



Forum: Environmental & Cultural committee

Issue: Measures to promote the UN Sustainable Development Goal Number 12 as a way of minimizing pressure on the environment

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Introduction

The growing global population combined with unsustainable uses of natural resources is causing devastating impacts on the planet — contributing to climate change, destroying ecosystems, and rising pollution levels. As a result of these growing challenges, sustainable consumption and production aims to inspire governments, businesses, and citizens to do more and better with less, as it promotes economic growth without environmental degradation. In addition, sustainable consumption and production can also contribute to poverty alleviation and the transition towards low-carbon and green economies.

Definition of key terms

Climate change — changes in the world's weather, in particular the fact that it is believed to be getting warmer because of human activity increasing the level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

Ecological footprint — method promoted by the Global Footprint Network to measure human demand on natural capital, i.e., the quantity of nature it takes to support people or an economy.

Carbon footprint — total greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions caused by an individual, event, organization, service, place, or product, expressed as carbon dioxide equivalent. It's often included in ecological footprint.

Sustainable living — lifestyle that attempts to reduce an individual's or society's use of the Earth's natural resources, and one's personal resources. Its followers often attempt to reduce their ecological footprint (including their carbon footprint) by altering their home designs and methods of transportation, energy consumption, and diet.

Sustainable consumption — use of material products, energy, and immaterial services in such a way that their use minimizes impacts on the environment, so that human needs can be met not only in the present but also for future generations. Consumption refers not only to individuals and households, but also to governments, business, and other institutions.

Sustainable products - products that provide environmental, social, and economic benefits while protecting public health and environment over their whole life cycle, from the extraction of raw materials until the final disposal.

Recycling - process of converting waste materials into new materials and objects. The recovery of energy from waste materials is often included in this concept. The recyclability of a material depends on its ability to reacquire the properties it had in its original state. It is an alternative to "conventional" waste disposal that can save material and help lower greenhouse gas emissions.

Secondary raw materials - production and consumption wastes that can and should be reused as raw materials or products directly or after additional processing.

Background information

Economic and social progress over the last century has caused environmental degradation that is endangering ecosystems and the future of the world. One component of the social and economic progress is the increasing worldwide consumption and production of all resources for the global economy, which rely on the use of the natural environment and resources in ways that have negative impacts on the planet. According to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2019), the global population could grow to approximately 9.7 billion in 2050. The equivalent of almost three planets could be required to provide the natural resources needed to sustain current lifestyles.

One of the greatest global challenges is to integrate environmental sustainability with economic growth and welfare by separating environmental degradation from economic growth and doing more with less. Resource decoupling and impact decoupling are needed to promote sustainable consumption and production patterns and to make the transition towards a greener and more socially inclusive global economy.

To ensure sustainable consumption and production practices necessarily entails to respect the biophysical boundaries of the planet and to reduce current global consumption rates to fit with the biophysical capacity to produce ecosystem services and benefits.

SDG 12 has 11 targets. Four of them are to be achieved by the year 2030, one by the year 2020, and six have no target years. The targets are:

1. Implement the 10-Year Framework of Programs on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns (Target 12.1)
2. Sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources (Target 12.2)
3. Halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels (Target 12.3)
4. Achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle (Target 12.4)
5. Substantially reduce waste generation (Target 12.5)
6. Encourage companies to adopt sustainable practices (Target 12.6)
7. Promote sustainable public procurement practices (Target 12.7)
8. Promote universal understanding of sustainable lifestyles (Target 12.8)
9. Support developing countries to strengthen their scientific and technological capabilities (Target 12.a)
10. Develop and implement tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products (Target 12.b),
11. Rationalize inefficient fossil-fuel subsidies that encourage wasteful consumption by removing market distortions (Target 12.c).

Major countries and organizations involved

- One Planet network
- United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
- Department of Economic and Social Affairs-Statistics Division (DESA/UNSD)
- Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
- United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)
- UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UNESCO-UIS)
- UNESCO Education Sector, Division for Peace and Sustainable Development, Section of Education for Sustainable Development (UNESCO-ED/PSD/ESD)
- United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
- United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD)
- United Nations University
- European Union

Relevant information and UN resolutions

- SDG 12 - Responsible consumption and production. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
- One Planet organization's website (<https://www.oneplanetnetwork.org>)

- Global Food Losses and Food Waste Study

Possible solutions:

12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

Responsible consumption and production

Challenges	Solutions
<p>Every year about ONE THIRD OF ALL FOOD PRODUCED—equivalent to 1.3 billion tons—IS WASTED while 1 billion people remain undernourished and another 1 billion go to bed hungry</p>	<p>REDUCE THE FOOD WASTED by producers, retailers and consumers</p>
<p>HOUSEHOLDS CONSUME 29% OF GLOBAL ENERGY contributing to 21% of CO₂ emissions</p>	<p>SWITCH TO ENERGY EFFICIENT LIGHTING to save \$120 billion every year and prevent 16 billion tons of carbon emissions over the next 25 years</p>
<p>The world's FRESH WATER SUPPLY such as rivers and lakes ARE POLLUTED at much faster rate than nature can recycle and purify</p>	<p>REDUCE THE RELEASE OF CHEMICALS AND WASTE into the air, water and soil</p>

Useful links and resources

<https://www.unep.org/explore-topics/sustainable-development-goals/why-do-sustainable-development-goals-matter/goal-12>

<https://www.oneplanetnetwork.org>

<https://www.undp.org/sustainable-development-goals>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sustainable_Development_Goal_12

<https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal12>

[https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=SDG_12 -
_Responsible consumption and production](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=SDG_12_-_Responsible_consumption_and_production)

<https://sdg-tracker.org/sustainable-consumption-production>