



## *UNIDO inputs*

### ***2024 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”***

*May 2024*

#### ***I. Introduction***

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

##### ***A. Follow-up of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development***

*This section will provide an overview of the status 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, built on Agenda 21, which recognizes that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development.*

The combined effects of the war in Ukraine, the Corona pandemic and climate change have led to rising energy, food and other prices, inflation and a reorganization of global value chains all putting at risk the achievement of SDG 1: End poverty in all its forms, everywhere. At the midpoint of the 2030 Agenda, it is unlikely that the SDGs will be achieved. UNIDO’s IDR 2024 shows that vulnerable areas, such as Africa and Least Developed Countries, are suffering from huge gaps in the achievement of the SDGs overall, including in relation to SDG 12: Sustainable Production and Consumption. A course correction is urgently needed.

##### ***B. Sustainable Consumption and Production***

*Taking into account the impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic, this section will focus on the central role of Goal 12 on sustainable consumption and production as a cross-cutting goal supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, recognizing that eradicating poverty, changing unsustainable and promoting sustainable patterns of consumption and production and protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development are the overarching objectives of and essential requirements for sustainable development.*

*It will refer to progress achieved in making fundamental changes in the way societies consume and produce goods and services through the transition to sustainable economic and business models that promote sustainable consumption and production patterns as well as enabling policies, policies, frameworks, partnerships, technological innovation and instruments that improve resource efficiency and the sustainable management of natural resources, including water-use efficiency, reduce waste, promote life-cycle approaches,*

*encourage approaches such as the circular economy, life cycle and other approaches, as appropriate and taking into account national circumstance and capacities, enable consumers to make sustainable consumption choices, mainstream sustainability practices, encourage sustainable and environmentally sound bio-based products and increase resilience across all sectors of the economy, which will contribute to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals, in particular SDG 12. It will also take consider the important role of private sector in prompting and utilizing sustainable practices.*

*It will also explore sustainable consumption and production approaches, in which products and materials are designed in such a way that they can be reused, remanufactured or recycled and therefore retained in the economy for as long as possible, along with the resources of which they are made, the generation of waste is avoided or minimized, and greenhouse gas emissions are prevented or reduced.*

The UN has a critical role to play in reversing course and moving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development forward. UNIDO is doing this with a focus on sustainable industrial development. UNIDO's vision is a world without poverty and hunger, where industry drives low-emission economies, improves living standards and preserves the environment for present and future generations. Synergies can be achieved when technologies are applied that take into account resource and economic efficiency. Key approaches that UNIDO is promoting to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs include:

- **Developing sustainable businesses:** Through development of business models and support to business plan development and technology transfer and capacity-building, UNIDO helps industries, including in particular small and medium-sized enterprises and entrepreneurs to start and grow their businesses to the point where they can effectively serve local markets and global value chains. This generates income and employment for many, including the poor and marginalized.
- **Driving sustainability standards:** Countries need to meet increasingly stringent market requirements for product quality, safety, health and environmental impact. UNIDO assists Member States and their industries in meeting many of these international standards. UNIDO also works with companies to develop and pilot more stringent standards for sustainable production.
- **Adding value to local products:** Many developing countries still export raw materials without adding value to them locally. By promoting value addition in developing countries through sustainable processing technologies, UNIDO helps developing countries to create prosperity and the basis for local job creation and income generation, including for the poor.
- **Building circular economies:** Moving from the current linear economy to a circular economy (CE) can reduce global greenhouse gas emissions by 39 per cent while enabling countries to decrease pressure on vital ecosystems by reducing the use of virgin materials by 28 per cent (CGRI 2023). UNIDO is helping developing countries



develop roadmaps for applying CE principles and practices in industries to transition to more sustainable production and consumption patterns ([UNIDO and Chatham House, 2024](#)).

- **Promoting cleaner production:** UNIDO assists industrial enterprises in designing products and materials for reuse, remanufacturing or recycling, thereby keeping them in the economy longer and minimizing waste. UNIDO facilitates the process of identifying and mobilizing capital, knowledge and technological resources for more targeted investments in cleaner and sustainable production. Achieving carbon neutrality in production and consumption patterns can be combined with nature-based solutions to ensure the conservation and restoration of biodiversity.
- **Decarbonizing industry:** UNIDO promotes energy efficiency policies, technologies, and affordable renewable energy sources for productive activities, supporting low-carbon growth paths in industry.
- **Managing water and preventing pollution:** UNIDO assists with best available technologies for industrial and municipal water management, preventing industrial effluent discharge into national and international waters.
- **Developing agri-business:** UNIDO helps to add value to agricultural production, reduce post-harvest losses and improve resource efficiency. This creates employment opportunities in rural communities and improves food security, safety and nutrition through agri-business development. It also provides outlets for farmers to sell their products.
- **Enhancing industrial skills:** UNIDO promotes an entrepreneurial culture and provides vocational training to enhance skills in industrial production, especially for youth in developing countries. This improves the competitiveness of local production and generates better incomes for communities. UNIDO also helps to develop sustainable production skills among upstream suppliers, which are often a key challenge in accelerating progress towards sustainable supply chains and production ([UNIDO 2024c](#)).
- **Supporting pharmaceutical industries:** UNIDO supports the development and upgrading of the pharmaceutical industry in developing countries. This includes local production of essential generic medicines, reduction of environmental pollution and protection of consumer health through food safety standards. As a result, consumers have access to more affordable, high-quality medicines, while local production also generates income and jobs.
- **Promoting sustainable industrial production through South-South cooperation:** Through its South-South and Triangular Industrial Cooperation ([SSTIC](#)) framework, UNIDO facilitates knowledge exchange, technology transfer, and capacity-building among developing countries with a focus on sustainable industrial development.



- **Fostering gender equality in industry:** UNIDO helps to empower women in industry by providing training in manufacturing and entrepreneurial skills, and facilitating their access to technologies, knowledge and financial resources, enabling women's effective participation in economic life.

**United Nations Development Systems' support for the implementation of SDG 12.**

*This sub-section will provide concrete examples of actions and initiatives being taken across the UN system in support of the implementation of the present resolution.*

*It will also include commitments and initiatives that provide tools for action on sustainable consumption and production, such as the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns and its new Global Strategy on Sustainable Consumption and Sustainable Patterns.*

UNIDO, thanks to funding from various donors, supports its Member States in improving sustainable production through a series of global and regional programmes, as well as national projects focusing on sustainable production and circular economy in resource-intensive sectors. A key target group of these interventions is the private sector, and in particular SMEs that constitute the economic backbone of many developing countries. Concrete examples on how UNIDO supports the implementation of SDG 12 include the following:

- The **Global Alliance on Circular Economy and Resource Efficiency**, launched by the European Commission, the United Nations Environment Programme and UNIDO, has produced working papers and practical guidelines on the application of circular economy principles in industry.
- UNIDO's **Global Eco-Industrial Parks Programme**, funded by Switzerland, helps emerging economies to create more competitive and sustainable industrial parks where technical solutions for circular economy practices are applied in accordance with the principles of sustainable consumption and production patterns.
- In cooperation with international partners and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, UNIDO launched the **Global Alliance and Partnership for Responsible and Green Minerals** with the aim to promote a socially responsible and environmentally sustainable mining sector.
- Through the **Industrial Deep Decarbonization Initiative (IDDI)** UNIDO helps the steel and cement industries adopt more sustainable technologies and transform production processes. At COP28, some of the world's largest purchasing countries of the most emission-intensive materials outlined their commitments under the IDDI Green Public Procurement Pledge, leveraging their buying power to markedly increase market demand for low and near-zero emission steel, cement and concrete.



- To promote the production and use of green hydrogen, UNIDO launched the international standards methodology to assess greenhouse gas emissions related to the production and use of hydrogen and supported the **COP28 Hydrogen Action Agenda** and initiatives of the **International Hydrogen Trade Forum**, helping countries to transition to low-carbon hydrogen and mitigate climate change.
- **UNIDO’s Industrial Recovery Programme in Ukraine** focuses on the transfer of digital and AI-based technologies that have the potential to transform industry and promote sustainable growth, ranging from the application of Internet of Things-based crop management in agro-processing, municipal smart grids and sensor-based monitoring of energy infrastructures to smart manufacturing and logistics. Even in times of war firms may find it profitable to adopt resource efficiency or other circular economy practices, as these changes in the production process improve the ability of firms to cope with disruptions ([UNIDO, 2024b](#)).
- UNIDO's EU-funded **SwitchMed Programme** supports small and medium-sized industries in the southern Mediterranean through skills development, capacity-building and technical assistance, including in the textile, plastics, and seafood industries, where pilot projects are demonstrating the potential for more resource-efficient and circular production.
- UNIDO’s **EU4Environment Project** facilitates industrial symbiosis, industrial waste reduction and circular economy practices in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, contributing to sustainable consumption and production. Circular economy solutions also help manufacturers in these countries to build resilience to value chain disruptions - caused by pandemics or conflicts – when companies need to reduce resource consumption or substitute inputs ([UNIDO 2022](#)).
- To contribute to global efforts to end hunger, UNIDO adopted blended financing solutions with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to advance the **AgriFood Systems Transformation Accelerator (ASTA)** for sustainable agricultural and agro-industrial development, building on the approach field tested in 15 countries across Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean.
- The UNIDO “**Bridge for Cities**” event promotes inclusive and sustainable urban and industrial development solutions, and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in cities along the Belt and Road. It seeks to address common issues like waste management, central heating distribution, water management, pollution, and social inequalities.
- UNIDO is also in charge of facility management at the **Vienna International Centre (VIC)** hosting the various UN organizations in Austria. In this function it continuously implements cutting-edge technologies for sustainable consumption optimizing, among others, heating, cooling, and lighting, significantly reducing the carbon footprint of Vienna-based UN organizations. For almost a decade, the VIC facility has operated as climate neutral by offsetting the remaining unavoidable greenhouse gas emissions and



purchasing 100% renewable electricity. Well water is utilized for flushing, LED-based emergency lighting has been installed, and elevators have been renovated to improve efficiency and operational savings.

#### ***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.*

Despite multilateral efforts, the debt problem in developing countries continues to worsen. The gap to reach the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in developing countries increased by 56% after the outbreak of COVID-19, to a total of USD 3.9 trillion in 2020 ([OECD 2023](#)). More than half of low-income countries and a quarter of middle-income countries are at high risk of debt distress ([IMF 2022](#)). Meanwhile, external creditors continue to be paid, while commitments to the SDGs, including for sustainable production and consumption or the Paris Climate Agreement are increasingly out of reach. A radical transformation of the global financial system is needed.

The UN system can help ensure that more financial resources reach sustainable production and consumption initiatives worldwide. Funding for sustainable production and consumption programmes from developed countries and the international community needs to be released to developing countries and matched with substantial resources from the private financial sector. Investing in developing countries needs to be made more attractive and communicated through the Fund managers, while standards and governments need to ensure that investments are made only in companies that are consistent with equitable and sustainable development.

The UN system shall also seek even closer alignment with the sustainable production and consumption related programming efforts led by vertical funds such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF), Green Climate Fund (GCF), Global Biodiversity Framework Fund (GBFF), Multilateral Fund (MLF), and Adaptation Fund (AF). These funds stimulate paradigm shifts in environmental sustainability and climate action, providing substantial financial support for UN-driven development projects in the area of sustainable production and consumption ([Ferraz 2023](#)).

A new private sector- and farmer-focused alliance to bridge the financing gap in agriculture - **Alliance for Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zones (ASAP-Z)** – has been launched by the African Development Bank Group, African Export-Import Bank, Arise Integrated Industrial Platforms, Islamic Development Bank Group and UNIDO. The financial institutions of the Alliance have committed to invest USD 3 billion and are looking to expand to new financial institution partners.

As part of its **South-South and Triangular Industrial Cooperation** framework, UNIDO advocates funding partnerships with LDCs and developing countries to share successful models and best practices for sustainable industrial production, including through the South-South Investment Forum, 2023.

### ***E. Strengthening Science-Policy Interface***

*This section will assess the current state of scientific knowledge on sustainable development, innovative approaches to sustainability science, 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.*

Industry is part of the solution to climate change and sustainable production and consumption. Sustainable industrial development is strongly linked to innovation and technological change, which promote the application of appropriate solutions in production and creates synergies between environmental, economic and social objectives. In the application of technological change, developed countries are more effective in applying synergies between economic, environmental and social goals (Cheng et al. 2023). The UN can help promote synergetic technological solutions that foster sustainable production and consumption in developing countries by removing barriers to their adoption.

By promoting policy coherence in industry legislation on the national, regional, and global levels – the latter particularly relevant to transboundary issues – the UN can ensure regulatory frameworks that foster sustainable consumption and production practices. Environmental and industrial policies can trigger virtuous investments in the modernization of industries and the replacement of unsustainable technologies (see UNIDO reports by Amann et al. 2021 and Cali et al. 2021). In this context UNIDO promotes the following:

- **Inclusive industrialization policies:** UNIDO ensures that policies for industrial development and related policy frameworks in the area of productive development are effectively linked to goals of sustainable and inclusive development, reaching especially the poor. The benefits of industrialization are to be share by all, improving living conditions sustainably and leaving no one behind.
- **Promoting smart technologies, digitalization and artificial intelligence in industry:** UNIDO promotes sustainable production by helping companies take advantage of smart technologies and artificial intelligence (AI) in industry through



various technical cooperation projects that showcase innovative AI solutions and through the Global Alliance on AI for Industry and Manufacturing and its global competition for startups.

- **Aligning digital and industrial policy to foster future industrialization:** Industries are increasingly using digital innovations. Policies that drive the adoption of data-rich applications in industry can lead economic progress and sustainable production and consumption. UNIDO fosters data capacity-building, industrial data infrastructure and national demonstrators to this end. Data policies also need to become more integrated into broader sectoral and economic policies, and aligned with broader development goals (Foster and Azmeh 2023).
- **Technological change towards higher environmental performance:** Private firms – of which more than half are manufacturing firms – hold over two-thirds of all green technology patents (Lavopa and Menéndez 2023). By way of promoting R&D and technological change in these firms UNIDO contributes to cleaner and more sustainable production.
- **Evaluation of sustainable production initiatives:** UNIDO’s scientific tool NICE (National Impacts of Circular Economy) analyzes to what extent projects implementing circular economy also trigger economic and social indicators and contribute to sustainable production and consumption.

## ***F. Partnerships for Sustainable Development***

*This section will examine the role of multi-stakeholder and cross-disciplinary partnerships as means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.*

*It will refer to partnerships at all levels, including with the United Nations system and international financial system, to advance innovative pathways to achieving sustainable consumption and production.*

*This section also will refer to partnerships that contribute to resource efficiency, sustainable management of natural resources, reduce waste, and increase resilience across all sectors of the economy, which will contribute to SDG 12 and 2030.*

UNIDO expanded its partnerships that address sustainable production and consumption in 2023.

- Jointly with UNEP, UNIDO is facilitating the Global Alliance on Circular Economy and Resource Efficiency (GACERE), an alliance of governments committed to promoting circular economy at the global level.





- UNIDO partners with Italy and companies such as Illy Caffè and the Lavazza Foundation, providing sustainable solutions in the production, processing and trade of coffee.
- UNIDO's Learning and Knowledge Development Facility (LKDF) is a public-private development partnership for vocational training in industrial engineering in Africa with long-standing partners such as Volvo, HP and Festo.
- UNIDO partners with Fairtrade International to promote sustainable supply chains and increase the value addition and sustainable production of small and medium-sized enterprises, smallholder farmers and workers.
- The OPEC Fund for International Development and UNIDO signed a joint declaration to deepen their partnership in securing energy access and promoting the energy transition.

### ***III. Conclusions***

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