



North America SCP Workshop Bulletin

A Summary Report of the North American Workshop on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP)
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NORTH AMERICAN WORKSHOP ON SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION: 6-7 NOVEMBER 2008

The North American Workshop on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) took place from 6-7 November at the George Washington University Law School in Washington, DC, US. The aim of the meeting was to define a regional approach to advance sustainable consumption and production (SCP) in North America that also contributes to the global Marrakech Process.

The meeting was attended by 60 experts from government, the United Nations (UN), academia, non-governmental organizations, business and industry. Five sessions were held, addressing: what SCP means and ideas for a unifying vision, concepts and principles for North America; the current status of SCP in the region; strategies to advance a regional SCP Framework; North American priorities for SCP action; and the way forward both regionally and in terms of the global Marrakech Process.

The workshop's discussions and outcomes will feed into the Marrakech Process, which is designed to support the development of a ten-year framework of programmes (10YFP) on SCP. The 10YFP will be considered by the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) and its eighteen and nineteenth sessions, in 2010-2011.

BRIEF HISTORY OF SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION (SCP) AND THE MARRAKECH PROCESS

Sustainable consumption and production (SCP) was addressed in Agenda 21, a key outcome of the UN Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 1992. In particular, chapter four of Agenda 21 focuses on unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, and on national policies and strategies to encourage changes in unsustainable consumption patterns.

The topic was subsequently taken up at the multilateral level by the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), which in 1995 adopted an International Work Programme on Changing Consumption and Production Patterns.

In 2002, the development of a 10-Year Framework of Programmes (10YFP) on SCP was included in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Under the JPOI, governments agreed to "encourage and promote the development of a 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." The JPOI establishes that a 10YFP should address, where appropriate, the delinking of economic growth and environmental degradation through improving efficiency and sustainability in the use of resources and production processes and reducing resource degradation, pollution and waste.

In 2003, CSD adopted a multi-year programme work for the period 2004-2017, to be organized as a series of two-year, action-oriented "implementation cycles." Each two-year cycle is expected to consider a thematic cluster of issues, and a suite of cross-cutting issues. One of the cross-cutting issues for every cycle is "changing unsustainable patterns of consumption and production." For the 2010-2011 cycle, the 10YFP was identified as a major theme.

The Marrakech Process was also launched in 2003. This global, multi-stakeholder process was designed as a follow-up to the JPOI, and aims to support the elaboration of a 10YFP. As part of the Marrakech Process, a series of regional and national consultations have been held. In addition, seven "Marrakech Task Forces" were established. The Task Forces focus on sustainable products and public procurement, sustainable buildings and construction, sustainable tourism, sustainable lifestyles, education for sustainable consumption, and cooperation with Africa. At the regional level, African and Latin American governments have developed regional

IN THIS ISSUE

| | |
|---|---|
| Brief History of Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) and the Marrakech Process | 1 |
| Report of the Workshop | 2 |
| Opening of the Workshop. | 2 |
| Session One: What SCP Means and Ideas on a Unifying Vision, Concepts and Principles | 2 |
| Session Two: Current Status of SCP in North America | 3 |
| Session Three: Looking Forward: Strategies to Advance a Regional SCP Framework in North America | 3 |
| Session Four: North American Priorities for SCP Action | 4 |
| Final Session: The Way Forward | 4 |
| Upcoming Meetings | 5 |

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programmes on SCP, Asia-Pacific governments have set up a regional information center, and the European Union has announced an Action Plan on SCP.

In May 2008, an Advisory Committee of the Marrakech Process was established. The Committee, which includes representatives from all regions and the Marrakech Task Forces, provides advice on elaborating a 10YFP and aims to generate more political commitment and support. The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) are acting as the Committee's Secretariat.

The 10YFP will be the subject of discussions at the CSD at its eighteen and nineteenth sessions in 2010-2011. In 2010, CSD will review progress on SCP, as well as best practices, lessons learned and case studies. In 2011, the CSD is expected to consider the 10YFP.

REPORT OF THE WORKSHOP

OPENING OF THE WORKSHOP

On Thursday morning, 6 November 2008, Jay Benforado, Senior Advisor for Sustainable Development Partnerships at the US Department of State, opened and moderated the meeting. He introduced the opening speakers, who provided an overview of the workshop, the goals of the meeting, and the wider context in terms of the Marrakech Process.

Lee Paddock, Associate Dean for Environmental Law Studies at George Washington University Law School, noted some progress to date, including the growth in organic and locally-grown agriculture and the US Environmental Protection Agency's Energy Star programme. He also noted action in some states on electronic waste, and the future risks and opportunities of nanotechnology. He noted the prominence given to energy efficiency by US President-elect Barack Obama, and argued that the current economic crisis makes discussions on SCP particularly timely.

Amy Fraenkel, Director of UNEP's Regional Office for North America, welcomed participants to the first formal North American regional meeting on SCP, stressing that for this process North America is composed of the US and Canada, while Mexico belongs to a different group. She reported that other regions have held SCP meetings and that all of these events are contributing to the Marrakech Process. She highlighted this event as an opportunity to share lessons learned and best practices and to consider gaps, and encouraged concrete and substantive dialogue on how to move forward. She thanked the Governments of the US and Canada and colleagues in the UN system for their role in preparing for this meeting.

GOALS OF THE MEETING: Rachel McCormick, Deputy Director of the Sustainable Development Division, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Affairs, Canada, stressed the need for interactive dialogue among all key stakeholders. She reported on various initiatives in Canada, including a commitment of CAN\$550 million to establish Sustainable Development Technology Canada to support eco-efficient technologies. She said this workshop is an opportunity to understand activities in North America and contribute to the Marrakech Process, and noted that this event would feed into discussions on SCP at the CSD. She said CSD's focus on partnerships aimed at implementing sustainable development, and on identifying what approaches do and do not work.

John Matuszak, Division Chief for Sustainable Development and Multilateral Affairs in the US Department of State's Office of Environmental Policy, said this meeting would identify

practical ideas for moving forward on SCP and for providing input to CSD-18 and CSD-19. He suggested that the focus of Agenda 21 on SCP had been reinforced at WSSD with the call for a 10YFP. He also highlighted action at the US national, state and local levels, and said this meeting was an opportunity to share best practices and lessons learned from both successes and failures.

MARRAKECH PROCESS: Charles Arden-Clarke, Head of the Goods and Services Unit in the SCP Branch of UNEP's Division of Technology, Industry and Economics, spoke about the Marrakech Process. He suggested that regional consultations are essential to building the 10YFP, and highlighted the need to share information and identify gaps that will feed into CSD-18 and CSD-19. He drew attention to a first draft document that outlines what a 10YFP might look like, and said written input has been requested by 12 December 2008. He also outlined various phases in the Marrakech Process, including: regional consultations; building regional strategies/action plans; developing implementation mechanisms and demonstration projects; and reporting and evaluating progress and exchanging information experience at the international level. He stressed that the 10YFP should deliver support down to the regional and national level, and that many developing countries need technology, support and know-how.

Chantal Line Carpentier, Sustainable Development Officer, DESA, highlighted the work that will be undertaken at CSD-18 and CSD-19. She underlined the importance of involving key stakeholders beyond just governments (known in the CSD process as the "major groups"). She noted that previous CSD policy sessions usually resulted in a negotiated text and a non-negotiated outcome. In the case of CSD-19, she said this might involve a negotiated section establishing a common understanding or overview, and a non-negotiated outcome setting out regional priorities. In terms of a common understanding, she noted the need to recognize concerns of both developed and developing countries, and consensus around the value of a life-cycle approach.

SESSION ONE: WHAT SCP MEANS AND IDEAS ON A UNIFYING VISION, CONCEPTS AND PRINCIPLES

On Thursday morning, participants shared their perspectives on what SCP means and shared ideas on a unifying vision, concepts and principles for North America.

James Riordan, Executive Director, Regulatory Innovation and Management Systems, Environment Canada, introduced this topic. He highlighted the existing mindset of "he who dies with the most toys, wins!" He stressed the need to change this to "he who lives the most sustainable lifestyle, wins!" Riordan pointed out that regulation is not always effective, consumption and production must be dealt with simultaneously, and governments tend to focus on supply rather than consumption.

In the ensuing discussion, many participants underscored the important role of information, education, and language in communicating the SCP agenda to consumers and producers, with some speakers outlining the importance of finding appropriate language both for decision makers and users. Participants also talked about workplace partnerships and the important linkage to jobs, input from consumer groups, and products. One participant noted that North America has high-input agriculture and urban development, as well as transportation systems dependent on motor vehicles, and a perceived tie between energy security and national security.

The role of the youth in SCP was stressed, with several speakers identifying the need to make SCP "cool." Speakers also addressed the need for more action and less incremental

change, as well as taking quantum leaps that focus on, and harness, opportunities for technology development and innovation.

Some participants urged using the current economic crisis as an opportunity to address market failures, create positive market signals, and improve pricing strategies and policies. The group highlighted the need to engage the corporate sector and defined the need to map-out what a sustainable future holds.

Participants also addressed the need for government leadership, particularly in bringing stakeholders together, seeking harmonization among labeling and standard-setting initiatives, and resolving definitions of SCP-related actions. Several spoke about governments' important role in social marketing for SCP, as well as the need to recognize the different levels of government such as state, provincial and local authorities.

LUNCHTIME SPEAKER: Marian Chertow, Associate Professor of Industrial Environmental Management at the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, shared a series of stories and personal experiences from China, the US and elsewhere that illustrated SCP issues and challenges. She recognized different social, cultural and economic conditions in different countries, increasingly sophisticated marketing to different generations and groups, and brand identification among consumers. She also spoke about efficiency gains from "self-organizing systems" and the important role of business and industry. She expressed concern that India, China and other countries are adopting lifestyles and consumption and production patterns of the West. She highlighted the importance of coordination and facilitation, and said donors should support good examples of self-organized cooperation.

One participant commended some innovative work by the UK's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. Another participant highlighted the need to bring key stakeholders together to talk about supply chains, suggesting that, as a first step, these groups exchange information, which puts them in a position to take positive actions.

SESSION TWO: CURRENT STATUS OF SCP IN NORTH AMERICA

This session focused on diverse SCP initiatives already underway in North America, including existing programmes, activities and networks that might help frame a regional approach. The topic was introduced by Jeffrey Barber of the Integrative Strategies Forum, Tania del Matto of My Sustainable Canada, and Jack Luskin of the University of Massachusetts, Lowell. They introduced a survey of North American SCP activities which identified diverse "communities of practices" that rarely communicate or collaborate. Del Matto said the need is to connect the pieces and create partnerships.

In the subsequent discussion, one participant said the workshop should focus on what more to do on the ground, and on lessons North America can share with the world. Others pointed out that North America also needs to consider lessons already learned in other regions.

One participant suggested Home Depot's promotion of Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified products as an example of SCP in action. Another pointed out that many wood producers still do not see the economic benefit of participating in FSC certification.

Workshop moderator Jay Benforado then asked for further examples of working SCP initiatives. Responses included the development of: sustainable tourism; the

Energy Star programme; organic produce; product take-back/re-manufacturing; car pooling; the US Commerce Department's Sustainable Production Awareness tools; supply chain initiatives; Adbusters' "Buy Nothing" Day; tools and calculators based on life cycle analysis; the fair trade movement; and socially-responsible investments.

Following up on this, Jeffrey Barber noted that many existing initiatives were targeting essentially "low hanging fruit" focused on efficiency that make good business sense and are politically palatable. He urged a focus on sufficiency-related measures that can change the economic culture and structure.

The group also discussed how to measure and quantify the success of SCP initiatives. Several participants noted the lack of a metric for success, which made it difficult to assess how SCP initiatives have contributed to "bending the arc" of unsustainable consumption.

One participant proposed focusing on "consumer domains" such as food and agriculture, shelter and domestic energy, and transportation and sustainable mobility. He further proposed that public health be seen as an overarching meta-category. Participants also addressed the need to change cultural norms, and stressed the importance of making the business case for consumer and industry-related behavioral changes.

At the end of the session, workshop moderator Jay Benforado asked the group to consider a possible list of needs and priorities for North America in the context of the Marrakech Process. He indicated that other regions had already considered a list and indicated their particular concerns. Participants highlighted as priorities a range of issues. In terms of institutional and policy support priorities, they highlighted enabling SCP policies and instruments. With regards to cross-sectoral issues, they emphasized sustainable manufacturing and value chains and sustainable procurement. In terms of sectoral approaches, they stressed mobility, buildings and construction, and food and agriculture. Finally, with regards to natural resources management, they highlighted water and energy use, as well as materials management.

Responding to a question on the importance of a negotiated CSD text on SCP, some participants said this did not rate as being a key priority. However, one participant stressed the impact of multilateral outcomes, particularly the climate change negotiations that are expected to conclude with an agreement in Copenhagen, Denmark, in December 2009. He suggested that a climate change agreement would have huge implications for SCP.

SESSION THREE: LOOKING FORWARD: STRATEGIES TO ADVANCE A REGIONAL SCP FRAMEWORK IN NORTH AMERICA

Kevin Brady, Director of Five Winds International, presented findings from a stock-taking exercise of various stakeholders in North America to help identify priorities for a possible regional SCP framework and opportunities for advancing SCP in North America. He noted agreement among stakeholders on the critical importance of pricing externalities, building understanding and creating a shared vision, and dramatic improvements in efficiency. He also highlighted observations on the need for more collaboration, integrating sustainability in production systems, more energy efficiency, and a carbon tax and/or cap-and-trade system, standards, social marketing, investments in research and development, education of bureaucrats, and leadership. Arguing that change requires vision, skills, incentives, resources and an action plan, he suggested that a clear vision is still lacking in terms of SCP.

Workshop moderator Jay Benforado asked for reaction to the paper's proposals for a North American SCP strategy focused on awareness-raising amongst decision-makers to build understanding of what is needed; setting a vision and policy framework; and significant change on critical issues. On awareness raising, some participants felt the public also needed to have their awareness enhanced to create support for change. There was some discussion about how best to frame the issue. Regarding the vision and change, discussion focused on whether incremental or transformational change should be sought, how aspirational the vision should be, and how best to define SCP and sustainable growth. Some participants also urged including a monitoring/evaluation component in the strategy.

Participants also discussed: whether climate change has become the wedge for rethinking development; what metrics might be useful to measure SCP progress; the role of services in SCP; how best to utilize the pricing mechanism to prompt SCP; the difference between assessing and communicating risks and benefits; and whether increased efficiency should be a central goal.

SESSION FOUR: NORTH AMERICAN PRIORITIES FOR SCP ACTION

On the morning of Friday, 7 November, participants considered how to advance SCP in North America, including which specific issues merit attention and how a shift to SCP can be accomplished.

Claude-André Lachance, Director of Public Policy for Dow Canada, said "business is in the business of making money" but there is no inherent contradiction between sustainability and a market-based approach. Stating that the challenge is to incentivize innovation, research and societal change that support SCP, he said the market can contribute to SCP with the right incentives and motivations.

Tima Bansal, Associate Professor at the Richard Ivey School of Business, said business schools teach corporate leaders the model of success achieved by companies such as Walmart, which has global reach and large sales, kills competition, takes control of supply chains, and prefers self-insurance of employees. Such business school models focus on growth, marketing, and increasing sales, rather than SCP. She concluded that SCP meetings should include more business representatives and SCP skeptics, and urged more collaboration and cooperation.

Edwin Piñero, Director of Rochester Institute of Technology's New York State Pollution Prevention Institute, noted his previous roles on the US Federal Environmental Executive and the President's Council on Environmental Quality. Reflecting on discussions on SCP under the current US administration, he said there had originally been concerns about how to make SCP practical, as well as a desire for tools, metrics, and concrete plans. He urged a focus on sustainable production practices, which would then facilitate sustainable consumption. He warned against focusing on trying to negotiate an internationally-binding commitment, and said the goals and targets and specific details should be left to individual countries and stakeholders to develop.

Dianne Dillon-Ridgley, environmentalist, human rights activist and a director at Interface, Inc., stressed mindset changes and clear language as critical to SCP. She challenged society's current assumption that "if something isn't growing then it's dying." Responding to Tima Bansal's comments on Walmart, she observed that China does not have the type of corporate dominance in the retail sector that Walmart has

achieved in the US, since the top 100 retailers in China have less than 10 percent of the market share. She also stressed poverty reduction as a critical consideration, noting that it is an externality that has not yet been fitted into business structures.

In the ensuing discussion, one participant said industry needed more incentives to act, such as a higher tax on landfill. Another said big companies such as Walmart will act on SCP if their reputation or brand is put at risk. Participants also spoke about the need to reach out to stakeholders to define a common vision on SCP and identify obstacles, tools, strategies, and roles. The respective roles of individuals, the corporate sector and society were all discussed.

Responding to a question about the role of government, Edwin Piñero said it had multiple roles that could potentially support SCP, including as a policy maker and regulator, a partner with business and other groups, a designer of incentives, and a key consumer of goods and services.

On the role of business, Claude-André Lachance said companies were more interested in profit margins than in product volume. As an example, he cited the invention of a termite trap that attracts the termite, describing how it uses a much smaller volume of chemicals than previous termite-control techniques, while profit margins have increased.

Workshop moderator Jay Benforado then asked participants to focus on the conceptual framework for SCP activities in North America, opportunities for additional emphasis and action, and North America's contribution to global SCP.

Most participants agreed that North American SCP work should be "framed" utilizing the life cycle approach adopted by other regions, although it was pointed out that some issues such as sustainable transport do not easily fit into that approach and may need to be treated separately. Some participants suggested that the North American framework should set out specific roles for each category of actors, such as governments, business, and consumers. There were also suggestions to establish timelines identifying steps that can be taken now, and longer-term actions. One participant suggested breaking down roles, tasks and timelines by sectors.

Several participants warned against over-emphasizing sustainable consumption, since North America has many lessons and technologies to share regarding sustainable production. The group also discussed how best to engage different stakeholders and give them a sense of ownership in the process.

Several participants stressed the importance of developing good metrics so that those engaged in SCP implementation can know that they are moving in the right direction and making meaningful progress.

Participants also debated whether to focus primarily on the North American SCP dialogue or to take into account the wider Marrakech Process and provide substantive input to the CSD discussions. Most agreed that this is first and foremost a regional dialogue, but some said it should also consider whether or not North America will be actively engaged in the CSD and Marrakech processes.

FINAL SESSION: THE WAY FORWARD

The final session took place late Friday morning, with workshop moderator Jay Benforado asking the group to consider next steps and how to move forward.

Participants started by identifying a range of areas for further discussion. These included:

- addressing resource issues;
- including SCP or greening approaches in processes emanating from the current economic crisis;

- collecting the work and visions of different groups;
- applying SCP issues to the current CSD cycle themes;
- developing a roadmap and a collective understanding of what SCP really means;
- utilizing the international, multi-stakeholder processes already underway and ensuring greater government engagement in this work;
- providing information to the public regarding sustainability choices;
- supporting greater engagement and ownership;
- evaluating what aspects of the SCP approach are working and what can be replicated;
- identifying other meetings that could be used to raise the SCP agenda;
- identifying sectoral themes and best practices;
- ensuring greater North American engagement in the Marrakech Process Task Forces; and
- proposing additional Task Forces, such as one on sustainable agriculture.

Participants also suggested linking SCP into the Millennium Development Goals and the needs of developing countries, and potentially streamlining certification processes and labels.

Regarding next steps, the group expressed support for a second meeting to bring together a larger community of practice and other stakeholders. Some participants stressed the need for financial support for NGOs, civil society and grassroots organizations.

Participants also spoke in favor of continuing to work on the draft template of SCP programmes and ensuring more involvement of stakeholders in its further development. One participant said an advisory group should be convened in advance of the next workshop, which could be tasked with identifying participants and working on developing a vision for North America. Several participants also supported an interactive online forum for collaboration that will allow SCP conversations to continue.

In their closing remarks, the workshop organizers thanked participants and workshop moderator Jay Benforado. They noted that a workshop report and "Co-Chairs' summary" would be circulated to all participants. The meeting closed at 12:48 pm.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

SUSTAINABLE MANUFACTURING SUMMIT

EUROPE: This Summit, which will take place from 19-21 November 2008, in Brussels, Belgium, will include a series of events for Europe's manufacturers that aims to "benchmark their sustainability strategies, develop carbon management programmes and update participants on the European Commission proposals. For more information, contact: Lenka Smejkalova, Green Power Conferences; tel: +44-207-0990-0600; e-mail: lenka@greenpowerconferences.com; internet: http://www.greenpowerconferences.com/corporateclimateresponse/sms_europe.html

14TH MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL

LIFE CYCLE PANEL: This event will take place on 9 December 2008, in Tokyo, Japan. The Panel is the advisory body for the Life Cycle Initiative of UNEP and the Society for Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry (SETAC). Participation is by invitation only. For more information, contact Sonia Valdivia, UNEP Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) Branch; tel: +33-1-4437-7622; e-mail: sonia.valdivia@unep.fr; internet: <http://www.unep.fr/scp/lifecycle/events/>

12TH MEETING OF THE PROJECT GROUP ON SOCIAL LIFE CYCLE ASSESSMENT: This event will take place at the offices of UNEP Division of Technology Industry and Economics in Paris, France, from 21-22 January 2009. The meeting is designed to assist in elaborating a Code of Practice to enhance and facilitate life cycle approaches methodologies globally. Participant is by invitation only. For more information, contact Sonia Valdivia, UNEP SCP Branch; tel: +33-1-4437-7622; e-mail: sonia.valdivia@unep.fr; internet: <http://www.unep.fr/scp/lifecycle/events/>

17TH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: CSD-17 will be held at UN Headquarters in New York, US, from 4-15 May 2009. Unsustainable consumption and production is a cross-cutting theme for all UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) sessions from 2004-2017. For more information, contact: UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) Secretariat; tel: +1-212-963-8102; fax: +1-212-963-4260; e-mail: dsd@un.org; Internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd>

MEETINGS OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF THE MARRAKECH PROCESS AND UN INTER-AGENCY MEETINGS ON SCP: The Advisory Committee will meet on the margins of the seventeenth session of the CSD at UN Headquarters in May 2009. A further meeting of the Advisory Committee is expected in 2010 on the margins of CSD-18. It is also expected that UN Inter-Agency meetings on SCP will be arranged on the margins of CSD-17 and CSD-18. Revised draft texts of a possible ten-year framework of programmes (10YFP) are expected to result from these meetings, with a final proposal expected after CSD-18. For more information, contact: DESA Secretariat; tel: +1-212-963-8102; fax: +1-212-963-4260; e-mail: dsd@un.org; Internet: <http://esa.un.org/marrakechprocess/roadmapcsd.shtml>

18TH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: CSD-18 will be held at UN Headquarters in New York, US, in April/May 2010. Both CSD-18 and CSD-19 will focus on the 10YFP on SCP, as well as on transport, chemicals, waste management, and mining. At CSD-18, delegates will begin the two-year process with a review or progress, constraints and obstacles. For more information, contact: DESA Secretariat; tel: +1-212-963-8102; fax: +1-212-963-4260; e-mail: dsd@un.org; Internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd>

INTERGOVERNMENTAL PREPARATORY MEETING FOR THE NINETEENTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:

The Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting for CSD-19 will take place at UN Headquarters in New York in February or early March 2011. This meeting will prepare for CSD-19, and is expected to include negotiations on the 10YFP. For more information, contact: DESA Secretariat; tel: +1-212-963-8102; fax: +1-212-963-4260; e-mail: dsd@un.org; Internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd>

19TH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: CSD-19 will be held at UN Headquarters in New York in April/May 2011. This policy session will seek to finalize and launch the 10YFP. Transport, chemicals, waste management and mining will also be the focus of discussions. For more information contact: DESA Secretariat; tel: +1-212-963-8102; fax: +1-212-963-4260; e-mail: dsd@un.org; Internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd>