal education policies, curricula and institutions at all levels,

Proposed SDG 6: Secure water and sanitation for all for a sustainable world

The current formulation of the proposed SDG takes into account the entire water cycle, in a holistic manner. SCP is essential to ensure that not only universal access to water is secured, but that it is *sustained* over time.

Possible targets integrating SCP (based on UN submission to the OWG co-chair, April 2014)

- By 2030, improve water quality by reducing untreated domestic and industrial wastewater by x%, nutrient pollution by y% and increase waste water reuse by z%
- By 2030, improve water-use efficiency by x% in all sectors, with particular focus on agriculture.

Proposed SDG 7: Ensure access to affordable, sustainable and reliable modern energy services for all

A shift to SCP patterns would contribute to achieving key objectives in the energy sector, including those of the Sustainable Energy for All Initiative (SE4All): energy access, renewable energy and energy efficiency. Of direct relevance to SCP, and at the heart of its lifecycle approach, is the objective of increasing energy efficiency throughout the process, while ensuring access to modern energy services.

Possible targets integrating SCP (based on UN submission to the OWG co-chair, April 2014)

- Double the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix by 2030
- Double the rate of improvement in energy efficiency, including in buildings, industry, agriculture and transport by 2030.

- By 2030, phase out fossil fuel subsidies that encourage wasteful consumption, taking into account the ongoing need to address income inequalities
- Increase the proportion of sustainable and efficient public transport and low carbon lifestyles

Proposed SDG 8: Promote strong, inclusive and sustainable economic growth and decent work for all

While growth was mainly based on capital and labor productivity in the 20th century, resource productivity is the challenge of the 21st century and can bring new growth[4]. Adopting the SCP approach will enhance resource productivity as SCP aims at decoupling economic growth from escalating resource use and environmental degradation. Additionally, sustainable infrastructure has a key role to play in creating decent jobs and more resource efficient economic opportunities, as well as in enabling more sustainable lifestyles.

Possible targets integrating SCP (based on UN submission to the OWG co-chair, April 2014)

- By 2030, improve by x% the energy and resource productivity of economic activities and reduce by y% their waste and emissions per unit of output.
- Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all including for marginalised groups by 2030.

Proposed SDG 9: promote sustainable industrialization

Industrialization can be pursued in a sustainable way, so as to diminish adverse effects on the environment, reduce depletion of natural resources and increase green and decent jobs. A shift to more sustainable production practices can increase overall employment in some contexts, enhance competitiveness of enterprises and protects the health of workers, communities and consumers. Adequate means of implementation should include support for the development, transfer and adoption of environmentally sound technologies and processes.

Possible targets integrating SCP (based on UN submission to the OWG co-chair, April 2014)

- By 2030, increase by x% the resource-efficiency of industry, reduce by y% harmful chemicals used and waste generated, and decrease by z% the intensity of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from the industrial sector
- By 2030, increase by a factor of x the share of environmentally sustainable products and services in GDP and increase by y % globally the share of environmentally sound industrial processes based on energy and resource-efficient technologies and standards.

Proposed SDG 11: Build inclusive, safe and sustainable cities and human settlements

Cities are expected to absorb between two and three billion additional people by the year 2050. Whether they manage to do so sustainably depends to a large extent on whether they harness the efficiency advantages of agglomeration, providing basic services to all and efficient, effective, accessible collective solutions to urban challenges. An SCP approach, with a lifecycle perspective, is essential to sustainable cities. These will rely on sustainable buildings and construction (including materials, water, and energy use, in the construction / retrofitting as well as the operation and destruction phases), and on compact and efficient urban planning and

[4] UNIDO, AFD (2013), Green Growth, From labour to resource productivity. *accessed at: http://www.unido.org/fileadmin/user_media_upgrade/Media_center/2013/GREENBOOK.pdf*

associated use of land, which also reduce mobility demand and enable more sustainable lifestyles. Relevant long term urban planning particularly transport and road systems is crucial in achieving sustainable cities.

Possible targets integrating SCP (based on UN submission to the OWG co-chair, April 2014)

- By 2030, reduce the environmental impacts of cities, by x% by limiting urban sprawl, pollution and waste, increasing the resource efficiency of buildings by 50%, and investing in sustainable and low carbon infrastructure.
- Increase investments in safe, affordable and accessible infrastructure that enables the adoption of sustainable lifestyles (e.g. recycling centres, public transport, green buildings)

Proposed SDG 12: Promote sustainable consumption and production patterns

While the cross-cutting nature of SCP is reflected in some goals identified in this document, some additional targets under an SCP goal could be useful, given its holistic nature, considering its lifecycle approach and characteristic of universality.

Among the *possible targets* proposed in the focus area document (17th April 2014) and in the Proposed SDGs document (2nd June) of the OWG on SDGs, a goal on SCP might be stronger if the following targets are considered:

- Decouple economic growth rates and progress in human well-being from escalating use of natural resources to achieve an average annual material intensity of consumption per capita of x tons in 2030
- Improve the resource productivity of economic activities by x%, including through sustainable supply chains by 2030;
- By 2030, increase the share of sustainable products and services in public procurement, including through competitive and transparent procurement processes;
- By 2030, reduce by x% per capita waste through prevention reduction, recycling and reuse;
- Promote sound management of chemicals and hazardous waste in accordance with agreed international frameworks, and by 2030 reduce by x% releases to air, water and soil and minimize significant adverse effects on human health and the environment; and
- By 2030, all countries are institutionalizing a culture of sustainable lifestyles for all, including through education and training, awareness raising, sustainability information on products and services, policies and incentives.

Proposed SDG 13: Promote actions all levels to address climate change

SCP aims at moving towards a low carbon society. The combination of behavioral changes, policies to enhance energy efficiency, promote renewable energy uses, switch to low carbon fuels and encourage sustainable transport, and application of related instruments, as part of the SCP approach, are expected to contribute to climate change mitigation, and the transition towards a low carbon society.

Possible targets integrating SCP (based on UN submission to the OWG co-chair, April 2014)

- All countries are applying instruments and incentives for investments in low-carbon solutions in infrastructure, industry and other sectors, by 2030

Proposed SDG 14: Attain conservation and sustainable use of marine resources, oceans and seas
& Proposed SDG 15: Protect and restore terrestrial Ecosystems and halt all biodiversity loss

60% of all ecosystems are damaged or being used unsustainably[5]. The main reason for this is human activities, mostly stemming from unsustainable consumption and production patterns Examples of effective responses are to be found in clean and resource efficient production of natural resource-based commodities which contribute to conserving marine resources, ecosystems and biodiversity. Aichi target 4 on SCP[6] recognizes the importance of SCP within the Convention of Biological Diversity. Conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems generates value through sustainable use of ecosystem services such as sustainable tourism, while sustainable tourism minimizes negative impacts upon them.

Possible targets integrating SCP (based on UN submission to the OWG co-chair, April 2014)

- By 2030, all countries have integrated SCP and resource efficiency principles into policies and relevant frameworks, including integrated coastal zone management plans, ecosystem conservation and tourism policies.

Proposed SDG 17: Strengthen and enhance the means of implementation and global partnership for sustainable development

It was stated in the co-chairs summary of the 10th session of the OWG on SDGs that *"the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on SCP is the principal framework for international cooperation and will need to be adequately resourced"*. This implies that this framework could play an important role as a mean of implementation for the SDGs. It is anticipated that more sustainable and efficient use of key resources like water and energy will be mainstreamed in the 10YFP programmes. Key sectors which are established as proposed SDGs, notably agriculture and food, are also themselves the focus of individual 10YFP programmes.

Conclusion

There are many linkages between SCP and the SDGs that can be expressed in concrete targets, and for which data is available to measure progress towards them. Sustaining the provision of human needs in the long term will depend on shifting to SCP patterns, as recognized in global intergovernmental processes on sustainable development, and most recently at the Rio+ 20 Conference. Embedding the objective of SCP in the SDGs is entirely consistent with the outcomes of these processes, and deserves close examination and further deliberation by Member States. Due to its systemic approach and cross-cutting nature, a shift to SCP patterns will support the necessary transformative change towards sustainable development.

[5] Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005. *Ecosystems and Human Well-being: Synthesis*. Island Press, Washington, DC.
[6] By 2020, at the latest, Governments, business and stakeholders at all levels have taken steps to achieve or have implemented plans for sustainable production and consumption and have kept the impacts of use of natural resources well within safe ecological limits