

SDG 12 – Transforming Consumption and Production Globally

Business & policy-makers explore opportunities for transformative products, services, and business models capable of enabling sustainable lifestyles

Wednesday 18 July 2018 from 2:00 to 3:45 p.m.
The Swiss Mission to the UN
Floor 29, 633 3rd Ave, New York, NY 10017, United States

SDG12 (Sustainable Consumption and Production) occupies a pivotal position within the SDG landscape. It sits as a balance between achieving the social goals (those aimed at “leaving no-one behind”, which will lead to greater consumption and therefore greater environmental impacts) and achieving the environmental goals (those focused on transformation, which demand, amongst many other actions, a dramatic reduction in consumption of natural resources).

By 2030, the global middle class will grow to 5 billion people. Middle-class footprints in developed and emerging markets are actually similar. People living on a local middle income have access to similar things – a vehicle, a bigger home, a ‘richer’ diet, home appliances, holidays. Today, we are already living beyond the planet’s means with a middle class of around 2 billion. Aside expected economic growth, achieving the SDGs will lead to an expansion of the middle class.

Circular models of resource consumption will not, on their own, be able to address the projected increases in resource demand. Furthermore, today, Sustainable Lifestyles are neither available, nor desirable in most parts of the world. Why is this?

Until now, the challenge of Sustainable Consumption has been predominantly approached from the perspective of behavior change (leading to consumption and material-use reductions). This is challenging for business and governments alike, given both profits and tax receipts would likely be affected by any such reductions. The World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) has been exploring Sustainable Lifestyles in terms of *mindset change*, rather than behavior change. Not just consumer mindsets, but business mindsets and policy-maker mindsets as well.

By and large, people don’t want to live a “sustainable lifestyle” as it is currently being offered (which again, is not the same thing as people wanting to live *unsustainably*). This is, in part, because our efforts to reduce consumption impacts and come up with ways to make people live more sustainably, often demand that we “take something away”. Sustainable lifestyle solutions ask people not to fly, not to drive, not to eat meat, not to live in a big house. We always demand people give something up; accept less. No-one wants less today. Instead, WBCSD is working to understand the lifestyles that people need and desire and only then exploring how these can be delivered in a sustainable way. Sustainable lifestyles should (and must) offer people “better”. Business and Policy-makers must offer “better” before they ask people to change their mindsets and behaviors.

WBCSD works to advance action on SDG12 through two program areas – Sustainable Lifestyles and Circular Economy. The Government of Switzerland and WBCSD will host an event convening business leaders and policy makers to explore the challenges and opportunities that companies and governments are facing. Firstly, with regard to accelerating activities that will accelerate the transition to the circular economy and ever more sustainable production practices and, secondly, the transformation of aspirations across cultures that could make more sustainable lifestyles possible around the world.

Time	Session Title	Short Description	Speakers
14:00	Opening Session	Welcoming remarks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dominique Kohli, Assistant Director-General, Federal Office for Agriculture, Switzerland
14:05 - 14:10	Introduction: Setting the scene	WBCSD to set the scene focusing on the need for a positive approach to this trickiest of challenges.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Filippo Veglio, Managing Director, World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD)
14:10 – 14:15	Introduction: Setting the scene on SDG 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reflections on the extent to which SDG 12 requires policymakers and businesses to integrate environmental sustainability with economic growth and welfare by decoupling environmental degradation from economic growth and doing more with less. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charles Arden-Clarke, UN Environment – Head of the Secretariat of the Ten Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns (the “10YFP”)
14:15 - 14:35	Sustainable Production: Business interventions in support of the Circular Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Brief overview of WBCSD’s Circular Economy program area (Factor 10 project) ▪ Present how the circular economy is a tool for achieving the SDGs. ▪ Share tangible actions taken by companies and value chains. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • James Gomme, Director SDGs, WBCSD, offering a brief summary of what business actions can be, and are being, taken. • Jeff Turner, VP Corporate Sustainability, Royal DSM, member of WBCSD’s Factor 10 project, offering the business perspective
14:35 - 15:00	Sustainable Consumption: Business interventions in support of more Sustainable Lifestyles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Brief overview of WBCSD’s Sustainable Lifestyles project. ▪ Company actions in support of making more sustainable lifestyles possible and desirable (innovation and marketing efforts to create the foundations for shifts towards more sustainable living). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • James Gomme, Director SDGs, WBCSD, offering a brief summary of what business actions can be, and are being, taken. • Nollaig Forrest, VP Corporate Communication, Firmenich SA
15:00 - 15:10	Engaging people in consumption and lifestyle shifts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Linking corporate and consumer action to drive policy change that enables progress on sustainability challenges, including SDG12 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Company case study offered by Jessie MacNeil-Brown, Head of Global Campaigns, The Body Shop Intl
15:10 - 15:20	The Policy Perspective: Incentivising the innovation and adoption of more Sustainable Lifestyles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Policy-makers’ perspective on SCP – new policy mechanisms that could accelerate the transition in infrastructure, products, services and behavior that will enable to more sustainable lifestyles. ▪ Barriers to overcome 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Lewis Akenji, Director for Sustainable Consumption and Production at the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) and Representative of 10YFP for Sustainable Lifestyles & Education
15:20 - 15:40	Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A reaction to the new positive approach to SCP solutions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All
15:40 - 15:45	The Road Ahead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Next steps for WBCSD and its partners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Filippo Veglio, WBCSD • Dominique Kohli, Federal Office for Agriculture, Switzerland