

## **Joint input from European NGO-networks on OWG 7 (January 2014)**

### **Sustainable Cities**

Today, half the world's 7 billion people live in cities. By 2030 there will be over one billion more urban residents and 60% of the area expected to be urban remains to be built. Up to 2050, the urban population will grow by 2.5 to 3 billion people, especially in low-income countries, increasing the urban share to 2/3 of the world's population.

In this increasingly urbanised world, achieving sustainable cities will be decisive for keeping global environmental and social equilibrium. Therefore, it is very important that the urbanization model is a sustainable one.

The new development paradigm should take into account that (i) about 70% of global economic activity is urban, (ii) middle classes already exist or are emerging in all the regions of the world; and therefore changing their consumption and production patterns (iii) more than 70% of the world's poorest people live today in middle-income countries, primarily in cities.

Cities are an opportunity to achieve a sustainable future, but present huge inequalities, with lots of people living in slums standing alongside of rich quarters have to be adequately addressed. Housing and basic services should be made accessible also for the poorest and phenomena like the real estate bubbles should be tightly regulated.,

Cities are a major source of GHG emissions and pollution on the planet and the largest consumers of natural resources and energy globally, especially through transport and housing. In the near future cities will define the quality of life for 2/3 of the world's population. Fast urban population growth rather than achieving greater efficiency, is delivering losing density, missing social relationships, reproduction of unsustainable lifestyles, rising transportation costs, congestion, and segregation of socioeconomic groups.

The subsidiarity principle is crucial. Therefore we see the advantages of a stand-alone goal on sustainable cities, as a follow up of Local Agenda 21. The goal has to focus mostly on the institutionalization of a local, participatory and inclusive governance model with the aim to implement all the (future) global SDGs on a local level, which can deliver:

- Effective decentralization and strengthening of local authorities .
- Improved democratic local governance, with principles of self-governance and participatory democracy.
- Inclusiveness for the most vulnerable groups, including the population living in the slums, temporal settlements, and/or (rural) migrants.
- Development of a strong capacity building framework including planification, spatial planning and governance as basic blocks to attain sustainable cities.

### **Sustainable transport**

We see this topic as very important element but don't consider it as a goal as such. Sustainable transport is an objective that has to be integrated and concretized in the goals on energy, sustainable cities, health, SCP, ...

## Sustainable Consumption and Production (incl. waste and chemicals)

A stand alone goal for SCP is necessary and will be a guide for the implementation of the 10YFP on SCP (adopted in the Rio+20 outcome).

The SCP agenda will only succeed if the international context is appropriate for their implementation. So we think that the SCP agenda cannot be isolated from other global trade and market policies **such as advocated by the WTO and implemented in bilateral trade agreements**. It is crucial that the WTO is compatible with the SCP agenda, not the other way around, as now is mentioned in Jo'burg Plan of Implementation and partly in the Rio+20-outcome.

**We would underline the importance to take away the following barriers for achieving SCP:**

- GDP growth obsession and therefor overconsumption of resources driven by the current debt-based economy. It is important to get the economy back to real.
- Inappropriate financial, monetary and economic systems to fully implement SCP.
- Lack of, or insufficient, awareness, where the existing "consumer blindness" leads to unrealistic consumption growth without knowledge of the direct and/or indirect consequences.
- Wrongly directed subsidies and investments strategies: we need to phase out urgently the non-sustainable and ineffective ones. This means also adapting the rules of subsidies in the WTO.

We also want to stress that technical and market based solution will never be enough to tackle the environmental and social challenges: We need to focus on **fundamental changes in lifestyles**, which can be obtained with **social innovation strategies**. SCP is not only about environmental issues, but also about social improvements like labour conditions, health and gender equality. Also shareholder values need to be transformed, so that maximising profit is not a legal objective anymore for a company.

In general we want to stress the need for **legal and globally applicable frameworks**, so that banning of toxic products and polluting activities and access to court for victims in case of damage caused by polluting industry becomes easier. Corporate accountability is crucial.

The SCP agenda has to be equitable and fair for all, and should lead to a fairly distribution of the use of natural resources around the world. For this to be achieved some regions and sectors have to decrease drastically the use of resources, so that other regions/sector can grow. A **contraction and convergence** scheme is needed. We have to use methods of capping the use of resources and energy, and **realise absolute decoupling**. Further, the economy needs to be adjusted in a way that fits into the planetary boundaries. We propose to work on tools how to implement this, and use the knowledge of the UNEPs International Resource Panel.

The challenges on **waste and chemicals** has to be included in the SCP agenda, but it is at the same time crosscutting subject for other goals like Sustainable Cities, Health, Agriculture, Water, etc.

## Climate Change

We aim for a stand-alone goal for Climate Change, as it would strengthen climate change action at intergovernmental and national levels, so as to reduce the risks posed by climate change to development and poverty eradication. It would not replace or duplicate the negotiations that take place under the UNFCCC.

To deliver this aim a climate change goal would need to have the following objectives:

- Reframe climate change and climate justice as an issue for poverty eradication, sustainability and social justice.
- Drive more and better action on climate change
- Build political momentum for an ambitious UNFCCC agreement in 2015.

Nevertheless we would also aim for mainstreaming climate change in all other relevant SDGs, as it is interlinked with all.

Targets could be either process or outcome based, or a combination of both, but should address the four pillars of the UNFCCC: mitigation, adaptation, technology development transfers and finance. For instance:

- Meeting the UNFCCC global goal of avoiding dangerous climate change
- Reducing vulnerability to climate change
- Moving to a low-carbon society
- Reducing the inequalities of climate change
- Building capacity to deal with climate change

## Disaster risk reduction

Disaster risk is a fundamental threat to sustainable development and eradication of poverty with negative impacts that roll back decades of development gains. The detrimental impacts of these events on development have been seen over and over, with destruction of lives and livelihoods setting back development progress and increasing levels of poverty—or forcing new groups into poverty or driving migration.

While hazards are natural, disasters are not. The scientific community has pointed out that the current drivers of risk are linked to poor policies and practices in land-use planning, governance, urbanization, natural resource management, ecosystem management as well as increasing poverty levels. For example, the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment found that many of our essential ecosystems are being used unsustainably, thereby reducing not only their services but their capacities as natural buffers to provide protection against hazards, which is essential in protection and sustainability of livelihoods.

Because risks are only increasing, addressing the dual and inter-related challenges of climate change, resource management, good governance and disaster risk is one of the most critical necessities for the sustainable development agenda beyond 2015. Disaster risk reduction is a cross-cutting issue that is intricately tied to different elements of sustainable development and therefore it is crucial to mainstream it in all SDGs.

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