Chair's Summary
High-level Intersessional Meeting
of the 19th Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development
on a 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production
Panama City, Panama
13-14 January 2011

The CSD-19 Intersessional Meeting on 10YFP was hosted by the Government of Panama, and jointly organized by UN-DESA and UNEP. Its aim was to facilitate a frank, informal and wide-ranging discussion by member States and other stakeholders of what they would like to see in a 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production (10YFP) to be negotiated at CSD-19. The discussion was organized around the goals and objectives of the 10YFP, the functions to be served, potential elements of its institutional arrangements, and identifying key programme areas and criteria and guidelines to build programmes.

This is a summary of the key proposals, ideas and concerns raised in the discussions in plenary and roundtables. The summary follows the order mentioned above, highlighting areas of broad convergence, areas where many or several member States and other stakeholders would appear to agree, and areas where there is no apparent convergence of views and further analysis and discussions are needed.

Opening Session: Setting the context

There was general agreement of participants that a 10YFP is needed and that it should
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accomplishments of the Marrakech Process, which was cited as a good example of incorporating regional and national needs and identifying gaps in implementation. It was further mentioned that the 10YFP could be built upon existing institutional arrangements.

It was suggested that it is time to shift from merely advocating SCP to actually setting up an effective framework to support the mainstreaming of SCP across all areas of decision making, public and private.

Goal and objectives of 10YFP

There was a broad convergence of views that the 10YFP should have ambitious goals. Several countries stressed the need to shape and launch at CSD-19 an "ambitious and actionable 10-year framework of programmes … in support of regional and national initiatives to accelerate the shift towards sustainable consumption and production to promote social and economic development within the carrying capacity of ecosystems".

Participants stressed the importance of a common global vision and shared goals as basis for the 10YFP, but views differed on the nature of the vision. While some participants were of the view that the JPOI provides a vision and goals, and these could simply be reaffirmed rather than spending time negotiating a new vision, others felt that the 10YFP goals should be more actionable than those contained in the JPOI.

Many agreed that aspirational goals are important, but there was less agreement on whether specific, quantified goals would be useful, considering inter alia the wide diversity among countries' level of development and priorities. Several countries suggested the adaptation of overall goals into region-specific goals. A number supported a differentiated approach to defining goals and objectives, based on experience and capacities in different countries, which resembles a "bottom-up" approach.

It was suggested that the 10YFP could adopt primary emphasis on seizing "win-win" opportunities – such as energy efficiency improvements -- with multiple economic, social and/or environmental benefits.

Some participants insisted that participation in the 10YFP should be seen as voluntary.

A few participants suggested that the 10YFP representing an initial step down a long road, which may entail future ambitious agreements, such as a legally binding framework.

Session 1: Functions of 10YFP

There was broad acceptance of the functions enumerated in background paper, namely (1) Commitment on global common goals and vision, (2) Knowledge sharing and networking, (3) Enabling frameworks and strategic planning and investment, (4) Technical cooperation, (5) Collaboration, and (6) Awareness raising, education and civil society mobilization.

Session 2: Institutional structure

There was a rich discussion of possible lessons and elements which might be drawn from the six models reviewed in Background Paper #1 (Marrakech Process, MDGs, SAICM, CGIAR, GAVI and UN-Water, -Energy and –Oceans), as well as some others that were not reviewed (e.g., One UN pilot projects in 8 countries). There was a broad convergence that the six models provided a good basis for discussions; however, a few participants indicated that they found it difficult to draw lessons because some models were designed to serve very different functions.

Usefulness of models

Several countries supported a 10YFP structure similar to the SAICM model with its three key features: political declaration; global policy; programmes. It was also noted approvingly by those countries that SAICM engages all stakeholders on an equal footing.

It was mentioned that, in evaluating how well a model delivers, it is important to evaluate its cost-effectiveness. By one assessment, for example, the SAICM approach is heavy on administration and relatively costly. Some participants suggested that a “SAICM light” could make more sense.

Some countries mentioned the positive lessons from the Marrakech Process, arguing that the MDG model seemed too broad, GAVI too specific, and UN-Water, -Energy, -Oceans perhaps suitable for interagency coordination but not appropriate to facilitating broader stakeholder engagement.

One participant observed that the level of ambition for the 10YFP would influence the choice of model to emulate, as the Marrakech Process model is more voluntary than the other models reviewed. On the other hand, with informality comes flexibility. Generally, there would seem to be a beginning of convergence towards a “SAICM light” or a more formal Marrakech Process.

Flexibility

A number of participants emphasized the need for flexibility of the 10YFP, in order to ensure that programmes could be added as the need arises (e.g., the agriculture supply chain), emerging issues could be addressed, and regional and national specificities accommodated. Reference was made in particular to ways of engaging different stakeholders and ensuring a balanced participation of the public and private sectors.

A few participants stressed that form follows function, suggesting that the key elements of the 10YFP could not be determined before Member States had formally agreed on the functions to be served.

Mainstreaming at national and regional levels

The importance of regional and national SCP centers was underlined. The majority were of the view that focal points should be used as bridges between different levels and it was also underlined that they should involve not only governments but other relevant stakeholders. It was suggested by some that national and regional focal points could report regularly to an international secretariat charged with reviewing progress.

High-level political ownership of the SCP agenda is a challenge which needs to be addressed in many countries, but perhaps especially developing countries faced with multiple other sustainable development challenges. SAICM and MDGs are both models which secured high-level political commitment.

In most countries, SCP remains largely confined to the environment ministries, but a few examples exist of where there has been a demonstrable mainstreaming of SCP, including in the economics, finance and planning ministries. UNEP has supported several countries in such efforts and developed guidelines for that purpose. This is an area where sharing of experiences could be facilitated by the 10YFP.

One participant described a successful experience with sub-regional coordination across environment ministries in Central America. They have developed regional projects and deal with donors and development banks in a coordinated fashion, which has facilitated fundraising for the work programme developed.

It was noted that some SCP challenges call for a global, cross-regional approach, as many supply chains are global in nature and taking a life-cycle approach to SCP would necessarily involve multiple regions.

Several participants noted that an effective 10YFP would require mainstreaming the SCP agenda into the work of most UN funds and programmes and agencies of the UN system, including the IFIs, taking into consideration their governing structures and arrangements, as well as into that of bilateral development cooperation agencies.

Knowledge sharing

Different structures and arrangements can facilitate knowledge sharing at different levels. At regional level, research centres and knowledge hubs can be valuable. At National level sharing can be done through national networks and cross-ministerial task forces or

Stakeholder engagement

A number of options were mentioned for engagement of the private sector, including public-private partnerships; voluntary agreements with government on cleaner production; providing the right incentives to private sector engagement; and building SCP into core business practices.

All stakeholders have a role to play in SCP and the form of their engagement will vary. Governments have a strategic role to play, first as those who will decide on the 10YFP at CSD-19 and then as those with the power to create laws and regulations which could facilitate implementation e.g. by changing production practices and consumer behaviour.

Financing

Several member States and other participants stressed the importance of predictable financial resources for implementation of the 10YFP.

Financing is an area where member States seem still to be rather far apart. Most acknowledged that there would be financial implications associated with implementing the 10YFP and these should be assessed as much as possible. Several countries indicated the need for new and additional resources. Several delegations indicated support for an SCP trust fund, along the lines of the SAICM Quick Start Programme, that could help to focus donor support in a more predictable and transparent process.

However, many countries were in favour of a more efficient use and leveraging of

Coordination and role of secretariat

Several member States said they supported an efficient organisational structure which would facilitate technical exchanges and coordination and review regularly the 10YFP implementation, by using existing UN structures, promoting inter-agency collaboration and involving major stakeholders. There was a strong preference for reliance on existing institutions for 10YFP implementation, with greater coherence and coordination among them. For that, several agreed that a lead coordinating institution could be useful.

A number of participants supported the establishment of a dedicated secretariat for the 10YFP. Some participants referred to one or two organizations. Others indicated that accountability would be enhanced if one agency had oversight of the process, and they supported the creation of a single secretariat within an existing institution based on its proven comparative advantage, to serve a coordinating function. Nevertheless, they stressed the need to coordinate with all relevant UN agencies, any of which could lead programmes in their respective areas of expertise.

A few participants made a distinction between a coordination function and a secretariat function, and one observed that in the case of SAICM its governing body sets strategic direction and coordinates among members, while the secretariat works to implement its decisions.

Session 3: Criteria and guidelines for programme selection

There was a broad agreement that the criteria in background paper #2 for programme selection form a good basis for discussion at the IPM. It was emphasized that programmes should contribute to progress by integrating the three pillars of sustainable development. They should advance SCP practices, including by promoting an efficient and sustainable use of resources within the carrying capacity of ecosystems. They should stimulate creativity and innovation. They should be flexible and adaptable to different national and regional needs, priorities and capacities.

Criteria

There was a suggestion that programmes could be thematic, covering broad areas. Such "umbrella" programmes could support multiple thematic initiatives at national and regional levels. An example of a flexible and comprehensive approach is the work of the Marrakech Process on sustainable public procurement, with tools developed by the Marrakech Task Force and tested and adapted to both developed and developing countries.

Some suggested that programmes should be lead-IN focus, while many emphasized that they should be applicable to developed and developing countries and have the flexibility to be adapted to different needs, priorities and capacities. To that end, criteria could exist for global programmes, which would support regional, national and local initiatives.

It was suggested that programmes should cover areas not yet addressed by international policies, promote synergies and avoid duplication. There was wide agreement that programmes should address gaps in existing initiatives, the case of agri-food supply chains being given as one example.

Multi-stakeholder participation in programmes, from concept development through implementation to monitoring, is important to confer ownership; some felt that it should be a criterion. The importance of engaging agribusiness was stressed, including through corporate social responsibility and entrepreneurship promotion.

Many agreed that programmes should take a life cycle approach but that not every programme could or should address all stages of the life cycle. At least one participant indicated that programmes should use a "mix of instruments" to effect shifts in SCP patterns.

Other criteria suggested include: leverage resources from different sources, ensure transparency, avoid "green protectionism", provide incentives, be voluntary, have a strong scientific base, have a positive benefit-cost ratio, and concretely result in changed SCP patterns. The last would require indicators to assess consuming differently, less, or better.

Several felt that criteria should be based on previous experience of the reviewed models and others that were not reviewed here, such as poverty reduction strategies, the Delivering as One pilot initiative, and the African 10YFP on SCP.

Components

Some indicated that it is important to distinguish, in the Annex circulated for the meeting, between programmes (global structure) and national and regional initiatives – several of which can be supported by a single programme.

There was also some support for the idea that programmes need an indicator and monitoring component, possibly using at least a minimum set of standard indicators. How that might work in practice would need to be more clearly defined. One participant warned that past efforts to agree on indicators have been progressing very slowly.

Areas

Several participants indicated that the Marrakech Process has already identified regional SCP priorities based on processes held in each region and these priorities have guided the submission of several programmes in the Annex. Other initiatives and agencies also have developed capacity and lessons that could be scaled up.

The contribution of the international financial institutions and regional development banks should be further considered.

Private sector resources – not just finance but technology and expertise – also need to be tapped, and it is critical to provide incentives for active private sector engagement in implementation.

It was noted that, in designing programmes to support SCP, we should challenge the assumption that developed countries are "clean" and developing countries "dirty" and thus the South will be handed over capabilities to be cleaned. Developed countries need to take the lead in changing consumption and production patterns, but learning can go both ways. There is also considerable scope for South-South co-operation.

The SCP work of the UN regional commissions and a number of UN agencies was presented.

At the regional level, regional commissions implement sustainable development programmes of priority to their regions, enabling sharing of experiences. In Latin American region, for example, these include programmes on low carbon transport, urban development, sustainable cities, small and medium enterprise development, scientific and technological development policy, and fiscal policy, that can support implementation of the 10YFP. Regional commissions are multidisciplinary in their staff and in the institutions they support, extending beyond the environmental realm. For instance, a policy observatory is currently being developed that could support exchanges of information and experiences on SCP initiatives.

Working closely with national governments, especially on capacity building, UNDP is the lead UN agency in each country and is all relevant to the SCP process. UNDP has a large natural resource management portfolio focused on primary production, across landscapes covering agriculture, fisheries, forestry, tourism, protected areas, water, energy and adaptation to climate change. Increasingly it is also working with the private sector and market development. Key approaches of relevance to SCP are supply chain management, certification and carbon credits, and economic valuation of ecosystem services. UNDP country offices can support national implementation of SCP, especially programmes to support sustainable consumption.

UNEP has been active in the field of sustainable consumption and production since Johannesburg, with its Governing Council endorsing its first decision on SCP in 2003. Since then, UNEP has supported the Secretariat of the Marrakech Process jointly with UN DESA. Since 2006 SCP is one of six core priorities within UNEP's programme of work, which define the focus of UNEP's activities. UNEP works with diverse actors, including public authorities, international agencies, industry associations, civil society to mainstream and support the development and implementation of sustainable consumption and production approaches, practices and policies. In consultation with key partners, UNEP has proposed 11 programmes for possible inclusion in the 10YFP, based on the

priorities identified through the Marrakech Process and on existing initiatives and partnerships, including the work of the Marrakech Process Task Forces.

The UNIDO-UNEP programme of cleaner production centres launched in 1994 now includes 48 centres around the globe. They have produced technical tools and training materials to train thousands of national CP experts. Regional roundtables and networks of NCPCs are established in Africa, Asia and Latin America. As a result of the programme's evaluation in 2008/09, a refocused programme on Resource Efficient and Cleaner Production (RECP) was launched. Though the RECP concept has identified win-win opportunities, large-scale implementation across industries and countries has not occurred. The new programme seeks to expand and strengthen the network of NCPCs and other RECP service providers, capture those win-win opportunities, and mainstream RECP into government policy and enterprise finance.

Participants acknowledged that the work of the United Nations agencies and programmes is encouraging, including those not present at this meeting such as UNITAR, but suggested that more is needed to scale up and mainstream SCP.

Way forward

The Chair of CSD-19 stressed the need to work towards achieving a 10YFP which represents a highest common denominator. There is emerging convergence on the functions of a 10YFP, a coordinated institutional structure, and the criteria for developing programmes.

In preparing for IPM, the CSD-19 Chair indicated the need for a further background document jointly prepared between UN-DESA and UNEP to elaborate further on those elements where there is a sense of convergence. This document is intended to further facilitate discussions during the IPM.

Though the Annex of the Background Paper #2 on programmes and initiatives was considered useful, it was suggested that the Secretariat consult further with member States and other stakeholders on potential programmes for the 10YFP before the IPM and reflect the results as appropriate in a revised Annex to be made available as a background paper for the IPM.

Many ministries and officials in member States are still not very familiar with SCP and a few participants indicated that delegates should go home and raise awareness in their own countries about SCP. The Chair's Summary could be used as basis for regional consultations with a view to building a regional consensus on key elements for the 10YFP ahead of the IPM.

The Chair of CSD-19 pointed to the need to brief NY based delegations, 2 to 3 weeks before the IPM, on the outcome of the Intersessional meeting.