



South-South cooperation a powerful mechanism for sustainable consumption and production in Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean

Two regions, 172 leaders and experts from 40 countries, 5 Development Banks and 9 Cooperation Agencies come together to scale up and replicate best practices on sustainable consumption and production – a way of doing more and better with less.

An unprecedented meeting in Brasilia last week brought together more than 200 experts with the aim of identifying opportunities to scale-up South-South cooperation on sustainable consumption and production.

The South-South Cooperation Conference on Sustainable Consumption and Production took place on 6-7 and was organized by Brazilian Ministry of the Environment and UN Environment.

The conference brought together participants of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns, the global platform for action to increase cooperation and promote sustainable consumption and production worldwide, including national focal points and members of the six thematic programmes of the Framework, which focus on sustainable public procurement, tourism, food systems, buildings and construction, lifestyles and consumer information.

Practitioners from the African and Latin American regions swapped knowledge and best practices at the conference, also discussing the role of small- and medium-sized enterprises, eco-innovation, circular economy and integrated waste management.

"The financing, facilitation and transfer of clean technologies and the development and sharing of capacities for the sustainable use of natural resources at the global level are cornerstones in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In this context, Sustainable Consumption and Production is a change of paradigm", the Brazilian Minister of the Environment, Sarney Filho, said during then conference's opening ceremony.

Six dedicated sessions took place to discuss the way forward of the 10YFP implementation and provide concrete recommendations to cooperation agencies and development banks. Key messages were: (i) to avoid duplication of efforts to approach and work with development agencies and banks; (ii) to foster more synergies between 10YFP Programmes [for example, sustainable public procurement in building sector and sustainable gastronomy in the tourism sector] and (iii) increase capacity building and facilitate dialogue among governments and civil society organizations.

The importance of anchoring South-South cooperation in the priorities of actions of the national and international agendas was also highlighted in the speech of His Excellency, Ambassador João Almino, director of the Brazilian Cooperation Agency. "South-South cooperation is an instrument for capacity building of institutions and individuals," he said. "Through sharing experiences and good practices in horizontal exchange processes, it promotes the empowerment of all the stakeholders."

Mr Almino outlined the important role Brazil played, highlighting some of the South-South cooperation actions that the country has been implementing, such as the Food and Nutrition Security Program, the Cotton Program and the Climate Change Program, alongside countries from Africa and Latin America. Brazil's leading role was also noted by Mr Sarney, who said Brazil was responsible for the largest donation from a developing country to the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns. He said Brazil's contribution had been used in the implementation of five projects: two in South Africa, one in Uruguay, one in Colombia, and one benefiting Kenya, Burkina Faso and Nepal.



Ligia Noronha, Director of UN Environment's Economy Division, highlighted the importance of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes as a mechanism to bring together different groups, characterizing it as an enhancer of positive initiatives. "The conference showed us that South-South cooperation is a new and very powerful mechanism to help us globally in the 10YFP implementation," she said. "Here we have seen a narrative that can bring together different projects in the programme's agenda - involving public and private initiatives, as well as banks and cooperation agencies. The 10YFP program goes beyond its six areas of expertise and has to be part of a global movement and a global demand that already exists towards sustainable consumption and production patterns".

Ms Noronha said it was essential to connect this agenda with major international environmental accords such as the Paris Agreement, the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the New Urban Agenda.

The Brazilian Government representatives emphasized the importance of inclusiveness and of not leaving anyone behind: "This is a cross-cutting theme that involves economic, social and environmental dimensions and it needs a multi-sectoral approach with different partnerships and stakeholders", said His Excellency, Ambassador José Antonio Marcondes de Carvalho. He said the conference was a milestone, as it was the first global event to bring together sustainable consumption and production experts and Development Cooperation representatives.

Sustainability as a business opportunity was also discussed by the conference, with speakers emphasizing the importance of private-sector involvement to reach the 2030 Agenda. José Guilherme Ribeiro, SEBRAE's superintendent director, highlighted the relevance of small and micro enterprises, noting that in Brazil there were 11 million micro and small enterprises, which accounts for 99% of the Brazilian business universe, 52% of formal jobs and 27% of the national GDP. "Sustainability is transversal to small and large companies. Micro and small entrepreneurs must be the protagonists in this process to change the way the whole society thinks," he said.

Patrick Mwesigye, UN Environment's Regional Coordinator of Resource Efficiency in its Africa Office, said promotion of sustainable consumption and production patterns and practices was well entrenched in 16 countries that had developed national action plans in close collaboration with 10 YFP Secretariat. This process had further been catalyzed by projects such as Switch Africa Green that had enabled Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to green their businesses and enhance their competitiveness and efficiency. The South-South Cooperation Conference had provided a very good opportunity and platform to enhance collaboration between Africa and Latin America in promoting sustainable consumption and production in the two regions.

Elisa Romano, coordinator of the Biodiversity Agenda, from the National Industry Confederation (CNI), said that as long as the business sector did not understand its impact on the environment, it would not be possible to achieve the desirable patterns of consumption. For her, the conservation of biological diversity translated as a challenge, but also as an opportunity for industry to become a key player in helping the government transition to a sustainable economy.

In the financial sector, Luiz Corrêa Noronha, Planning Director for the Southern Regional Development Bank in Brazil (BRDE), presented the banks' credit line for sustainable consumption and production, the first product from the bank to specifically address sustainable consumption and production. Cecília Guerra, Corporate Director of Environment and Climate Change in Brazil, Latin America Development Bank, said sustainability had been a key issue on the bank's agenda for the past five years and that its 2020 goal was to have 30 per cent of its operations "green", reaching 50 per cent by 2030.