



# Sustainable Consumption and Cleaner Production

## Global Status 2002





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**UNITED NATIONS PUBLICATION**

**ISBN: 92-807-2073-2**

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# Acknowledgements

The Sustainable Consumption report was written by Professor Chris Ryan, from RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia, and the Institute for Industrial Environmental Economics (IIIEE), Lund University, Sweden. It was produced for the UNEP Division of Technology, Industry and Environment (UNEP DTIE), under the guidance of Bas de Leeuw, Co-ordinator of the Sustainable Consumption Programme, and Anne Solgaard, Junior Professional Officer, Sustainable Consumption. The author gratefully acknowledges the research assistance of Helen Nilsson of the IIIEE.

The initial draft of the Cleaner Production report was prepared by Prasad Modak and his colleagues, Rahul Datar, Lavanya Karthik, Nagasimha Swami and Mrinalini Patwardhan at the Environmental Management Centre, India. Surya Chandak, Co-ordinator of the Cleaner Production Programme and Garrette Clark under the guidance of Fritz Balkau at the Production and Consumption Branch, managed the project for UNEP.

The reports were presented for review and comment at the 7th International High-level Seminar on Cleaner Production, April 2002 in Prague, Czech Republic, and the Implementing Sustainable Consumption and Production Policies expert meeting, held in May, 2002, in Paris, France. They were placed on UNEP's website and requests for feedback were sent to Cleaner Production centres and other stakeholders. All comments were reviewed and incorporated.

Both reports were reviewed and finalized by UNEP DTIE, under the direction of Jacqueline Aloisi de Larderel, Assistant Executive Director, UNEP. UNEP DTIE extends its appreciation to all those individuals and organisations whose contributions have greatly helped in the preparation of the reports.

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# Preface



Fifteen years ago UNEP launched the Cleaner Production Programme. The aim was to promote more efficient use of raw materials, including water and energy, to reduce emissions and wastes at source, and to reduce risks for people and the environment. Cleaner Production applies to production processes and products as well as services. Agenda 21, adopted at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, clearly referred to Cleaner Production as the way to reconcile economic growth with environmental protection. More broadly, it recognized the need to change our production and consumption patterns.

Since Rio, UNEP has been monitoring progress around the world in the implementation of Cleaner Production and similar approaches such as eco-efficiency or green productivity. The last ten years have seen significant achievements in Cleaner Production and Sustainable Consumption. In the field of Cleaner Production global awareness has been raised, various tools have been developed to help implement the Cleaner Production approach, demonstration projects have been conducted, National Cleaner Production Centres - reflective of capacity building - have been established, an International Declaration on Cleaner Production has been launched and Regional Roundtables are meeting regularly to exchange experience and best practices.

However, it has become increasingly evident that the environmental gains achieved by programmes aimed at Cleaner Production and eco-efficiency are being offset by trends on the demand side -- population growth, an increasing standard of living and individual desires to consume products and services. This is usually referred to as the "rebound effect". Supply--production and demand--consumption are therefore two sides of the same coin, and the challenge we face today is to establish a framework for action in which producers and consumers can move together along the road to sustainable development. Only by adopting a 'preventive' environmental management approach throughout the product life cycle -- product design, manufacture, use and disposal -- can we move towards the objective of delinking economic growth from environmental impacts.

This is why work has also been initiated in the field of Sustainable Consumption. The Life Cycle Initiative has been launched in order to promote and facilitate the use of sound and transparent environmental product criteria, to be used for eco-design and eco-labeling by business and for green procurement by governments. National Cleaner Production Centres are being trained on how to use these demand side tools. With help from the advertising industry, state-of-the-art market research and communication techniques are being developed through UNEP's Advertising Forum. Youth groups are being empowered to take action as well, through the "YouthXchange" website, and a review of national implementation of sustainable consumption policies has been carried out in co-operation with Consumers International. Even so, for all that

has been achieved, much more remains to be done, and as highlighted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg, South Africa in September 2002, *“Fundamental changes in the way societies produce and consume are indispensable for achieving global sustainable development.”*

The Global Status Reports on Sustainable Consumption and Cleaner Production take stock of what has been achieved so far, what lessons have been learnt and propose future courses of action. This publication contains the executive summary of each Global Status Report. The full reports, which contain regional overviews and results from global surveys and activities, are available in CD ROM format from UNEP or can be accessed on the web at [www.uneptie.org/pc/cp/library.htm](http://www.uneptie.org/pc/cp/library.htm). It is hoped that the information in these reports will be a useful reference for stakeholders engaged in the process of changing the current patterns of production and consumption to more sustainable ones.

The reports launched at the 7th International High-level Seminar on Cleaner Production in Prague in April 2002, provided input to the World Summit on Sustainable Development and will serve as a basis for further follow-up action for tackling global as well as local environmental problems.

UNEP, in co-operation with other UN bodies, is committed to continue to catalyze and contribute to this world-wide effort which to be successful needs the full and active engagement of all partners in government, business and civil society.

Jacqueline Aloisi de Larderel  
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Director, Division of Technology, Industry and Economics  
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## Sustainable Consumption: A Global Status Report: Executive Summary

September 2002

The growing attention to issues of Sustainable Consumption is a natural outcome of decades of work on Cleaner Production and eco-efficient industrial systems. It represents the final step in a progressive widening of the horizons of pollution prevention; a widening which has gone from a focus on production processes (Cleaner Production), to products, (eco-design), then to *product-systems* (incorporating transport logistics, end-of-life collection and component reuse or materials recycling) and to *eco-innovation* (new products and product-systems and enterprises designed for win-win solutions for business and the environment). Action focused on *consumption* has highlighted the need to address the creation of new systems of *production and consumption*, systems that might be truly sustainable, environmentally, economically, systems that will enhance the quality and equality of cultural, social and physical existence for all people.

This report is an overview of action and thinking on the issue of Sustainable Consumption since the publication of *Agenda 21* in 1992. Its focus is the ten years that have elapsed since that publication. Chapter 4 of *Agenda 21* (Changing Consumption Patterns) became the starting point for international work directed to improving understanding of global consumption patterns and their environmental and social impacts. It also led to work, by a number of United Nations and international agencies, on the development of appropriate policies and programmes of action to change unsustainable consumption patterns, and to promote the importance of sustainable and equitable consumption for human development. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) through its Division

UNEP has initiated a series of international consultations on the issue in four regions - Africa, Asia Pacific, Eastern Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean and published a report, *Consumption Opportunities*, which made important contributions to strategic thinking about Sustainable Consumption. UNEP recognises that industrialised countries have a special responsibility to promote, facilitate and achieve. However, consuming and producing more efficiently will be fundamental to any successful strategies for eradicating poverty and creating business opportunities in developing countries. UNEP has thus placed great emphasis on promoting the concept for developing countries and countries with economies in transition and developing capacity building programmes, designed to raise awareness, inform and train decision-makers, in governments and (small- and medium-sized) companies. In addition to carrying out consumer trend studies focusing on global consumers and youth, supported by the advertising and communications industry, UNEP has also been reviewing the implementation of a set of Consumer Protection Guidelines specifically related to Sustainable Consumption. These were adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1999 as a specific section of the general guidelines for consumer protection (1985).

The Global Status Report examines progress and the status of the area at the time of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) - August - September 2002. It examines whether the issues of concern in 1992 at Rio are still relevant today.

The history of the Sustainable Consumption debate is considered with reference to the key players involved. The outcomes of the UNEP regional consultations and the nature of actions proposed by UN agencies and governments, business, consumers and environment organisations and research institutions are reviewed and future action considered. A number of Industry Sector Reports have been prepared by relevant industry organisations and UNEP for WSSD. These reports review action and development over the last ten years

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