

NGO CONTRIBUTION

Also the NGO community welcomes the adoption of the 10 Year Framework of Programmes for Sustainable Consumption and Production. We have confidence in UNEP leading its implementation, and call upon all UN member states and agencies to fully engage in its implementation. We are sure civil society organisations at the national level are keen to take part in its implementation as well.

We would like to specifically focus on one of the questions for this Roundtable, and of the five focus areas of the Framework, being sustainable public procurement. Because sustainable public procurement can create and upscale markets for green and socially enabling/inclusive products, works and services. It will also set the right example for private procurement and consumption patterns of citizens.

In the process towards Rio+20 we have noticed that public procurement appeared a controversial issue, and the “Future We Want” text does not mention this very important tool at all. **So it is important to look at reasons for this resistance, the barriers, real and perceived, for introducing sustainable public procurement practices and ensure that the Sustainable Public Procurement Initiative really takes off, tackling these barriers.**

We specifically call for focus on 5 points:

1. Promoting sustainable public procurement in the real sense, building upon what is currently often green (=environmental) or sometimes social public procurement. Essential is to integrate environmental and social objectives. Also, to accept that this will require political will to overcome the usual concerns about subjective judgements and emphasis on life-cycle costing. To give an example of where things can get wrong: the EU is currently working on new directives on public procurement which risk to seriously limit the right to public authorities to purchase sustainably produced goods, including social requirements concerning people affected by production processes, and might prevent the use of voluntary certification and labelling schemes.
2. Promote the use of robust criteria and reliable tools (including voluntary certification schemes and low cost and accessible guarantee systems), that can really make a difference, can become important drivers for sustainable production and consumption and enable the realisation to priority objectives, such as sustainable forest management, sustainable agriculture and food security, reduced natural resource use and pollution, and sustainable cities.
3. Identify and tackle real existing bottlenecks, such as insufficient local supply of products and services that can prove compliance with sustainability criteria. Public procurement policies indeed could include the promotion of local sustainable production practices, throughout supply chains.
4. Tackle the often mentioned lack of information and knowledge with public authorities in creative and multiple ways, including promotion of twinning between public authorities, working with organisations such as ICLEI, mobilising funds from development cooperation agencies and institutions, etc.
5. Encourage public authorities to engage with local civil society and business on formulating the ambitions for sustainable public procurement policies, tackling bottlenecks, including supply constraints, ensuring monitoring and evaluation.