

FINLAND

6 May 2010

Statement for CSD-18

Sustainable Consumption and Production

Thank you, Mr/ Madam Chair

First of all I would yield my full support to the statement made on behalf of the European Union.

It has become increasingly clear that we use natural resources in a way that undermines the carrying capacity of our ecosystems. Some of us are over-consuming while others don't have the possibility to fulfill basic needs. Unsustainable use of natural resources is also one of the drivers behind climate change and loss of biodiversity.

The UN financed study on Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) has estimated that the damage to the environment will cause the global economy to decline by 7 % by the middle of the century. Also, the Secretary-General in his excellent report to CSD-18 has underlined that one huge challenge before us is correcting the under pricing of natural resources and non-pricing of pollution.

We need to work together so that in the long term everybody is able to meet their basic needs and have a decent quality of life within the carrying capacity of the ecosystems.

This means that we have to rethink the concept of economic growth. Growth cannot anymore be dependent on the use of natural resources, and it needs to be decoupled from environmental degradation and social wellbeing. In placing political priority on sustainable use of natural resources and producing more from less we might gain triple wins: promote poverty eradication, create jobs and slow down climate change. The governments should take the lead and ensure that the SCP goals are integrated into relevant strategies, such as strategies on SD, climate change and poverty reduction.

At the moment we are lacking a common vision on how to use natural resources in a more sustainable way and at the same time create welfare for all.

The CSD19 next year will provide an excellent opportunity for Governments to agree on a 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production for 2012-2022. Furthermore, the 10YFP can also be a major response to the current political demand for input on how to green our economies. Therefore, governments should use the opportunity at the Rio+20 Conference in 2012 to reconfirm their commitment to promote global action on sustainable consumption and production.

Mr/Madam Chair

Finland has developed a national strategy on SCP together with all relevant stakeholders which was approved by the government in 2006. This process has led to various concrete measures.

The first measure after the approval of the strategy was the establishment of a material efficiency centre, which provides services for businesses and advice for consumers and public sector organisations in improving material efficiency. The intention is to set sector-specific targets and conclude material-efficiency targets with key sectors. The centre is for the time being piloting a tool on material auditing. The results from the pioneering companies show that it is easy to reduce material-efficiency by 5-10 % and at the same time save money and cut CO₂ emissions.

Another result of our national strategy was a major study on the environmental and economic footprint of Finland's economy, including our environmental impact abroad through imports which pointed out important facts. First of all, most environmental impacts of domestic final

demand are caused by housing, food and private transportation. Another important finding was that half of the Finnish economy's environmental impacts are due to exports. In addition, our economy uses natural resources abroad as much as we use domestic resources. The study showed that in the global economy, the places of consumption and production have become distanced which results in unequal distribution of risks and benefits. Therefore we cannot rely solely on domestic solutions to rectify the problem.

All stakeholders and citizens should be involved, but **the governments and public sector should set an example in changing unsustainable practices.** The governments should focus financial support like innovation and recovery packages on fundamental change. We should abolish perverse subsidies, use economic instruments more widely and invest in sustainable infrastructure.

In Finland the government passed in April 2009 a resolution that encourages all public actors to adopt sustainable procurement. The Government expects measures particularly in the areas of energy, construction and housing, transport, food services, energy-using equipment and services.

For instance, an advisory service for environmental technology procurement has been established. Other plans include the establishment of an electronic information bank and increased advisory services in food services at public sector kitchens. The Finnish Funding Agency for Technology and Innovation (Tekes) has launched a funding model that will lower the threshold to invest in innovative environmental technology.

The public sector should also enable the transition towards more sustainable societies by creating social and physical infrastructure to make sustainable behaviour easier. For example, buildings and urban structure hold enormous potential for emissions reductions, reductions that can be done cost-effectively. Almost 40 % of all energy is consumed in buildings and constructions. To encourage energy-efficient retrofitting of buildings Finland chairs the Marrakech task force on Sustainable Buildings and Construction.

Regional and local authorities can often go further than national governments in shaking up the business as usual. In Finland five municipalities have pledged to act as test cases by working to curb their carbon dioxide emissions ahead of schedule. The project aims at carbon neutrality through the actions and decision-making of municipalities, companies and citizens by 2025. Researchers, experts, businesses, politicians and local residents will together devise and tailor solutions that can reduce emissions, especially related to housing, transportation and food. **All the 5 municipalities will strive to increase their use of renewable energy, improve their material and energy efficiency and find new business solutions.**

Finally, also individuals and households have a greenhouse footprint that is simply too large for policymakers to ignore in the long term. Consumers are also actors and - in this capacity - able to create new solutions and demand for new climate-friendly and resource-efficient alternatives and innovations.

Thank you.