

Concept Note

EMG Nexus Dialogues on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) - A vehicle to address the triple planetary crisis and to promote a sustainable economic and social transformation

Paving the way towards a UN System Alliance for SDG12

1. RATIONALE: PROMOTING INTER-AGENCY DIALOGUES ON SCP THROUGH THE ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT GROUP (EMG)

In December 2021, the UN General Assembly in its resolution “*Promoting sustainable consumption and production patterns for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, building on Agenda 21*” ([A/RES/76/202](#))¹, extended the mandate of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes (10YFP) to 2030, and encouraged its implementation to generate fundamental changes in the way societies produce and consume goods and services. Following this decision, Member States recognized in the [Ministerial Declaration of the 2022 High Level Political Forum](#), the importance of the extension of the mandate of the 10YFP and the development of a new Global Strategy on Sustainable Consumption and Production.²

The vision of the new Global Strategy is to “*bring us on track to 2030 through Sustainable Consumption and Production and deliver on global sustainability ambitions, leaving no one behind*”. It has been developed through broad multi-stakeholder consultations, with the participation of over 200 key partners of the One Planet Network – including UN organizations, the 10YFP Board, the One Planet Network programme leads, UN agencies, Secretariats of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (UNFCCC, CBD, BRS), National Focal Points, and Secretariats of other sister initiatives.

One of the pillars of the Strategy is to: “Empower countries, in particular developing countries, and stakeholders for mainstreaming and implementing sustainable consumption and production, leveraging the UN Development System.” This builds on *resolution 11 adopted at the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) on “Enhancing circular economy as a contribution to achieving sustainable consumption and production”*, requesting that UNEP together with other United Nations entities, including the International Resource Panel, development partners and relevant international multi-stakeholder networks, facilitate collaboration among Member States and members of specialized agencies in research, capacity-building, knowledge management and the sharing of best practices for the promotion of innovative pathways for SCP, including the circular economy.³

EMG members play a significant role in supporting countries in the design, implementation and mainstreaming of sustainable consumption and production policies, practices and approaches.

¹ A/RES/76/202, Page 4/5, Paragraph 9

² E/HLS/2022/1

³ [K2200701 - UNEP-EA.5-Res.11 - ADVANCE-.pdf](#)

Acknowledging that there is no “one-size-fits-all” solution, it is of significant importance to enable cooperation across UN agencies, leveraging the UN development system, and providing demand-driven and coherent support to countries for the national implementation of SCP. This should be done taking into account all SDGs, in particular SDG12 and SDG17 on “Strengthening the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development (targets 17.6 and 17.9).”

In October 2022, the technical segment of the 28th EMG Senior Officials Meeting, agreed to organize a series of nexus dialogues to promote a coherent and integrated delivery of SDG12 by the UN system. The nexus dialogues will reflect on how SCP can contribute to a green economic transformation and tackle the triple planetary crisis in the post-COVID context, especially focusing on high-impact systems and value chains (*e.g. sustainable tourism; sustainable food systems- in the follow-up of the SG summit; sustainable built environment; sustainable procurement; sustainable lifestyles; and other thematic areas of the One Planet Network’s Programmes*). They will also seek ways for UN agencies to join forces and pave the way towards the creation of a “UN Alliance for SDG12” that enhances SCP/SDG12 implementation.

1.1. OBJECTIVES OF THE NEXUS DIALOGUES

The nexus dialogues will address the following objectives:

- **Provide science-based evidence and best practices on sustainable consumption and production (SCP)** as an important vehicle to address the triple planetary crisis and its contributions for a sustainable economic and social transformation.
- **Enhance coordination and coherence for a UN wide-offering on SCP and SDG12**, focusing on key themes and high-impact sectors and positioning better the relevance and co-benefits of circularity and action on SDG12 in strategic inter-governmental fora- including the 2023 SDG Summit, the G20 processes under the Indian (2023), Brazilian (2024) and South African (2025) presidencies; the Global Dialogue on SCP and circularity, among others.
- **Unlock opportunities for cooperation, knowledge sharing and resource mobilization** in concrete joint interventions. To the extent possible, using the opportunity to **leverage the UN Development Reform System**⁴, for a stronger delivery at regional and national levels so that SDG12 serves as an enabler for a green economic transformation.
- Pave the way for a **UN Alliance on SDG 12** as an overarching coordination mechanism to enhance continuous collaboration and joint support to countries and regions.

⁴ In the case of engagement with Resident Coordinator Offices and UN Country Teams, engagement will be coordinated with DCO and UNEP’s team coordinating the UN Reform Advisory Group on Greening Economic Transformation.

1.2. EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF THE NEXUS DIALOGUES

Three sessions will focus on the following cross-cutting themes, to address the gaps of SCP implementation and enhance progress on SDG12:

- i. **Digitalization for Circular Economy and Green Jobs for Youth**: Discuss and present best practices of how digital technologies can accelerate the transition to circular economy and create green jobs for youth.
- ii. **Sustainable living and aspirational consumption as a solution to the triple planetary crisis**: The dialogue will focus on enabling policies, infrastructure and other tools such as India's campaign on Lifestyles for Environment (LiFE) to promote sustainable living, amplifying aspirational consumption. It will look for areas and initiatives for inter-agency cooperation.
- iii. **Sustainable Tourism a key sector to make value chains more sustainable, addressing the triple planetary crisis**: Share inter-agency initiatives on sustainable tourism and highlighting how SCP and circularity approaches help to make value chains of high impact sectors more sustainable, and provide economic and social benefits for people and the planet.

These themes are selected based on the mandate and expertise of the 10YFP, as well as on key areas with higher potential for cooperation on SCP among UN entities across different high impact sectors. The Nexus Dialogues will address how SCP and circularity contribute with solutions to addressing the triple planetary crisis and advancing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – particularly SDG12. The Dialogues will contribute to scaling up initiatives and/or strengthening joint implementation in the UN system.

The preliminary timeframes of the sessions are as follows:

- 1st Nexus Dialogue: 17 May 2023
- 2nd Nexus Dialogue: June/July 2023
- 3rd Nexus Dialogue: August/September 2023

2. IMPORTANCE OF INTER-AGENCY DELIVERY ON SCP TO ADDRESS THE TRIPLE PLANETARY CRISIS

Life on Earth and biosphere integrity are being altered, facing the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution and waste.⁵ The root causes for this triple planetary crisis are unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, and the linear model of extraction, production and waste.

⁵ International Resource Panel, [making climate targets achievable improving wellbeing through reduced absolute resource use.pdf](https://www.resourcepanel.org/making-climate-targets-achievable-improving-wellbeing-through-reduced-absolute-resource-use.pdf) (resourcepanel.org)

SDG 12, on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP)⁶ is a strong vehicle towards a much needed sustainable economic and social transformation to address the triple planetary crisis. It prioritizes the decoupling of economic growth from environmental degradation and increases resource efficiency. SCP promotes sustainable living, contributing substantially to poverty alleviation and the transition towards low-carbon and sustainable societies and economies.

The UN development system plays a central role in addressing this challenge and in creating systemic change towards a sustainable economic transformation. A global movement led by the UN system is vital to position SCP as a cross-cutting and driving force to transform the way societies produce and consume, while addressing the current triple planetary crises. Moreover, UN agencies can help governments prioritize investments in impactful SCP policies and strategies, and thus encourage changes in lifestyles, business models, and practices.⁷

2.1. SCP PROMOTES A CIRCULAR ECONOMY AND THE PATHWAY TO A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION -- HELPING ACHIEVE THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

The current economic model is no longer feasible to our Earth system.⁸ The world requires an economic transformation that not only minimizes further negative effects, but also results in long-term gains for the environment, economy and society. But most importantly, it is imperative to revert current trends of natural resource use, restore ecosystems and promote stability and resilience of our planet.

The best way to achieve this economic transformation is to mainstream SCP as a driving force and long-term strategic solution by governments, businesses, and societies. It.

In summary, SCP offers the following benefits to tackle the triple planetary crisis and move towards a transformative economic model:

- ✓ **Provides a pathway to achieve the Paris Agreement:** *Greenhouse gas emissions could be cut by 90%*, compared with projections for continuing along historical trends.⁹

⁶ Sustainable consumption and production refers to “the use of services and related products, which respond to basic needs and bring a better quality of life while minimizing the use of natural resources and toxic materials as well as the emissions of waste and pollutants over the life cycle of the service or product so as not to jeopardize the needs of future generations”, [Sustainable consumption and production policies | UNEP - UN Environment Programme](#)

⁷ Hotta Yasuhiko, et al., [Microsoft Word - 1.2.4-43-Hotta-SCP post covid \(un.org\)](#)

⁸ [Planetary boundaries - Stockholm Resilience Centre](#)

⁹ Modelling conducted by the International Resource Panel (Global Resources Outlook for 2019). “The analysis and modelling presented in this report are a first attempt to understand the impacts of our growing resource use, and to develop coherent scenario projections for resource efficiency and sustainable production and consumption that decouple economic growth from environmental degradation. A Historical Trends scenario shows that the current trajectory of natural resource use and management is unsustainable, while a Towards Sustainability scenario shows that implementing resource efficiency and sustainable consumption and production policies promotes stronger economic growth, improves well-being, helps to support more equal distribution of income and reduces resource use across countries” [Global Resources Outlook | Resource Panel](#),

- ✓ **Supports biodiversity protection and restoration:** The business opportunities associated with transforming our food, land and ocean-use systems towards a restoration economy could generate almost \$3.6 trillion of additional revenues or cost savings by 2030 while creating 191 million new jobs.¹⁰ By **fostering models towards a circular economy**, as compared to business-as-usual, a global net increase of jobs between 7 and 8 million could be created by 2030.¹¹ SCP can help drive the Global Biodiversity Framework to protect at least 30% of the world's land and ocean by 2030.
- ✓ **By promoting health and a pollution-free planet:** A circular economy for the food system can lower the health costs associated with pesticide use by USD 550 billion.¹²

The UN development system plays a key role in bringing SCP as vehicle for a social and economic transformation, promoting a lifecycle thinking¹³ and a systemic and inclusive change, focusing on high impact sectors, and engaging all stakeholders. Depending on the respective mandate, budget, and specialized expertise, UN entities have worked on their own programmes and projects, or jointly with other UN bodies and stakeholders on topics that drive SCP, such as the circular economy, waste management, sustainable infrastructure housing, sustainable food systems, and digitalization **(Please see Annex).**

However, in spite of efforts, progress on SDG12 still lags behind. Therefore, it is critical for a stronger UN system – strengthening existing coalitions and allowing for a better coordination and cooperation - to scale up implementation across regions, especially in developing countries, and by providing substantive evidence on how SCP makes a positive difference to address the triple planetary crisis.

2.2 WAY FORWARD FOLLOWING NEXUS DIALOGUES – PAVING THE WAY TOWARDS A UN ALLIANCE FOR SDG12

An important objective of the Nexus Dialogues is to create momentum for a UN Alliance for SDG12 and define its key functions to accelerate the implementation of SDG12 and the 10YFP. The 10YFP mandate adopted at Rio+20 includes *“To collaborate with all relevant United Nations bodies, including the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations*

¹⁰ World Economic Forum, [395 Million New Jobs by 2030 if Businesses Prioritize Nature, Says World Economic Forum > Press releases | World Economic Forum \(weforum.org\)](#)

¹¹ ILO, [Work for a brighter future – Global Commission on the Future of Work \(ilo.org\)](#)

¹² Ellen Mc Arthur Foundation, Universal circular economy policy goals. Enabling the transition to scale

¹³ Life Cycle Thinking is about going beyond the traditional focus on production site and manufacturing processes to include environmental, social and economic impacts of a product over its entire life cycle. The main goals of LCT are to reduce a product's resource use and emissions to the environment as well as improve its socio-economic performance through its life cycle. This may facilitate links between the economic, social and environmental dimensions within an organization and through its entire value chain, [What is Life Cycle Thinking? - Life Cycle Initiative](#)

Development Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the World Tourism Organization, through an inter-agency coordination group, and with regional entities and commissions, so that there is strong coordination".¹⁴

Therefore, the Nexus Dialogues will allow UN entities to retrieve mutual feedback and define the best coordination approach to scale up SCP, and address implementation gaps at regional and national levels. The objective is to work on the initially defined themes and include in the scope further priority topics that enable coherent delivery, especially by engaging and empowering UN entities, Country Teams and government representatives.

The UN Alliance for SDG12 would have the core objectives to promote a coherent UN response on SCP/SDG12, unlocking inter-agency opportunities and leveraging the UN development reform. This can help bring expertise and tools from UN entities and translate them into coordinated actions for priority cross-cutting topics.

¹⁴ The realization that a global shift towards SCP would require the commitment of diverse actors across the globe spurred Heads of State at Rio+20 to adopt the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns (10YFP). Therefore, the 10YFP is mandated as part of its key functions to collaborate across the UN system through an inter-agency coordination group.(Outcome document A/CONF.216/5*)

The 10YFP generates collective impact through multi-stakeholder programmes and partnerships, which develop, replicate and scale up SCP policies and initiatives at all levels., [10YFP - 10 Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns | UNEP - UN Environment Programme](#)

ANNEX: EXAMPLES OF EXISTING INTER-AGENCY COLLABORATION ADDRESSING THE TRIPLE PLANETARY CRISIS AND WITH RELEVANCE TO SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION (SCP)

The UN system has made efforts address the triple planetary crisis through different cross-cutting Inter-Agency initiatives. Some cross-cutting inter-agency initiatives addressing SCP-related themes are listed below:¹⁵

- a) **The One Planet Network** implements the 10-Year Framework of Programmes (10YFP)¹⁶ which works towards achieving SDG12 through a global community of more than 6000 members including 140 focal points (represented from Member States) and more than 800 partner organizations from the UN and elsewhere. The 10YP Secretariat commenced efforts early 2022 to consolidate UN knowledge on SCP and raise awareness across the UN system and Resident Coordinator Offices. To this end, a capacity building component on the [SDG12 Hub](#) will be launched in 2023, comprising an initial mapping of 25 UN tools relevant to SCP implementation. This was achieved through the participation and consultations of ten UN agencies.¹⁷ The Development Coordination Office (DCO) was likewise consulted and engaged in this process. *It was highlighted by the participating Agencies to formalize a UN –wide programme of work that could help join forces to implement and contextualize tools in countries.* In this context, the One Planet Network also coordinated two inter-agency and multi-disciplinary projects coordinated by the programmes of the 10YFP Secretariat and funded through the **One Planet Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF)** comprised by UNEP, UN World Tourism Organization, UNOPS, UNDP, UN-Habitat and FAO.¹⁸ These projects integrated tools and resources in a unified value proposition to countries, by leveraging multi-stakeholder collaboration, and including the engagement of UN Country Teams. Both tools provided unique solutions in Burkina Faso, Sri-Lanka and Uganda. As a result, two new toolkits on [Sustainable Food Systems](#) and [Sustainable Buildings and Construction](#) are included in the mapping and will be deployed on the SDG12 Hub.

- b) **Partnership for Action on the Green Economy (PAGE)** brings together five UN agencies: UNEP, ILO, UNDP, UNIDO, and the UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR). It is a

¹⁵ Based on the Annex List “Analysis Global Commitments for Nature: Opportunities for Greater Impact- A background document prepared for the Office of the Presidency of the UN General Assembly 13 July 2022

¹⁶ UNEP’s 10-Year Framework of Programmes (10YFP) represents the intergovernmental mandate adopted by the UN since 2012, to accelerate the shift to sustainable consumption and production in both the developing and developed world. The 10YFP is anchored on six programmes focusing on enabling themes (sustainable public procurement, sustainable lifestyles, and consumer information) and high-impact sectors (sustainable tourism, sustainable food systems and sustainable buildings and construction).

¹⁷ UNEP, UNOPS, UNDP, UN-Habitat, ILO, ITC, UNITAR, UNECE, FAO, and UNWTO.

¹⁸ The One Planet Multi-Partner Trust Fund supports the necessary shift and offers incentives to national and global leaders to adopt adaptable solutions that overcome challenges to realizing SDG 12 and make good on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, [One Planet Multi-Partner Trust Fund | MPTF Office \(undp.org\)](#)

mechanism to coordinate UN action for a green economic transformation. Action Partners include: the 10YFP, the Green Economy Coalition, the Global Green Growth Institute, the Green Growth Knowledge Partnership, SWITCH Africa Green, SWITCH Asia, UN Environment Finance Initiative, UN Environment Inquiry, UN-REDD Programme, and the UNDP-UNEP Poverty-Environment Action.

- c) **The Food Systems Coordination Hub** acts as a catalyst and connector inside the UN system in relation to food systems transformations' contribution to the 2030 Agenda. It is jointly led by the Principals of FAO, WFP, IFAD, UN-DCO and the UN Task Force lead(s), with participation from the UN DSGs. The Hub's vision is to support countries in developing and implementing national food systems pathways.¹⁹
- d) **The United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (UN-REDD)** promotes approaches that ensure the environmental integrity of carbon emissions reductions while supporting non-carbon benefits – from safeguarding biodiversity to supporting local livelihoods and promoting the rights of indigenous peoples. It helps advance the implementation of the Paris Agreement, particularly Articles 5 and 6, in order to reduce deforestation, promote sustainable land uses, advance international cooperative approaches to climate mitigation and mobilise climate finance to turn the tide on tropical deforestation. It has 65 partner countries and it is led jointly by UNEP, FAO and UNDP.
- e) **Coalition for Digital Environment Sustainability (CODES)** leads a global multi-stakeholder process and convene a series of events to firmly anchor environmental sustainability needs within the Digital Cooperation Roadmap and catalyse a digital planet for sustainability. UNEP and UNDP is working on the coalition together with the International Science Council and the German Environment Agency, among others.
- f) **The Climate Promise** is UNDP's response to the climate challenge, with UNEP and UNFCCC as strategic partners. Tackling the climate crisis requires all countries to make bold pledges under the Paris Agreement, or NDCs, to reduce emissions of the greenhouse gases that cause global warming and strengthen adaptation to its impacts. The Climate Promise is an effort to ensure that any country wishing to increase the ambition of its national climate pledge is able to do so. UNDP provides support to help countries take bold action to reduce their emissions, increase their resilience to climate impacts and support sustainable development priorities. This support covers a range of key technical areas, including enhancing political will and ownership across society, strengthening targets and aligning with key national policies, assessing costs and investment opportunities, as well as setting up the systems for monitoring and reporting on progress.

¹⁹ [UN-FS-Hub-Work-Plan.pdf \(fao.org\)](https://www.fao.org/3/a/19000en.pdf)