

**Report on the India Roundtable on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP)
Mumbai, India
29 September 2006**

Background

This roundtable was organised by the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF), Government of India and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), with the collaboration of Safety Action Group (SAG) and sponsored by the European Commission (EC).

In November 2004 at the European Stakeholder Meeting on SCP held in Ostend, the European Union (EU) expressed interest in supporting the promotion of sustainable consumption and production at global level by pooling experts from Europe and key partner countries such as India. This roundtable intends to give a concrete follow-up on the recommendations of the Ostend meeting and on the India-EU Environment forum on Waste management held in November last year. The roundtable aims in particular were:

- Increasing India's involvement in the Marrakech process on sustainable consumption and production, with a focus on policies to promote reducing, reusing and recycling activities;
- Identifying needs, priority areas and gaps for the implementation of the 10-year Framework Programmes on SCP, the so called Marrakech process.
- Exchanging expertise on SCP between India and other regions, particularly Europe.

Thus the roundtable was seen as an initial step for a long term commitment to promote SCP in the country, where possible acting as 'kick-off' to the development of focused activities and to a statement of intent on further strategic work.

Participants: Representatives from MoEF Jt.Sec (Sudhi Mittal) and Add.Sec (I couldnt recollect his name), from UNEP Bas DeLeeuw and Silvia Ferratini, from EC Astrid Schomaker (Head of International Relations), from Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Dr. K P Nyati (Head, Centre for Excellence in Sustainable Development) and others from organisations like Consumer Education and Research Society (CERS) (Prof. Manubhai Shah), Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research (IGIDR), Consumer Coordination Council (CCC), Toxics Link, Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) (Vivek Bharati), Tata Chemicals etc.

Highlights

- The organisers and hosts identified some of India's most pressing SCP issues and obtained the views of recognised experts in the respective fields. Since for a country as diverse as India, it would be unwise to present the view of a single 'authority'. Thus the below mentioned areas were selected for discussion:
 - (a) The management of waste
 - (b) Energy and Water Resources
 - (c) Sustainable Agriculture
 - (d) Consumption patterns and consumer demand
- The roundtable was first of its kind that selected representatives from Government, Industry, and Civil society of both consumer and environment to discuss India's priorities and possible means of resolving the developmental problems that the nation faces.

Lowlights

- Not much effective participation from the industry. There was only one participant from the industry side that too one of the co-organisers of this meeting (Tata Chemicals), though they had invited many, which includes Reliance, Hindustan Lever, Procter & Gamble etc. When we do such an event, when businesses are required to attend, we will need to think of some strategies to ensure their attendance. One sure way to get them in is to co-organise with either CII or FICCI.
- Many of the local participants hardly attended the session for an hour or so.

Lessons Learned

- There is a change from green public procurement to sustainable public procurement in foreign markets. India needs to be prepared for this.
- Sustainable development is to be seen as a series of compromises, with clearly identified objectives.
- In India, there is no law, which specifically deals with the issue of e-waste and lays down the process for collection and its disposal. The country is still struggling with the issue of e-waste and needs to understand it in totality and initiate appropriate measures. The current National Rules on Hazardous Waste Substances cover various aspects including the generation, storage, transportation and disposal of hazardous waste. This is more intended to handle the issue of large industrial houses generating waste, traders of these hazardous waste and the facility managers of such waste. However, given the nature of generation of e-waste, this regulation completely falls short of addressing the issue in totality.
- There is a need to have suitable legislation on electronic and electric waste. Such legislation should address the problems of imports as well as domestic generation of waste.
- For India, efforts for stimulating demand for sustainable goods and services should be made in a concerted manner rather than ad-hoc individual efforts. As is evident from numerous international examples, a holistic and integrated approach involving both the production and the consumption phases of the use of goods and services with multi-stakeholder participation is sure to yield success. A typical approach therefore should include i) Policy level interventions, and ii) Programmatic interventions/activities on the ground – involving both public as well as private sectors.
- There is pressing need for training development agencies; focusing on the consumption side of SCP; encouraging SCP in Small and Medium Enterprises; encouraging SCP courses in business management schools; and demonstrating the social and economic benefits for business and development agencies.
- The roundtable emphasized the importance of education at all levels. In particular at the School levels since children are one important target group for SCP. However young designers and business also need to look further into how they can contribute to SCP.

Miscellaneous

- Distributed our Ecomark research report to a few, in particular to Mandar Parasnis of E2KM Group, Pune and Rajan Gandhi of SAG, asking for their valued comments.
- Had a separate chat with Bas and Silvia (UNEP) regarding our ecolabel project and other related works of CUTS on the next day of the meeting in the Hotel. They told that the project would officially start from January 2007 and would in the mean time keep corresponding with us related to the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and other formalities. They were also interested to know about the proposed EU-India Seminar on ecolabels as it would certainly add more value to this project since both the objectives are somewhat on similar lines.
- Had a talk with Sudhir Mittal (MoEF) primarily on the EU-India seminar. But that was a very brief talk during one of the coffee breaks. However he informed me that he would let PSM know the progress soon.