

Report of the Secretary-General “Towards the achievement of sustainable development: implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including through sustainable consumption and production, building on Agenda 21”

UNEP input

II. Promoting sustainable consumption patterns for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, building on Agenda 21

B. Sustainable Consumption and Production

Sustainable consumption and production sits at the core of the 2030 Agenda. Reaching and exceeding the Sustainable Development Goals will require a concentrated push to address unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, which drive the triple planetary crisis in climate, nature and pollution. This effort will entail a focus on shifting investment and transforming high impact sectors of the economy to significantly reduce their climate, nature, and pollution footprints while simultaneously ensuring positive economic and social benefits.

Nonetheless, the data indicate several sobering trends: in the first instance, SDG 12 on sustainable consumption and production, is one of the least well-funded of the global goals¹; and secondly, the data indicates that progress on resource productivity and decoupling economic growth from material flows has slowed and even reversed over the past few years.² There is thus an enormous challenge facing member states to reverse these trends and double-down on efforts to make these core components of the economy - consumption and production - more sustainable.

B.1 Country progress in the implementation of Sustainable Consumption and Production

Until the end of 2023, one third of member states (33% or 64 countries) have reported policies and actions to implement the 10Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production patterns (10YFP) as set out under target SDG12.1. Since 2019, when the official reporting was initiated and up to December 2023, a total of 516 policy instruments to accelerate the transition to sustainable consumption and production patterns have been cumulatively reported. This represents a 7.7% increase from the 2022 cycle.

From January through December 2023, 41 policy instruments including national strategies for circular economy were reported from 14 Member States (Australia, Cambodia, France, Hungary, Lao PDR, Mozambique, Niger, Norway, Philippines, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United States of America).

Policies and initiatives reported in 2023 were mainly national roadmaps and strategies (49%). The objective of these policies was mainly to align roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders at national level and overall raise attention towards SCP. Some countries took further steps to enforce sustainable consumption and production through legal instruments (30%) meanwhile voluntary instruments reported decreased during the reporting period (14%).

¹ See IISD, policy Brief, UN Considering Reforms to Deliver the SDGs, November 2017

² See <https://sdg12hub.org/sdg-12-hub/see-progress-on-sdg-12-by-target/122-natural-resources>

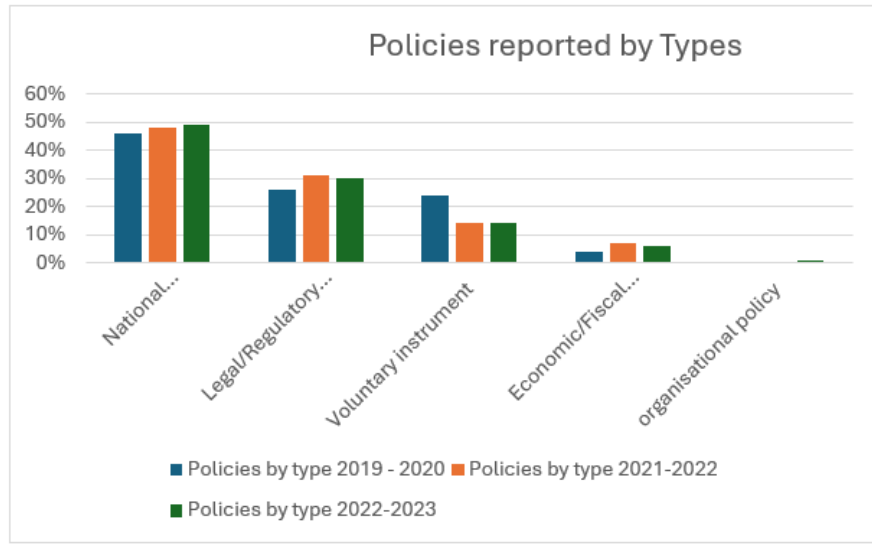


Figure 1- Policy instruments reported in 2023 as classified by member states.

More than a third of the policies focus on applying circular economy approaches in high-impact economic sectors such as consumer goods, agriculture and fisheries, buildings and construction, energy, and transport.

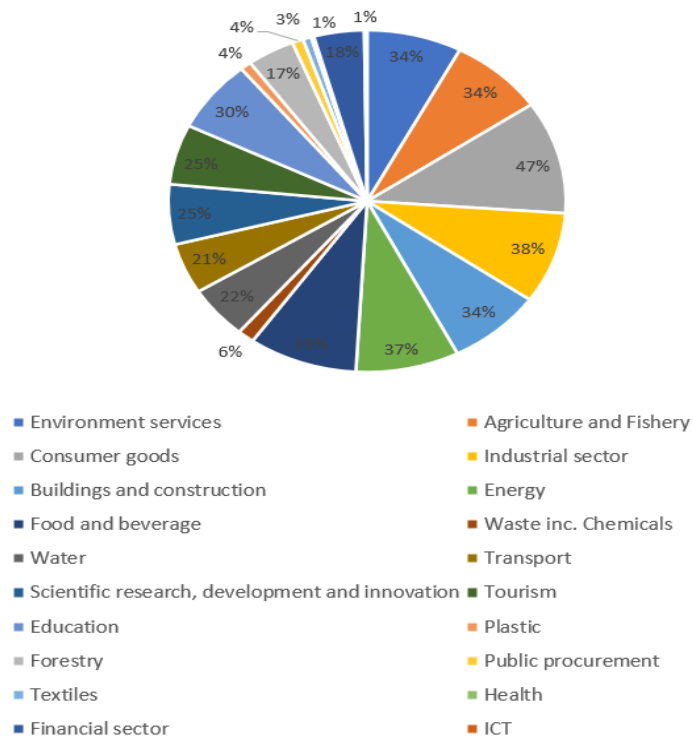


Figure 2- Sectoral focus of SCP policies reported in 2023.

B.2. Accelerating the uptake of Sustainable Consumption and Production in high impact sectors

B.2.1. Textile

UNEP's Textile Initiative provides strategic leadership and encourages sector-wide collaboration to accelerate a just transition towards a sustainable and circular textile value chain. UNEP works along the entire textile value chain by applying UNEP's roadmap for a circular textile sector, from developing global guidelines on trade and used textiles, to continuing and scaling its work on circular business models and access to environmental life-cycle data through its InTex project series, including the InTex Africa project (Kenya, South Africa, Tunisia), as well as expansion of InTex to India and Indonesia. All InTex countries are taking steps to implement Sustainable Consumption and Production approaches in their textile sector.

UNEP's roadmap identified the need for a global policy dialogue on textiles, which UNEP was invited to facilitate during a UNEA-6 side event convened by the Netherlands and Türkiye. Another identified need was to involve communicators in the transformation to circularity – in 2023 UNEP trained over 200 communicators on the principles of UNEP's Sustainable Fashion Communication Playbook, and a major lifestyles magazine in the West Asia region applied these principles to its December 2023 issue.

Hazardous chemicals continue to be a significant barrier to circularity, and as such, the Global Framework on Chemicals adopted textiles as a priority sector to improve chemicals management. This is the focus of the initiatives to improve chemical transparency and eliminate the most hazardous chemicals in four countries in Asia, and the Integrated Program on Eliminating Hazardous Chemicals from Supply Chains, where UNEP has convened a further eight countries to integrate pollution reduction with climate and nature objectives, working with UNDP, UNIDO, and FAO.

B.2.2. Mining

A systems-change towards resource efficiency and circularity is critical for ensuring that responsible mining of minerals and metals contributes to the needed planetary transition towards sustainability and a just energy transition, while averting conflict, loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services, and pollution. Using fewer resources, as well as recovering and reusing materials that would otherwise have been lost after use, must become the norm. This requires new approaches to transform prevailing economic models – for example, from economies based primarily on goods provisioning to those based on servicing provisioning options with lower material footprints.

The UN Environment Assembly - the highest decision-making body on the environment within the UN system - has adopted three resolutions on minerals and metals since 2019, all embedding a full life cycle approach. The most recent resolution adopted in March 2024 (UNEA 6/5) encourages Member States to promote sustainable consumption and production, and requests UNEP to support capacity building opportunities to enhance environmental sustainability of mining.

The speed and scale of the energy transition to a net-zero economy is contingent on availability of a range of minerals for renewable energy technologies and infrastructure, with an estimated six-fold increase in these materials by 2040³. But their supply chains are complex, fragile, and often dominated by

³ IEA (2022a). World Energy Outlook Special Report: The Role of Critical Minerals in Clean Energy Transitions. International Energy Agency: Paris. <https://www.iea.org/reports/the-role-of-critical-minerals-in-clean-energy-transitions>

a narrow range of countries and companies, which makes them vulnerable to political pressure and economic shocks⁴.

In this context, UNEP is advocating four mutually reinforcing approaches to enable more sustainable and resilient materials value chains. The first is to 'flatten' the future demand for transition materials by radically improving the **efficiency** in the extraction and use of transition materials through innovation and design. The second is to ensure **greater circularity** in the flows of those materials through the economy so that the materials provide services for longer rather than being used once and thrown away. Even with maximum efforts towards efficiency and circularity, copious quantities of transition materials will still need to be mined, so it is important that these are extracted **in a responsible way**. Finally, considerations of **equity** should drive all policy developments to ensure that the transition does not widen existing economic, social, or environmental rifts within or across communities and countries.

UNEP co-leads the work of the UN Secretary General's Working Group on Transforming Extractives Industries for Sustainable Development, along with UNDP and the UN Regional Economic Commissions. UNEP also supports the secretariat and Technical Advisory Group of the UN Secretary General's Critical Energy Transition Minerals independent expert Panel which will develop common voluntary principles for a just energy transition.

B.2.3. Building and construction

The construction sector is critical to our economy and wellbeing, representing an estimated 10% to 13% of global GDP^{5 6} and some of the greatest present and future investment opportunities⁷. The construction sector also consumes almost 50% of the total material footprint across the global economy⁸. This translates into a heavy contribution to global GHG emissions (37%), mainly associated to the production and supply of construction materials as well as to the operation of buildings⁹.

In 2023, a new partnership between the One Planet Network and **the Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction (GABC)** materialized at the World Circular Economy Forum 2023 and the General Assembly of GABC¹⁰. Its main objective is to foster change across the construction and materials ecosystem by promoting circular principles and sustainable practices throughout the entire lifecycle.

The 10YFP Secretariat, in partnership with UNOPS and UN-Habitat, launched the development of a **standardized circularity assessment framework for the construction sector at national level**, aligned with the SDGs and other international agreed objectives.

Supporting national and local governments in their efforts to use their **planning, managing, and purchasing power to accelerate the uptake of sustainability and circularity in the construction sector** has become one of the strategic objectives of the 10YFP Sustainable Public Procurement programme. In this context, with the support of UNEP and UNOPS, the One Planet Network initiative "**Mainstreaming Circularity in the Construction Sector Leveraging the Power of Public Procurement**" was initiated in 2023,

⁴ UNEP (2024, Working paper, to be published soon). Critical Transitions: Efficiency, circularity, responsibility, and equity in the quest for energy transition minerals.

⁵ United Nations Environment Programme (2021). *Catalysing Science-based Policy action on Sustainable Consumption and Production – The value-chain approach & its application to food, construction, and textiles*. Nairobi.

⁶ McKinsey & Company (2020). *The next normal in construction. How disruption is reshaping the world's largest ecosystem*.

⁷ International Finance Corporation (2019). *Green Buildings: A financial and policy blueprint for emerging markets*.

⁸ UNEP, SCP Hotspot Analysis Tool (2020)

⁹ United Nations Environment Programme (2021). *Catalysing Science-based Policy action on Sustainable Consumption and Production – The value-chain approach & its application to food, construction, and textiles*. Nairobi.

¹⁰ World Circular Economy Forum session "Building blocks for a circular future: trends, policies and solutions", 31 May 2023 and Accelerator session "Building a circular environment", 1 June, GlobalABC Assembly, 1-2 June 2023, Helsinki Finland

under the leadership of the 10YFP Sustainable Public Procurement programme and the Circular Built Environment working group of the Global Alliance for Sustainable Buildings and Construction (Materials Hub).

Also, during 2023 the 10YFP Secretariat undertook the preparatory steps to establish an international advisory to guide the initiative Mainstreaming Circularity in the Construction Sector and elaborated an engagement and outreach strategy leading to the **Buildings and Climate Global Forum** co-organized by UNEP and France in March 2024.

B.2.4. Plastics

UNEP is implementing the **Plastics Initiative** with stakeholders along the plastic value chain to address plastic pollution systemically. The Initiative applies a programmatic approach to promote circular solutions adopted by governments, businesses, financial institutions, and individuals, with a long-term vision to end plastic pollution by 2040. It has a specific focus on activating upstream innovation and solutions that focus on reduction and reuse. The Initiative has following four strategic goals: (i) Eliminating and substituting unnecessary or problematic plastics and hazardous additives and accelerating the market for reusable products; (ii) Ensuring plastic products are designed to be circular (reusable, recyclable, or compostable); (iii) Closing the loop of plastic in the economy by ensuring plastic products are circulated in practice (reused, recycled, or composted) and (iv) Managing plastic waste that cannot be reused or recycled in an environmentally sound manner. It also supports countries and regions to be better equipped with policy, knowledge, tools, and capacity and improve their readiness to adopt ongoing global efforts to address plastic pollution, particularly to the upcoming international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution after being agreed upon by the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC). The Initiative is currently active through **14 active projects**¹¹ being implemented by UNEP in **60 countries**, which encompass different geographic locations, sectors, intervention areas, and stakeholders.

In addition to the in-country support, UNEP has continued the collaboration with the Ellen MacArthur Foundation on the New Plastics Economy Global Commitment, bringing together businesses accounting for more than 20% of the plastic packaging market, as well as governments representing 1 billion people. In November 2023, the Global Commitment published its **5-year report**¹² just ahead of the third session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on plastic pollution. The report demonstrates the progress that businesses have been able to deliver in a voluntary setting, but also points at the hurdles that require further concerted, regulatory and global action to make further progress. Key areas where progress has been made include the reduction of consumption in virgin plastics (the equivalent of one barrel of oil stays in the ground every two seconds through the action of Global Commitment signatories), and the incorporation of post-consumer recycled content has grown 7 times faster among the Global Commitment signatories than their peers in the global market.

B.2.5 Tourism

Sustainable tourism has the capacity to drive economic development and create jobs, while conserving and protecting the fragile environmental and cultural ecosystems. If well managed, tourism can also be a catalyser of sustainability in other sectors: food, buildings, transportation. The One Planet Sustainable Tourism Programme, led by UN Tourism (World Tourism Organization) in collaboration with the 10YFP Secretariat, demonstrates that collaborative and pre-competitive

¹¹ [Ongoing projects | UNEP - UN Environment Programme](#)

¹² [The Global Commitment 5 Years In. \(ellenmacarthurfoundation.org\)](#)

platforms where tourism businesses, destinations, and other relevant organizations can share best practices, and develop tools, methodologies, and solutions to implement sustainability and circularity, can drive the transformation of an entire sector.

The One Planet Sustainable Tourism Programme continued to engage the tourism sector in the fight against climate change and inclusive transitions through its **Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism (GD)**, included in 2023 as an initiative under the Global Climate Action Platform¹³ of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The Glasgow Declaration has continued to secure commitments from the tourism sector in 2023, with 80 new signatories (mainly businesses) out of a total of 868, and track progress on their implementation. The Glasgow Declaration Implementation Report 2023 – Advancing Climate Action¹⁴ presents an overview of the rapidly developing engagement of tourism sector with the strategic pathways of measurement, decarbonization, regeneration (adaptation), collaboration and finance. The report is based on 420 updates on progress shared in in 2023, including 257 first-of its kind climate action plans. Most of the Climate Action Plans submitted are from business signatories (59%), followed by supporting organization signatories (30%) and destination signatories (12%).

In 2023, 59 National Tourism Administrations nominated, a national tourism climate focal point to UN Tourism and participated in consultations to develop the **Policy Guidance to Support Climate Action by National Tourism Administrations**¹⁵. The guidance document is intended to assist governmental agencies in the development of tourism climate action policies and initiatives to support the low-carbon transition with a focus on integrated mitigation and adaptation approaches. The Policy Guidance was developed with technical support from UNEP and released in collaboration with UNFCCC.

In 2023, the **Global Tourism Plastics Initiative (GTPI)** of the Sustainable Tourism Programme secured 73 new signatories (215 in total) committed to take ambitious commitments on circular economy of plastics and track progress of their implementation, including 74% from the business sector. Initial analysis based on data collected in 2023 shows that at least half of the signatories measuring plastic weight have reported lower usage intensity of plastic, and that accommodation providers are making steady progress in eliminating unnecessary and/or problematic plastics as well as in introducing reuse models.

To foster more sustainable food systems within the tourism sector, the “**Global Roadmap for Food Waste Reduction in the Tourism Sector**”¹⁶ was launched to promote the sustainable management of food so that it does not become waste. The roadmap proposes a systemic approach and is complemented by a series of nine Procuring Food Sustainably Factsheets¹⁷ which emphasize **sustainable procurement strategies** across various food types, detailing their climate and water footprints, as well as ethical considerations like fair trade and organic sourcing. To raise awareness, a toolkit¹⁸ aimed at different audiences including policymakers, businesses, and tourists was developed, complemented by a video¹⁹ showcasing chefs’ recommendations on food waste reduction and sustainable procurement. Furthermore, the promotion of these initiatives was highlighted during a panel on Circular Solutions for Reducing Food Waste at the 8th UNWTO World Forum on Gastronomy Tourism²⁰.

¹³ <https://climateaction.unfccc.int/Initiatives?id=134>

¹⁴ [Glasgow Declaration Annual Progress Report 2023 | One Planet network](#)

¹⁵ <https://www.oneplanetnetwork.org/knowledge-centre/resources/policy-guidance-support-climate-action-national-tourism-administrations>

¹⁶ <https://www.oneplanetnetwork.org/knowledge-centre/resources/global-roadmap-food-waste-reduction-tourism-sector>

¹⁷ <https://www.oneplanetnetwork.org/programmes/sustainable-tourism/sustainable-food-systems/procurement-factsheets>

¹⁸ <https://www.oneplanetnetwork.org/programmes/sustainable-tourism/sustainable-food-systems/sustainable-food-management-toolkit>

¹⁹ [Video on Food waste Reduction and recommendations from Chefs](#)

²⁰ <https://www.oneplanetnetwork.org/news-and-events/events/circular-solutions-reducing-food-waste>

B.2.6 Food systems

Food systems transformation is a whole-of-society and whole-of-government task that requires active engagement and effective participation of all actors across all sectors, leaving no one behind. Multi-stakeholder collaboration mechanisms that enable meaningful participation of stakeholders who have often been excluded from policymaking processes, such as Indigenous Peoples, small-scale farmers, women, youth, and informal food systems workers, are essential to create food strategies and actions that simultaneously benefit food security, environmental and socio-economic goals.

In 2023, the 10YFP Sustainable Food Systems Programme convened its 4th global conference “[The Transformation We Need](#)”, focused on how food systems need to be transformed to overcome the multiple, deeply rooted, and interlinked crises which undermine the achievement of the SDGs. The conference also served as a preparatory meeting for the first Stocktaking Moment of the UN Food Systems Summit. The [Conference high-level messages](#) subsequently influenced other international processes held in 2023, such as the Emirates Declaration on Sustainable Agriculture, Resilient Food Systems and Climate Action launched during UNFCCC COP28, as well as the Food System Coordination Hub’s Convergence Initiative.

The 10YFP Sustainable Food Systems Programme also promoted other initiatives, in particular the publication of the UNEP-FAO-UNDP guide “[Rethinking our Food Systems: A Guide for Multi-stakeholder Collaboration](#)”, a series of [shared learning events](#) in support of the implementation of the National Pathways for Food Systems Transformation in Support of the 2030 Agenda, as well as a [webinar series with a focus on the Mediterranean region](#) on topics including the role of consumers, women, and green growth in promoting sustainable food systems.

UNEP’s [Global Opportunities for Sustainable Development Goals \(GO4SDGs\)](#) together with the 10YFP Programme on Sustainable Food Systems and the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) helped build capacity to measure and reduce food waste across four regions (Africa, Asia Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and West Asia), supporting 25 countries on their pathways to reduce food waste and progress on SDG12.3. In addition, the Recipe of Change Initiative collaborated with leading hotel chains in West Asia to tackle food waste in the hospitality sector.

B.3. Global and Regional initiatives

B.3.1 Global Alliance on Circular Economy and Resource Efficiency (GACERE)

The [Global Alliance on Circular Economy and Resource Efficiency](#) (GACERE) is an alliance of governments at global level (current membership available [here](#)) willing to work together on and advocate for a global just circular economy transition and a more sustainable management of natural resources, at the political level and in multilateral fora. GACERE has consolidated its position as a platform for synergic work among governments for the promotion of a circular economy transition. In support of its advocacy work, the Alliance has made available resources demonstrating the potential impact of circular economy on [climate change](#) (experience sharing by member countries is also available [here](#)), [biodiversity loss](#) (with experience sharing by member countries available [here](#), and [discussions in the margins of UNEA-5](#)) and [green recovery](#). GACERE also developed a [Policy Brief on Circular Design of Plastic Products](#) which intends to inform the work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment by demonstrating the potential of circular design to address the plastic pollution crisis.

In this context, in December 2023, the [Outcome of the First Global Stocktake](#), which is part of the [UAE Consensus](#), recognizes in Article 36 the important role of sustainable consumption and production, sustainable lifestyles and circular economy in addressing climate change ([II.A.36](#)).

GACERE also provides convening opportunities to share lessons learned on the journey of member states towards a just and inclusive transition to circular economies. At the margins of UNEA-6, the Alliance and partners supported a conversation on [leveraging effective and inclusive collaboration with financial institutions to accelerate the transition to more circular economies](#). The World Circular Economy Forum 2023 offered the opportunity for GACERE to lead exchanges on [circular strategies and roadmaps](#), where GACERE member countries and others took stock of [their successes and challenges vis a vis the development, implementation and monitoring of sub-national, national and regional circular strategies](#), as well as discuss the potential of these road maps to address the biodiversity crisis.

B.3.2 Circular Economy Coalition for Latin America and the Caribbean

UNEP supports the Circular Economy Coalition for Latin America and the Caribbean by serving as coordination of the initiative. The initiative is formed by 17 countries, 9 strategic partners and more than 20 members, amongst them the European Commission, private sector allies, academia, and NGOs. The coalition launched the report "[Unlocking the financing of the Circular Economy in LAC: the catalyst for positive change](#)", developed by the Circular Economy Coalition for Latin America and the Caribbean, in strategic collaboration with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), BID-Invest, UNEP-FI and GO4SDGs. This report provides an exhaustive analysis of circular economy practices across the Latin American and Caribbean region. It goes a step further by offering strategic recommendations tailored for financial institutions, regulatory authorities, and policymakers.

In strategic collaboration with the European Union's Switch to Green program, the Coalition also organized **a series of virtual exchange workshops**. These workshops served as a platform for countries across the region, including Costa Rica, Peru, Colombia, Uruguay, Chile, the Dominican Republic, as well as regions of Buenos Aires and Turrialba, to meet and share their plans, steps, strategies, and methodologies related to the circular economy road maps. Following this preparatory work, the Coalition established a working group on national strategies, to provide further support to countries to develop and implement national policies on CE.

The Coalition also developed the [2023 Circularity Gap Report for Latin America and the Caribbean](#), a collaborative effort involving UNEP GO4SDGs, the LAC Circular Economy Coalition and partners like ECLAC, UNIDO, and IDB. This comprehensive report is a valuable tool for governments, organizations, and various stakeholders, providing them with the insights needed to gauge their current position in the shift towards a circular economy. It highlights areas requiring enhancements and offers guidance on aligning efforts to foster more sustainable and efficient practices. Additionally, the report plays a crucial role in aiding the reduction of resource consumption, waste generation, and environmental impact.

B.3.3. African Circular Economy Alliance (ACEA)

UNEP through the initiative [Global Opportunities for Sustainable Development Goals \(GO4SDGs\)](#) is supporting the African Circular Economy Alliance (ACEA) along with the African Regional Standards Organization (ARSO) within the framework of the African Free Continental Trade Agreement (AfCTA) to

develop a common continental recycling standard for food grade polyethylene terephthalate (rPET) to accelerate circular plastics value chains in Africa based on the emergence of scaled and internationally competitive rPET recycling. The standard will be recommend supporting trade policies and regulations to shore up the harmonization process.

D. Financing for Development

This section will address the challenges of financing for development as envisaged in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, including financing the shift to sustainable consumption and production.

It will also explore policy options that incentivize and attract private sector finance and adjust national public and private financial systems to mobilize resources for sustainable investment at the national and regional levels.

D.1. The role of the private sector finance in accelerating the shift to sustainable consumption and production

UNEP's Finance Initiative helps more than 320 banks representing more than half of global banking assets – to set targets in areas in which their operations have the most significant impacts, as part of implementing the Principles for Responsible Banking (PRB), the leading global framework for banks worldwide to align their strategies with the Sustainable Development Goals and Paris Climate Agreement and help redirect private financing towards related targets. To help mobilize private finance for sustainable consumption and production, banks can access UNEP's guidance and technical support to set and implement resource efficiency and circular economy targets. The PRB biennial [progress report](#) highlighted the strides made by the signatory banks, with 98% having integrated sustainability oversight into their governance structure, and 91% at board and CEO level. Since its establishment in 2019, the PRB membership has seen significant growth from 130 founding member banks to 325 in 80 countries, representing almost USD 90 trn assets – more than 50% of banking assets worldwide.

On the insurance front, the Principles for Sustainable Insurance (PSI) Initiative grew to 153 signatories representing about one-third of world premiums and USD 15 trillion (trn) assets under management (AuM). 2023 saw the launch of the first life and health guidance for insurers and work continued on nature positive insurance.

UNEP FI's Leadership Council, its senior governing body, held its third meeting in December, rallying 12 CEOs and global finance leaders around the table to elevate the agenda and boost action on sustainable finance. 2023 agenda included international financial architecture reforms to mobilize finance for sustainability impact in emerging and developing economies, and private sector policy and regulation for sustainable economies.

UNEP FI helps financial institutions to set and implement targets in areas including mitigating climate change through UN-convened Net-Zero Alliances across asset owners, banks, insurers, and export credit agencies. The Net-Zero Banking Alliance has seen a threefold rise in membership since its launch, now including a significant representation from emerging market banks. 2023 [progress update](#) found that over

two-thirds of member banks have aligned their targets with 1.5°C scenarios. Members of the NZ Asset Owner Alliance, representing USD 9.5 trn AuM, published their third annual progress report, which showed heightened aspirations across various hard-to-abate sectors, broadening the coverage of AuM under target, and achieving a commendable 3.5% reduction in total absolute financed GHG emissions. The NZ Insurance Alliance launched its [Target-Setting Protocol](#) for insurance and reinsurance underwriting portfolios. 2023 saw the launch of the [Net-Zero Export Credit Agencies Alliance](#) with eight founding members from leading export credit agencies, unified in the goal to support the decarbonization of international trade by 2050 or sooner.

Adaptation and resilience are critical to secure sustainable economies, and with its network of 150+ insurers representing one-third of global insurance premiums, UNEP FI's insurance initiative is supporting the V20 Sustainable Insurance Facility to support access to climate-smart insurance solutions among micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises in 55 vulnerable economies.

To unlock private sector finance for climate adaptation and bridge the adaptation finance gap, UNEP FI published the Principles for Responsible Banking [Climate Adaptation Target Setting Guide](#) to help banks accelerate management of climate-related impacts.

UNEP FI co-developed with a group of banks from all regions an updated version of the [Resource Efficiency and Circular Economy Target Setting Guidance](#) under the Principles for Responsible Banking Framework. The Guidance includes a common pathway to impact and core indicators to guide good practices in the banking sector, measure progress, and foster active collaboration to drive results for people and planet. It has been designed to support banks in offering financial products and services that increase the circularity of their clients' activities.

UNEP Finance Initiative (UNEP FI) published with GO4SDGs a study [Unlocking Circular Economy Finance in Latin America and the Caribbean](#). This study on circular economy finance practices includes recommendations for financial institutions, regulators, and policymakers to unlock financing for the transition towards a circular economy. This work has engaged over 15 financial institutions and has strengthened the partnerships with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), IDB Invest, Dalberg Advisors, and the African Development Bank, among others. It has also contributed to the work of the LAC Circular Economy Coalition and the African Circular Economy Alliance. It has also paved the way to the development of future work at national level in some countries of the region, in collaboration with CTCN and BASE.

UNEP FI convened a Finance Leadership Group on Plastics to contribute to the development process of the future international legally binding instrument to end plastic pollution and to building readiness of the finance sector to act on plastic pollution. The Finance Leadership Group on Plastics is a core group of financial institutions representing c. USD 9.8trn global assets. The Leadership Group published, ahead of INC2, [Ten Key Messages to Align Financial Flows with the Objective of Ending Plastic Pollution](#), which identified the priorities to include in the future instrument objectives and core obligations, to enable the finance sector to play its role in ending plastic pollution. Ahead of INC3 the Leadership Group published [Redirecting Financial Flows to End Plastic Pollution](#), a comprehensive paper for negotiators and the finance industry on the role and requirements of the sector to enable the transition towards pollution-free economies.

Helping to mobilize financial institutions on plastic pollution can contribute to support the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), that UNEP FI has supported in 2023 through various initiatives including the release of a [high-level roadmap](#) and sector-

specific briefings for the finance sector, technical support for the development of final Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD) recommendations, and the publication of a Principles for Responsible Banking guidance on nature target-setting.

In view of the imperative that the shift to low-carbon, resource-efficient, and resilient economies ensure just economic and social benefits and protect the most vulnerable populations, UNEP FI released with the International Labor Organization the first just transition roadmap for banks and insurers, to support financial institutions on an equitable economic shift.

On the policy front, 2023 saw an increase in policy and regulatory reforms from around the world with countries setting out net-zero finance frameworks, culminating with the launch of the UN Task Force on Net Zero Policy at COP28. UNEP FI co-released in July a common framework for sustainable finance taxonomies in Latin America and the Caribbean, and is contributing to the technical development of Brazil, Panama, and Costa Rica's sustainable taxonomies.

E. Strengthening Science-Policy Interface

This section will assess the current state of scientific knowledge on sustainable development. innovative approaches to sustainability science and digital technologies.

It will refer to initiatives to harness science, technology, and innovation, including new and emerging technologies, including through scaling up the use of open science, affordable and open-source technology, research, and development to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals including SDG 12.

It will also explore initiatives from the international community to support developing countries in strengthening their scientific and technological capacity to move towards more sustainable patterns of consumption and production.

E.1. Key findings from the Global Resources Outlook 2024

Better resource management is essential to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. According to the 2024 edition of the Global Resources Outlook, the question is no longer whether a transformation towards sustainable resource management is necessary, but how to urgently make it happen. The scale of impacts linked to the way material resources (biomass, fossil fuels, metals, and non-metallic minerals) are extracted and processed for our global economy is increasing; it is responsible for over 55% of greenhouse gas emissions, up to 40% of particulate matter health related impacts, and over 90% of total land-related biodiversity loss. If not addressed, the impacts of the current trajectory of resource use will derail the aim of meeting Multilateral Environmental Agreements like the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the Convention on Biological Diversity.²¹

At the heart of more sustainable resource use is an accelerated shift in resource productivity, together with responsible consumption. Fairer and more responsible consumption can be facilitated by strategic

²¹ United Nations Environment Programme (2024): Global Resources Outlook 2024 Summary for Policymakers: Bend the Trend – Pathways to a liveable planet as resource use spikes. International Resource Panel. Nairobi. <https://wedocs.unep.org/20.500.11822/44902>

investments in public and private infrastructure and provisioning systems to guide the global economy towards more sustainable and equitable resource use and management.²²

According to the International Resources Panel, high-income countries consume six times more materials and contribute ten times more to climate impacts than low-income countries.²³ Over the last twenty years, upper-middle income countries have more than doubled their material footprint²⁴ and material footprint per capita, fast approaching high-income country levels - which themselves have remained constant over the same time period. More concerning, the material footprint of low-income countries – where there is an urgent need for improvements in material standards of living - has remained low and almost unchanged over the past twenty years.²⁵

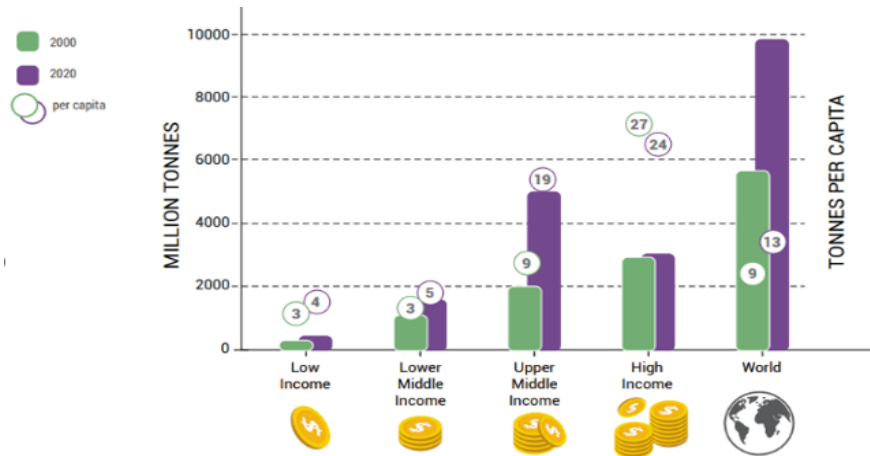


Figure 3: Material footprint by income group (Source: UNEP-IRP (2023) Global Material Flow and Resource Productivity Database)

Resource efficiency and supporting policies can reduce material resource use and dramatically reduce environmental impacts in high and upper middle-income countries (absolute decoupling) while improving well-being and boosting economic growth. This can also create the space for resource use to grow where it is most needed.²⁶ For instance, dietary changes that reduce consumption of commodities with high environmental impacts including animal protein, and policies that reduce food loss and waste can decrease the land needed for food by five per cent by 2060 compared to 2020 levels while more equitably ensuring adequate nutrition for all.²⁷ The following table illustrates recommended strategies for reducing resource used across four provisioning systems (food, built environment, mobility, and energy).

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Material footprint is a measure that attributes all the material resources mobilized globally to the final consumer and is used as an indicator to report on SDG 12.2. SDG 12 indicator 12.2.1: material footprint, material footprint per capita, and material footprint per GDP.

²⁵ United Nations Environment Programme (2024): Global Resources Outlook 2024 Summary for Policymakers: Bend the Trend – Pathways to a liveable planet as resource use spikes. International Resource Panel. Nairobi. <https://wedocs.unep.org/20.500.11822/44902>

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.





Provisioning system	 Food	 Built environment	 Mobility	 Energy
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reducing the demand of the most impactful food commodities Reducing food loss and food waste Protecting and restoring productive land while meeting demand for nutrition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assuring sustainability of the new building stock Retrofitting the existing building stock More intensive use of buildings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cities moving towards active mobility and public transportation Reducing carbon-intensive frequent traveling modalities Decreasing emissions intensity of transport modalities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decarbonizing electricity supply through the scaling up of low-resource renewable energies and increased energy efficiency
Outcomes from policies modelled in Scenarios	Can decrease the land needed for food by 5% compared to 2020 levels while more equitably ensuring adequate nutrition for all	Can decrease building material stocks by 25% by 2060, leading to a 30% decrease in energy demand, and 30% decrease in GHG emissions compared to current trends.	Can reduce related material stock requirements (-50%), energy demands (-50%) and GHG emissions (-60%) by 2060 compared to current trends.	Can drive a sharp decrease in energy demand, with reductions of climate impacts by more than 80 per cent.

Figure 4: Recommended strategies for reducing resource use across four systems, and expected outcomes based on scenario modelling of the International Resource Panel Global Resources Outlook 2024.

It is possible to reduce resource use while promoting sustainable development, reducing inequality, improving well-being, and dramatically reducing environmental impacts.²⁸ This requires system-based approaches across sectors. According to the International Resources Panel, integrated action on resource efficiency, climate and energy, food and land can achieve significantly larger positive effects than any one of these policy areas would in isolation.²⁹ Taken together, by 2060 these actions could lead to a global GDP about 3% larger alongside a global Human Development Index 7% higher than could be expected by following historical trends.³⁰ Such measures could also mitigate growth in material use by 30 per cent and reduce GHG emissions by more than 80 per cent from current levels by 2060, consistent with the Paris Agreement, along with absolute reductions in energy use, agricultural land area, and other pressures.³¹

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ United Nations Environment Programme (2024): Global Resources Outlook 2024 Summary for Policymakers: Bend the Trend – Pathways to a liveable planet as resource use spikes. International Resource Panel. Nairobi. <https://wedocs.unep.org/20.500.11822/44902> (page 7)

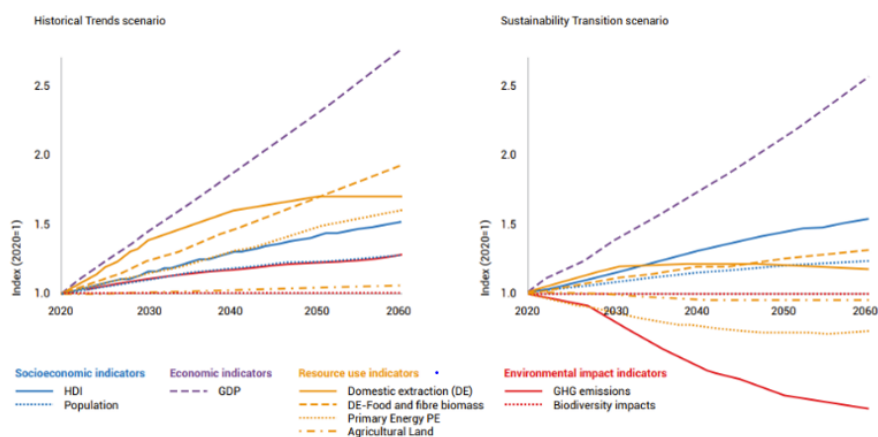


Figure 5: A comparison of the global outcomes of two scenario models: Historical trends (left) showing increasing pressures and impacts alongside economic growth, and Sustainability Transition (right) showing moderated or falling pressures and impacts while wellbeing improves alongside stronger economic growth and higher incomes. (Source: IRP GRO24)

E.2 Digital solutions to accelerate the shift to sustainable consumption and production

Digitalization can boost the transformation towards a more sustainable consumption and production patterns. It can help close the material loops by providing accurate information on the availability, location, and condition of products. Digitalization also enables more efficient processes in companies, helps minimize waste, promotes longer life for products and minimizes the transaction costs. Thus, digitalization boosts innovative business models by helping to close the loop, slow the material loop and narrow the loop with increased resource efficiency. However, there are still many challenges to be solved in order to gain the desired benefits and gaps hindering digital technology-aided circular business models implementation.

In 2023, UNEP continued to advance sustainable consumption and production by enhancing existing digital platforms and tools, in collaboration with key partners. These included the "[Building circularity into Nationally Determined Contributions—a practical toolbox](#)", the [toolbox for the Sustainable Consumption and Production Hotspot Analysis Tool \(SCP-HAT\)](#), the [EnABLE tool for sustainable infrastructure](#), the expanded [Global LCA Data Access \(GLAD\) platform](#), and the enhancements of the [ARIES for the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting](#).

Alongside these technological advancements, UNEP launched the '[Digitalization for Circular Economy](#)' initiative, following the recommendations of a pivotal [report](#) on harnessing digital technologies for the circular economy. Noteworthy engagements included participation in [UNCTAD's e-week](#), the [AI4Good Summit](#), and the [UPU Hackathon](#), among others.

In 2024, UNEP has continued to actively advance its digital and data-driven initiatives to enhance sustainable consumption and production. The organization began the testing phase of '[EnvironmentGPT](#),' a generative AI model aimed at transforming complex environmental data into more easily understandable information. In collaboration with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), UNEP [convened regional consultations](#) with key stakeholders from the ICT sector across 24 countries in Latin America, Africa, and Asia, focusing on the implementation challenges and benefits of Digital Product Passports (DPPs). Additionally, UNEP is developing a [Global Environmental Data Strategy \(GEDS\)](#), holding

thematic consultations to co-define this strategy's framework and value propositions. The publication of the report '[Digital Public Infrastructure for Environmental Sustainability](#)' is also noteworthy as an emerging priority to advance environmental sustainability.

III. Conclusions

This section will refer to policy implications necessary to achieve implementation of sustainable consumption and production as a cross-cutting goal to achieve 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Accelerating the shift towards more sustainable consumption and production patterns entails that high impact, industry sectors are significantly reducing their climate, nature, and pollution footprints, therefore addressing critical pollution, climate, and nature outcomes while at the same time ensuring positive economic and social benefits.

Addressing the financing gap for sustainable development, especially for the transition towards Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP), remains a complex and pressing challenge. Public finance plays a critical role in bridging the financing gap and creating an enabling environment for private sector investments. Effective fiscal policy and strong public finance systems can influence the cost of borrowing and make sustainable investments more attractive.

To fully harness its potential, the transition to SCP and circular economy must be designed to be inclusive and equitable, incorporating gender-responsive and youth-focused strategies. Initiatives such as the [Green Jobs for Youth Pact](#)—a collaborative effort between UNEP, ILO, and UNICEF— present a unique generational opportunity to equip stakeholders with essential tools for effective policies.

The ongoing process of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee will provide the opportunity to identify how to create new economic opportunities and alleviate poverty, while tackling plastic pollution. It will enable to bring to scale sustainable consumption and production solutions, deploy innovative business models, design products that keep the highest value, address the chemical contents in products to enable safe reuse and recycling, develop safe and environmentally sound waste management and eliminate residual waste along the value chain.