



SUMMARY REPORT OF THE WORKSHOP ON CONSUMPTION IN A SUSTAINABLE WORLD 2-4 JUNE 1998

The "Consumption in a Sustainable World" workshop convened from 2-4 June 1998 in Kabelvåg, Norway. The workshop was sponsored by the Norwegian Ministry of Environment and was attended by more than 50 individuals from 28 countries, including government officials and representatives of international and non-governmental organizations, industry, labor and the scientific community, participating in their personal capacities. Joke Waller Hunter, OECD Director for Environment, chaired the workshop.

The meeting is part of a consultative process undertaken by the Norwegian Ministry of Environment to encourage pioneers in sustainable consumption from around the world to identify the best ways of accelerating international action to spread good practice, remove obstacles to further progress and monitor the results. The aims of the workshop were to: generate a shared understanding of sustainable consumption priorities; identify examples of good practice; lay the foundations for new international partnerships; and generate specific proposals to move the process forward.

The starting point for discussion at the workshop was a background document produced by the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), "Making Consumption Sustainable - Accelerating International Action," which provides orientation about the scope of the issue and the focus of the workshop. IIED collected written submissions by participants on the content prior to the meeting and incorporated these into a workbook, which served as the working document of the meeting. The workbook outlines elements for a shared understanding of sustainable consumption, points out areas of uncertainty and strategic priorities, provides numerous examples of good practice in improving products and changing consumption patterns, and identifies areas for international cooperation.

Workshop participants engaged in discussions in Plenary sessions and four discussion groups on sustainable consumption priorities, lessons from current sustainable consumption initiatives, key factors for the success of initiatives as well as elements that are missing, and international action on sustainable consumption. They formulated a number of new initiatives and recommendations for action that they committed themselves to undertake. The outcome of the workshop will be a revised version of the workbook that incorporates these initiatives and recommendations as well as the conclusions from their discussions on the above topics. The revised workbook will be presented to the seventh session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-7) in 1999, whose cross-sectoral theme will be changing consumption and production patterns. The participants also agreed to form a Kabelvåg Task Force to take further steps to implement their recommendations.

Other highlights of the workshop included an address by Norwegian Secretary of State Jesper W. Simonsen and a site visit to a pilot sustainable community project in the municipality of Steigen.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE PROCESS

The 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) put changing consumption patterns at the heart of the Agenda 21 action plan for sustainable development and called on industrialized countries to take the lead. Following UNCED, a number of governments, international organizations, businesses, research institutes and citizens' organizations, mostly in the industrialized world, began to explore the practical implications of the global sustainable consumption agenda. The Norwegian Ministry of Environment responded by organizing a series of meetings to strategically address the issue.

SORIA MORIA SYMPOSIUM ON SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION: The Soria Moria Symposium on Sustainable Consumption was held in Oslo, Norway from 19-20 June 1994. The meeting was chaired by Thorbjørn Berntsen, Norwegian Minister of the Environment, and brought together 40 participants, including several high-ranking officials from the OECD countries, experts, UN representatives and NGOs. More than 40 observers also attended. The symposium focused on industrialized countries and covered overall aspects of sustainable consumption including key areas such as energy and transport. It discussed possible indicators of progress and how to achieve necessary changes, addressing questions of what governments and each sector of society can and should do and what can be achieved through international cooperation. There was broad support for a detailed analysis of the relationship between production and consumption patterns and their environmental, economic and social impacts. The symposium reconfirmed that industrialized countries should assume a leading role, but all governments as well as NGOs should cooperate in the process of change. The symposium proposed that the CSD consider establishing a network among interested countries for exchanging information on practical experience in promoting sustainable consumption, and establishing a task force of experts designated by interested governments to recommend ways and means to achieve more sustainable patterns of production and consumption in both the public and private sectors.

OSLO ROUNDTABLE ON SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION: This Ministerial Roundtable took place in Oslo from 6-10 February 1995. The aim of the meeting was to prepare elements of an international work programme for the CSD on sustainable consumption and production. The roundtable concentrated on developing a global strategy for sustainable consumption that takes the end-user as the starting point. The roundtable concluded that more sustainable production and

consumption will require long-term structural change to economies and lifestyles. Among the recommendations, particular emphasis was placed on: building partnerships for sustainable consumption between different sectors of society; establishing a policy framework for sustainable consumption; extending producer responsibility for the environmental impacts of goods and services; setting governmental examples in sustainable consumption through environmentally sound public procurement and administration; and empowering individuals and households to adopt more sustainable consumption patterns. The results of the roundtable were presented to the CSD in 1995 and provided a basis for the work programme adopted by CSD-3 on changing consumption and production patterns.

WORKSHOP ON SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION: CLARIFYING THE CONCEPTS: This workshop, jointly sponsored by the OECD and the Norwegian Environment Ministry, took place from 2-4 July 1995 in Rosendal, Norway. The workshop aimed to improve the conceptual basis for policy development in OECD countries and help focus the efforts of other international organizations on the most promising conceptual approaches to developing policies for more sustainable patterns of production and consumption. The workshop concluded, *inter alia*, that: encouraging eco-efficiency was viewed as the most promising strategy; concepts such as carrying capacity and critical loads have the most intuitive meaning for politicians and the public and are valuable for setting targets; there is a need to develop more effective parameters to define, measure and integrate environmental and economic problems and measure the effectiveness of policy implementation; and objectives and policies should focus on reducing energy and material flows and their harmful impacts, taking into account their potential social and economic effects.

WORKSHOP ON RETHINKING PAPER CONSUMPTION: The Norwegian Ministry of Environment and the OECD co-sponsored this workshop in Oslo on 14 November 1996. Participants agreed on the need to examine and understand how and why paper is used. They highlighted three reasons for rethinking paper consumption: to achieve efficiency gains; to improve life cycle sustainability; and to widen access to use. The workshop concluded that: the debate on paper consumption is still new and needs further elaboration; robust methods are needed to understand consumption; policy measures aimed at end-users may not be the most effective means of improving consumption patterns as intermediaries may have a greater impact; social and technological innovation must be encouraged and constraints removed; and a systemic approach must be taken.

WORKSHOP ON SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION: PATTERNS AND POLICIES: The Governments of Brazil and Norway hosted this workshop from 25-28 November 1996 in Brasilia, Brazil, to identify the key elements for a shared North-South vision on the issue of changing consumption and production patterns. The conclusions of the meeting note, *inter alia*, that: the issue of consumption and production patterns has the common interest of, and deserves additional international cooperation between, industrialized and developing countries; exchange of information and experiences on national policy development and implementation is a determining factor toward achieving progress in making patterns of consumption and production more sustainable; and the current debate should have a broader scope, going beyond technological and policy change to incorporate the human dimension, in order to better understand the needs and values that underpin sustainable livelihoods.

REPORT OF THE WORKSHOP

On the evening of Tuesday, 2 June 1998, Oddmund Graham, Environmental Counsellor, Permanent Norwegian Mission to the EU, inaugurated the workshop as participants embarked on a boat ride through the Lofoten Islands. He expressed hope that the

meeting would produce practical efforts and networks for tangible action, particularly at the local and national levels. He appealed to participants not to engage in general debates or repeat polemical statements but to contribute concrete suggestions and strive to realize common efforts and shared values for a more sustainable world.

On the morning of Wednesday, 3 June, Chair Joke Waller Hunter, OECD Director for Environment, launched the day's discussions by stressing the need to move the topic of sustainable consumption out of the conference room and into the marketplace. She asked participants to consider whether their choices in the marketplace are consistent with the policy objectives they have negotiated in the conference rooms. She recommended that they examine concrete and successful initiatives and attempt to formulate practical options for action. She expressed her desire for participants to return home from the meeting with a shared understanding of sustainable consumption and inspiration to pursue existing initiatives with renewed vigor. Regarding the output of the meeting, she emphasized that rather than another policy declaration, the goal would be to create a results-oriented, practical tool, possibly a revised version of the workbook, which already provides the basis of a shared understanding since it embodies a compilation of participants' views.

Following these opening remarks, workshop participants met in two consecutive Plenary sessions on understanding sustainable consumption priorities and on lessons from current sustainable consumption initiatives. Nick Robins and Sarah Roberts of IIED introduced the two Plenary discussions by outlining the workbook's findings on these issues. In the afternoon of this first day, participants divided into four discussion groups to formulate a list of key factors for the success of initiatives as well as elements that are missing. On the following morning participants also convened in discussion groups and formulated proposals for new initiatives to accelerate action on sustainable consumption, building on the conclusions of the previous day's discussions. These proposals were presented in a Plenary session in the afternoon.

UNDERSTANDING SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION PRIORITIES

Nick Robins and Sarah Roberts, IIED (UK), introduced the first topic for discussion in Plenary, "Understanding Sustainable Consumption Priorities," which addressed the first aim of the workshop -- to build a shared understanding of these priorities. Robins outlined the goals of sustainable consumption as delineated in the workbook: making goods and services serve the goals of sustainable development; influencing the choices made by individuals, corporations and public authorities; using the demand side to lever life cycle social, economic and environmental benefits; and addressing the underlying patterns of demand, such as values, knowledge, marketing, prices, regulation and infrastructure.

The workbook highlighted that the impacts of consumption on the environment, poverty, health, economic efficiency and quality of life were highlighted as five reasons for action to improve consumption. It noted that sustainable consumption was viewed as an umbrella concept that is not yet universally understood. Robins highlighted a number of principles that emerged from participants' contributions, which emphasized that sustainable consumption: is a means, not an end; requires a balance of social, economic and environmental aims; is about informed choice, knowledge and values; aims to institutionalize alternatives; requires a multi-level approach; needs continuous improvement; and requires open public participation.

Roberts presented priorities for action that had been proposed, including the need to: tackle the unsustainable consumption patterns of the rich; strike balance between globalization and local needs; ensure that changes are practical, popular and politically attractive; focus on critical consumption clusters such as energy,

transport, food and housing; recognize the strong steering role of governments; harness the power of the business community; link lifestyles and livelihoods; seek a rural/urban balance; target key social groups; and rethink measures of success. She summarized that sustainable consumption requires a shared understanding and is about making goods and services serve sustainable development, and noted that there are strong reasons for improving consumption and clear priorities for action.

The floor was then opened for discussion on the need for a shared understanding of sustainable consumption priorities. Participants discussed the need for shifts in behavior and attitudes toward more sustainable consumption. They noted that in industrialized countries there is ambivalence and a reluctance to change, and a notion that the future will not be as good if sustainable consumption prevails. The need to overcome these problems was stressed, by demonstrating that there is something to gain rather than something to lose by consuming more sustainably. One participant emphasized the importance of retaining a modest role for the public and respecting individual freedom if efforts toward sustainable consumption are to succeed. Several participants underlined the importance of responsibility, both of individuals and of corporations. The difficulty of selling social and moral responsibility to the public was noted. Consumers must be convinced that it is to their advantage to consume more sustainably, by providing more sustainable alternatives that serve them better, last longer and cost less. There is a need for government action and incentives to send these kind of strong market signals. The imposition of "value-loss" taxes was proposed. Participants discussed the concept of value and highlighted the need to restructure it to incorporate non-economic aspects.

A number of interventions explored the question of how to institutionalize alternatives. The importance of informed choice, which respects individuals' freedom to choose but provides information about more sustainable alternatives, was underscored, as was the need to find means of making competitiveness converge with sustainability.

Numerous speakers highlighted the important role of education and information on sustainable consumption. The workshop emphasized the essential roles of the media and information technology in educating and spreading information to consumers. However, participants highlighted the lack of access to modern means of communication by the majority of the poor in the South as a significant obstacle. One participant noted the lack of feedback to consumers to show them how their behavior affects the environment. A number of participants stressed the need to employ the tools of marketing to combat materialistic behavior.

One participant noted the lack of research on how people react to threats to the environment and how to motivate people to change their behavior. It was suggested that one of the workshop's recommendations be to engage the social sciences more actively in the sustainable consumption debate.

The reluctance by developing countries to join in the sustainable consumption debate was discussed. It was noted that lip service is paid to the importance of meeting basic needs and addressing poverty, but these aspects are not as integrated into the sustainable consumption agenda as they should be.

Participants discussed the workbook's contention that making consumption sustainable is the responsibility of the rich. One speaker disagreed, emphasizing that it is a need for the poor but also a responsibility of the poor, because they consume inefficiently. It was pointed out that the poor consume "insufficiently" rather than inefficiently. Using the example of burning wood for energy, one participant said it must be recognized that "inefficient consumption" in the South is not by choice but is forced due to the absence of choices. The poor need to be provided with alternatives.

Discussion emphasized the need to narrow the debate and prioritize different kinds of consumption, by focusing on core consumption sectors such as energy, transport, housing and tourism. One participant underscored the need to focus on the root causes of unsustainable consumption and suggested that the extraction and production stages must be addressed. Others contended that efforts should focus on the demand side.

The need to place more emphasis the role of technology and technological change in changing consumption patterns was noted. One participant stressed the importance not only of having clear priorities for action but also time frames for change, and proposed that the workshop's output consist of actions rather than simply recommendations, such as the formation of a task force on sustainable consumption.

LESSONS FROM CURRENT SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION INITIATIVES

Several participants offered examples of lessons learned from sustainable consumption initiatives in their countries. One speaker highlighted the depletion of fish stocks in Korea and emphasized that their depletion was not due to a lack of alternatives but to lack of awareness of the longer-term effects of human activities. He stressed the need for people to think about sustainable consumption in terms of the benefits it can create for them. He also emphasized the importance of demonstrating to developing countries that increasing energy efficiency is good for their economies, which will motivate them to take on needed commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the climate change convention negotiations.

Several interventions underscored the need to identify the social drivers of current unsustainable consumption patterns. The development of solid science to provide supportive evidence of the need for sustainable consumption was identified as a priority, particularly in the area of energy efficiency. Participants also discussed the role of technology transfer, noting that it is not necessarily the answer and that developing countries must be enabled to leapfrog the less sustainable technologies used by industrialized countries in the past. One speaker highlighted the need to consider the element of time in consumption and the potential effects of creating more free time by providing more time-saving products.

Differences in consumption patterns as well as in understandings of sustainable consumption in different parts of the world were highlighted. It was noted that over-consumption and unsustainable production occur in both the North and the South, while people's basic needs remain unmet. Participants explored the question of whether developing countries' consumption patterns will become more sustainable as they develop economically. Some contended that they will if alternatives are provided. It was noted that with increasing economic growth, consumption often becomes increasingly unsustainable. Participants agreed that incorporating sustainable consumption within the development process is the best approach. One speaker emphasized that if global solutions to unsustainable consumption are to be sought, there must be relevant local input and local definition of appropriate agendas for sustainable consumption.

Participants emphasized the need to target the middle class for education on sustainable consumption. It was noted that urbanization in developing countries is creating a middle class that is increasingly alienated from the environmental impacts of their consumption and that looks to the North as a model. The need to educate Northern consumers about the impact of their consumption on people and the environment in the South was also highlighted. It was noted that developed countries have much to learn from developing countries, particularly from traditional knowledge and practices. Participants agreed that OECD countries have a responsibility to set an example and demonstrate the will to take the lead. The Kyoto Protocol was highlighted as a disheartening example of their unwillingness to do so.

The importance of awareness-raising, education and the role of media were reiterated. One speaker highlighted her production of a weekly television programme on environmental issues in China, and informed participants that she would be producing a short programme on the workshop to demonstrate to the Chinese people how many people are dedicated to the issue of sustainable consumption. She emphasized the importance of providing examples of good practice and proposed producing a television series and publishing a book series showcasing best practices. The potential of using role models to raise awareness and influence public opinion was illustrated by examples such as the introduction of alternative, environmentally conscious characters in soap operas in Mexico, and the recent delivery of a message from the Swedish Prime Minister emphasizing the environmental as well as economic benefits to Sweden of shifting to sustainable development.

The workshop underscored the critical role of governments and incentives to get the prices right. One speaker proposed introducing fees and taxes on the "bads" and reducing them on the "goods." Another emphasized the enormous impact of public sector consumption and the relative ease of affecting change in institutions compared with individuals, and called for greater efforts toward greening government procurement. An example was provided of lessons learned from efforts to reduce waste in Korea. A leading Korean newspaper undertook an initiative to raise public awareness on the importance of reducing waste, and while it succeeded in raising awareness, it had a negligible impact on waste reduction, whereas the subsequent introduction of a volume-based waste tax by the government has led to a significant decrease.

The importance of responsibility and action by the business and financial sectors toward greater sustainability was highlighted in a number of interventions. Participants concurred that industry needs to take greater responsibility for their products, not only for their production but also for the environmental and health aspects of their use and disposal. Corporations' concern with their public image and the potential impact of publicizing environmental and social irresponsibility were highlighted as powerful means of leveraging corporate responsibility. One speaker stressed the need to focus on the supply side and examine the production strategies of companies, since focusing solely on the demand side detracts from the critical need for corporate responsibility.

It was emphasized that businesses will ask whether there is shareholder value in being sustainable, and it was noted that at present this does not appear to be the case. One speaker stressed the need to make employees of corporations aware of and comfortable with sustainable consumption, for instance by educating engineers that environmental credentials will provide a gateway into the market. A number of examples were highlighted, such as a new element of Norwegian Co-op's commercial strategy to encourage greater customer loyalty: the education of its employees on environmental aspects and on communication with customers about the implementation of environmental considerations in their company. Other examples were noted, including: the creation of an environmental awareness and training programme by a large Indian aluminum company, and the recent adoption of a code of conduct by Statoil in Norway requiring full information and participation of the workforce as well as regular benchmarking of environmental performance.

The workshop underscored that competitiveness and sustainability are not mutually exclusive. The success of a Korean personal computer company's marketing strategy was highlighted as a case in point -- its inclusion of a guarantee for an upgrade in two years has resulted in a significant increase in sales.

A number of speakers stressed the need to examine and address the relationship between globalization and trade and sustainable consumption. Citing as an example the Korean Government's effort to limit the size of cars by imposing a significant tax on large cars

and the objection by exporters of large American cars to the tax, one participant noted that the sovereignty of governments and their efforts to steer consumption towards sustainability are being degraded by globalization.

IMPACTS OF SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION INITIATIVES

Nick Robins and Sarah Roberts presented the third topic for consideration by the workshop: "Impacts of Sustainable Consumption Initiatives," which participants were to consider in smaller discussion groups. They noted that examples of good practices as presented in participants' input to the workbook emerged in two different categories -- those seeking to improve the sustainability of goods and services and those aimed at changing consumption patterns. They highlighted some of the lessons learned from these examples, which suggest that: change is possible; awareness-raising initiatives alone have produced limited results; packages of measures lead to progress; and efforts to improve products have proven easier than changing underlying consumption patterns. Requirements for the success of initiatives include: responding to local needs and priorities; building new alliances between citizens, business and regulators; linking short-term action with long-term vision; and finding points of strategic leverage.

Roberts introduced the questions to be considered in the discussion groups: what are the key factors for initiatives to successfully improve the sustainability of consumption (what works?), and what aspects of sustainable consumption are poorly addressed at present (what's missing)? Participants then broke into four discussion groups to address these questions. They reported back to the Chair, who presented their conclusions in Plenary.

Discussion Group I, chaired by Bas de Leeuw (the Netherlands), highlighted that key factors for success include the need for: strong commitment and leadership by government; clear targets and time frames; public acceptance and support; public participation; focus on key individuals (i.e., ministers) and sectors (i.e., energy); identification of benefits, in economic terms or in terms of time; quality control, monitoring and enforcement; innovative business ideas and win-win situations; and provision of alternatives. The group noted that what is missing is: the institutionalization of sustainable alternatives; sufficient use of popular media; sufficient attention to the role of intermediaries, such as retailers and distributors; a global commitment to changing consumption patterns; attention to the proximity issue in the context of globalization; the use of long-term time horizons in planning; and promotion of the ideal or goal of sustainable consumption -- a better quality of life.

Discussion Group II, chaired by Erik Brandsma (the Netherlands), examined several case studies and highlighted common factors that led to their success, including: the use market forces, such as price and quality incentives; the creation of benefits for producers and consumers; participatory approaches, partnerships and involvement of stakeholders; political backing; provision and/or illustration of alternatives to unsustainable products or practices; and the potential for scaling up and replication of projects. The group identified a number of important elements that are missing, including: awareness that there is a problem; a clear, simple message that presents the problem; concern at the level of the individual; political prioritization of the problem; willingness to address the equity side of the debate; transparency in the use of financial instruments such as subsidies and in institutions; understanding of the social drivers behind consumption; and sufficient use of the media.

Discussion Group III, chaired by Martin Standley (Norway), highlighted the following factors as key to success: the right economic signals and incentives; public participation; and provision of environmental information for effective decision making by consumers. The group submitted that what is missing is: an under-

standing of the role of trade systems in consumption; comprehensive education and public understanding; measurement and indicators of environmental, social and economic impacts of consumption and their communication to relevant actors; and high-level political commitment to and internalization of sustainable consumption priorities.

Discussion Group IV, chaired by Anders Wijkman (Sweden), highlighted as key factors for success the application of a systems approach, the use of marketing tools and the use of feedback mechanisms to demonstrate to consumers that their efforts toward more sustainable consumption make a difference. The group identified a number of elements that are inadequately addressed or are lacking, including: an understanding of the potential use of information technology and its effects on sustainable consumption; demand creation for alternative products; an emphasis on local production; public interest research and development; properly functioning markets; more radical approaches to changing consumption patterns; and coordinated research and outreach efforts targeting key consumption sectors, such as transport and energy.

ACCELERATING INTERNATIONAL ACTION ON SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION

In Plenary on the morning of Thursday, 4 June, the Chair presented a compiled list of the factors for success and missing elements as identified in the discussion groups. She recommended reconvening the discussion groups to formulate action proposals to build upon the factors for success and address the missing elements. She suggested that these action proposals could be compiled into a workplan to be attached to the revised Kabelvåg workbook. She urged participants to think through and elaborate the steps required to implement their proposals and to only propose initiatives that they could commit to and implement themselves rather than ones that call for action by others.

Participants then met for several hours in the four discussion groups and presented the results of their deliberations in Plenary.

In Discussion Group I (chaired by Bas de Leeuw), participants formulated a list of 20 projects clustered in four areas, and responsibility for undertaking each project was taken on by one or more participants. In the area of research and policy development, participants proposed projects to: provide practical examples of economic instruments; establish a monitoring network; examine the design of low transport intensity systems; internalize sustainable consumption into the planning process; conduct research on the connection between equity and globalization issues; and conduct studies of consumption patterns in different social classes in the Asia-Pacific region. Under the umbrella of stakeholder involvement, participants proposed projects to: support the European Green Purchasing Network; highlight the role of media and marketing and promote their use in cleaner production; put consumption, production and employment on labor unions' agenda; and identify the role of retailers and distributors in sustainable consumption. Projects to inform and inspire the public on sustainable consumption issues were proposed to: use popular media to promote local action; develop popular education tools; develop a network of education institutes in the Asia-Pacific region; create scenarios of sustainable households; contribute to organizing an upcoming meeting in Korea on reviewing Asian consumption patterns; publish a regular indicator report on consumption patterns; and produce a special edition of UNEP's *Industry and Environment Review* on sustainable consumption. To maintain the commitment of and contact between workshop participants, projects were proposed to: use the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) World Wide Web site on sustainable consumption and link it to a special Kabelvåg homepage; collect and disseminate detailed information on participants' expertise and current projects; and examine their personal behavior with a view to improving it.

Discussion Group II identified general priority policy actions, including: identifying and assessing consumption problems on an individual level and setting priorities; making sustainability attractive; and making sustainability competitive. The group also formulated a number of specific proposals to: address problems of urban water supply using consumption-based approaches by exchanging experiences on water pricing policies, cost-recovery and finance, raising awareness of consumers and the public sector and organizing advocacy, using the Moroccan experience in this area as a model; foster awareness in the business community by educating CEOs on the importance of sustainable consumption and exchange experience and practices; exchange experience on consumer campaigns, such as Consumers International's World Wide Web pages on campaigns in specific sectors; and provide a brokering system between workshop participants' skills and needs on sustainable consumption.

Discussion Group III submitted proposals grouped into three overarching areas. Projects to reach decision makers would: sensitize business people, bureaucrats and politicians through workshops, training and literature, and partner with groups such as Maurice Strong's new "Trustees 21" and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) and regional business councils for sustainable development; organize a workshop in Ghana for local politicians; advocate the sustainable consumption message in different sectors in the OECD; and devote an upcoming Consumers International India newsletter to sustainable consumption. They recommended initiatives to influence the mass market, including: finding effective intermediary sponsors in business and retail; targeting international events such as the Olympics; using the media, such as free radio and TV channels and soap operas; producing guides for sustainable behavior; and publishing an article that presents sustainable consumption in a simple and attractive way. Under the theme of creating a network for understanding consumption behavior, the group proposed: starting with participants' own lifestyles, using a common benchmark; quantifying and benchmarking the impact of consumption; understanding life cycle consumption patterns and strategic choices; and identifying the drivers of consumption.

Following the presentation of this group's proposals, one participant commented that transmitting the message of sustainable consumption to the public is not easy to do as it is not adaptable to an "MTV format." Another disagreed, highlighting popular media's adeptness at conveying anti-consumer culture messages. It was noted that the task would be easier if particular consumption behaviors were targeted.

Discussion Group IV proposed several initiatives to improve research and documentation of sustainable consumption, including: extending IISD's existing World Wide Web site on sustainable consumption instruments to include research on the effectiveness of the various instruments, employing the indicators developed by the CSD; documenting traditional lifestyles and values; conducting and collecting research on the social drivers and behavioral underpinnings of sustainable consumption; exploring the positive and negative impacts and the potential of information technologies on consumption; and investigating ways to make Hollywood emulate more sustainable consumption. The group also recommended actions that address the need to make markets work: integrating sustainable consumption into national strategies for sustainable development; focusing attention on the tension between the short-term and the long-term; exploring the idea of "consumption service companies" based on the energy model for other sectors; organizing transportation user groups in cities to lobby for more sustainable transport options and linking them with the providers of public transportation; and launching a campaign focusing on the electronics sector.

The group also presented a proposal to ensure follow-up: to establish a Kabelvåg Task Force that will take concrete steps to take these proposals forward and guarantee that the recommendations are being implemented and multiplied, ideally leading to a network for information exchange and action.

The Chair provided a summary of the recommendations outlined above. She called on all participants to share the output of the meeting with their colleagues, write an article about the workshop and its conclusions, examine their own behavior, follow up on projects already underway and formulate next steps, and collaborate on and support one another's work in the effort to make consumption more sustainable.

CLOSING PLENARY

Chair Joke Waller Hunter summed up the conclusions of the conference. She highlighted that participants had forged a better understanding of what sustainable consumption is: it is more about looking at how and why we consume in the ways we do and not so much about consuming less. She noted their realization that the experts' jargon of sustainable consumption is not understandable to policy makers or the public, and their commitment to formulating and delivering a simple message in a language that is comprehensible. She highlighted their agreement on the need for efficient consumption and the recognition that different approaches are needed to achieve efficient consumption in different countries as well as in different sectors and at different levels. As sustainable consumption is a rather young issue in policy making, the workshop recognized that at this early stage it is essential to analyze, exchange lessons and learn from experiences. The Chair stressed that this can only be done with monitoring mechanisms in place to make the analyses and lessons convincing and based on real experience, and said the modified Kabelvåg workbook would be a very useful tool in this respect.

She said the revised workbook would be circulated to participants by the end of July for comments and would be finalized thereafter. She stated that it could be used as input for several upcoming events, including the OECD workshop on education and learning for sustainable consumption in September, the workshop on sustainable consumption indicators in Korea in spring 1999, and the publication of this year's UNDP Human Development Report, which will focus on sustainable consumption and production. The workbook would also provide input to the 1999 session of the CSD, which will also focus on sustainable consumption and production, as well as the Rio+10 review in 2002. She said the proposal to set up a Kabelvåg Task Force will keep workshop participants in contact and informed about next steps and will foster collaborative efforts. She announced that a CSD World Wide Web site on sustainable consumption patterns would be on line the following week and suggested that this site could be used to further these ends. She urged participants to take home with them the motto of the discussion groups: "just do it."

Norwegian Secretary of State Jesper W. Simonsen then delivered the closing remarks of the workshop. He stressed the need to reach the billions of consumers and transmit the workshop's important message to them, as well as to the world's politicians. He commended participants for committing themselves to their proposals rather than calling on others to undertake them. He then described a number of reforms that the Norwegian Ministry of Environment has recently undertaken to raise the profile of sustainability in Norway. A group is being appointed to prepare a law on consumers' right to information on the environmental background and effects of consumer goods, which incorporates not only labeling but also the creation of user-friendly databases to enable informed choice. Second, a green tax shift was launched in the spring of 1998 that replaces taxes on labor with taxes on pollution and resource use, specifically on carbon dioxide and sulfur emissions and landfill. Third, the 1999 finance law will require sector

ministers to adhere to specific environmental responsibilities within their particular sectors and will include measurable objectives and monitoring mechanisms. This is related to a new effort to introduce an environmental profile of the Government to the Parliament at the same time that they discuss the budget, to ensure that environmental considerations are integrated into economic decisions.

He also noted efforts to implement the principle of producer responsibility in waste management in Norway and to inject environment into trade and globalization discussions at the international level. He stated that globalization as a policy makes no sense in the long run if policies are not implemented to fight subsidization in sectors where the polluter does not pay. He emphasized that competition and sustainable consumption need not be mutually exclusive and can be made to converge at the national level through taxation and at the international level by charging polluters for the full costs of pollution. He noted the important role that the OECD could continue to play in this arena, highlighting its work on economic indicators and stressing the need to extend it to sustainable consumption and eco-indicators. He underlined the usefulness and impact of indicators in the public debate and suggested that a new indicator be developed on a "polluter subsidy equivalent."

Simonsen underscored the importance of integrating sustainability into the economic system at both the national and international levels and the precondition that development in the South follow a more sound path than it has in the North. He highlighted the symbiosis of social development and ecological sustainability and the importance of fulfilling basic needs. He assured the workshop that their work would be delivered to and regarded by the Norwegian Minister of Environment, who would present its results to the UN next year. He thanked participants for their hard work and forward-looking initiatives and urged them to spread their important message.

SUSTAINABLE LOCAL COMMUNITIES PROJECT SITE VISIT

On Friday, 5 June, participants traveled by boat to the municipality of Steigen to visit a site of the Norwegian Environment Ministry's Sustainable Local Communities Project. Participants were welcomed by the Mayor of Steigen, Svein Benoni, as well as many members of the community, and learned firsthand about the initiative for a more sustainable community being undertaken in the fishing village of Leines. In addition to a presentation on the initiative, participants were served a lunch of traditional foods based on local resources and enjoyed a theater presentation in which the students of Leines School illustrated what sustainable living is all about. Their performance expressed the importance to young people of a better, more sustainable future and their dedication to achieving it. The students also presented an exhibition of local handicrafts and local traditions for participants to explore.

Steigen is one of seven municipalities in Norway taking part in the Sustainable Local Communities Project, a central goal of which is to make the concept of sustainable production and consumption tangible. The local authorities have been developing a sustainability framework that includes fishing, agriculture and the private and public sector, emphasizing local production. Housing and job opportunities have been developed, and culture and the environment are central to planning. A school-based environmental education programme has also been implemented and a series of workshops held to encourage official authorities and private enterprises to develop new strategies for sustainability.