

Changing consumption patterns:

developing policies, infrastructure and engagement

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The context: approaches to sustainable consumption

- Sustainable consumption requires an increase in the *efficiency of consumption*. But *efficient* consumption can only be a *weak* version of sustainable consumption.
- We also need changes in consumption *patterns* and reductions in consumption *levels* in industrialized countries. This can be called *strong* sustainable consumption.



The need to tackle consumption patterns is now more urgent than ever.

- This is not a new issue. At the 1992 UN Earth Summit Agenda 21 spelt this out: the “the major cause” of global environmental degradation is unsustainable consumption and production patterns in those richer nations.



A new urgency...

... global climate change

- We need to deliver cuts in global emissions of around 80% by 2050.
- That will require huge changes to how we live our lives, what we produce and what we consume.



Action (or inaction) on Climate change

What might happen by 2050?

Likely effects of emission reduction

Business as usual No action taken	5.5-7.1C rise in global temperature by 2100
Late and slow decline Action starts in 2050	4-5.2C rise in global temperature by 2100
Early but slow decline Action starts in 2010	2.9-3.8C rise in global temperature by 2100
Early and rapid decline Action starts in 2010	2.1-2.8C rise in global temperature by 2100

SOURCE: METEOROLOG



Time for change!

We need action to change consumption patterns at three levels.

- Policy
- Infrastructure
- Engagement



Policy

- We need strong policy: new policies and changes to existing ones at every level.
- We have an international UN forum – the Marrakech Process - a "10 year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production"
- Governments must:
"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 accelerate social and economic development within the carrying capacity of ecosystems..."



The EU Sustainable Consumption Action Plan.

- A "dynamic policy framework for smarter consumption and better products".
- A lot already in place - Some EU regulation schemes
 - Ecodesign (EuP) Directive⁴ (ecodesign requirements for energy-using products)
 - Energy Labelling Directive⁵,
 - Energy Star Regulation⁶,
 - Ecolabel Regulation⁷ and more...
- But poorly coordinated.



The EU identifies five main areas:

- Better Products,
- Leaner and Cleaner Production,
- Leveraging Innovation,
- Smarter Consumption and work with
- Global Markets



Smarter consumption

- Government and civil society need to take a lead.
- Stimulate innovation and help lead by example.
- Tackle those who lag behind.
- We need laws to say quite simply 'that won't do any more!'



Infrastructure.

- We need ways for people to live low-carbon lives without even noticing it.
- The good news ... It's starting to happen
- CSOs and NGOs have repeatedly set up projects to show what is possible.



Engagement.

- CSOs and NGOs are essential.
- Even the smallest community organisation can help change the behaviours of its members
- Behaviour change by individuals and households is one essential part of what needs to be done
- Levels of engagement vary widely – East-West, Rich-poor



Time to get smart!

- We need to be clever in how we sell the vision of sustainable consumption
- We need to make sure that we are advising people well (NGOs have not always been too good at this)
- We need to evaluate what we are doing and show the results.
- We also need to learn how to work with different communities and groups
- We need political pressure, but we also need good evidence to back up our calls for action.
- Research, and especially action research is essential and NGOs also need to make better links with academics



Some points for ACTION

- Global discussion on SCP needs to link in to work national strategies and plans for sustainable development and also to work on climate change;
- National policy work needs to link to and learn from research work by academics and agencies such as UNEP and the European Environment Agency;
- Policy work needs to engage with national and local work to develop the infrastructure to support more sustainable low-carbon consumption;
- Policy and practice work need to work with, support and learn from work to encourage behaviour change.



Civil society - some key roles:

- Influencing the development of global, national and local policy;
- Engaging directly with national and local government on education and awareness work and helping develop work on behaviour change by consumers and communities;
- Work with private sector bodies to help develop solutions to current environmental problems
- Help develop the engagement of wider civil society including social development NGOs, faith groups etc. in work on policy and behaviour change.



A lot to do...

- ... and not too much time in which to do it.
- All this needs a lot of political pressure to make it happen.
- We need to build the momentum both change
- We need a working deal at the UN conference in Copenhagen in 2009.
- To do all this we need engagement by far more people.



Thankyou!

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