



HLPF 2019 REVIEW OF SDG 10: REDUCED INEQUALITIES WWF BRIEFING

WWF Recommends

Responsible global consumption, production and supply chains to address inequality, achieve food security and combat climate change and biodiversity loss

At HLPF 2019 under the theme of “empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality”, WWF calls upon member states and all other stakeholders to recognise and include the following as fundamental for the full and effective implementation of SDG 10 and related targets:

- Develop **transparent and responsible trade, markets, investments and finance for commodities**, especially for those which pose risk to forests and other ecosystems (*related targets: 2.a, 2.b, 8.4, 8.a, 12.2, 12.6, 14.4, 14.6, 14.b, 15.2, 15.7, 15.a, 15.b, 16.6, 17.11, 17.12*);
- Implement laws and regulations that **safeguard against environmental and social harms** associated with agricultural and seafood production, investment and trade. These harms include deforestation and conversion of natural habitats, illegal fishing and human rights abuses (*related targets: 2.4, 8.8, 14.4, 14.6, 15.2, 15.5, 15.9*);
- Create an enabling environment for sustainable production and consumption including strong legislative and policy frameworks that **promote the circular economy** (*related targets: 8.4, 12.1, 12.2, 12.5, 12.6, 12.7, 12.a, 12.b, 12.c, 17.16*);
- Incentivise the private sector to use new technologies and traceability tools to implement **sustainable, fair and transparent supply chains** (*related targets: 2.4, 2.a, 12.6, 12.7, 12.a, 14.4, 15.1, 15.2, 15.b*);
- Encourage the uptake of **credible sustainability standards and certification** as robust indicators for SDG target 12.6, to support business to adopt more sustainable practices (*related targets: 12.6, 12.7*);
- Increase long-term **productivity, efficiency and climate and nature protection in food systems** through the adoption of agro-ecological practices, making fisheries more sustainable and eliminating harmful subsidies. This should include protecting the rights and livelihoods of smallholder producers (*related targets: 1.4, 2.3, 2.4, 2.b, 8.4, 14.2, 14.4, 14.6, 14.7, 14.b*);
- Support and publicly articulate the need for a **new legally binding agreement to combat marine plastic pollution** (*related targets: 3.9, 6.3, 11.6, 12.4, 12.5, 12.c, 14.1*);

- Implement **national consumption-based accounting systems** (in addition to production-based) – so that a country’s environmental score includes its imports and better reflects its global ecological footprint (*related targets: 7.2, 7.a, 8.4, 11.6, 12.1, 12.2, 12.a, 13.a, 17.11*);
- Recall that the in-depth review of SDG 12 at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in 2018 explicitly stated that UN member states shall “**encourage sustainable lifestyles** by providing reliable sustainability information to consumers, increasing education and awareness-raising”, as this will help to address inequalities caused by consumption (*related targets: 4.7, 12.6, 12.8, 13.3*).

Background

Global production, consumption and supply chains cause inequality between countries

Due to globalisation the place where goods are produced is no longer necessarily the place where the goods are consumed. Environmental degradation, loss of nature and labour exploitation in poor countries is often associated with the production of export goods that are consumed in wealthier countries. These indirect effects of consumption are obscured by complicated supply-chains, and are mostly hidden from consumers, who generally do not know where the raw ingredients of their purchases stem from, or the labour conditions in production.

Emissions accounting should accurately reflect inequalities caused by consumption

Carbon emissions are accounted for on a country basis, using the production-based accounting method, which measures emissions generated in the place where goods and services are produced. This means that if a country moves from producing goods domestically to importing them from another, its reported carbon footprint decreases. This accounting loophole must be closed. Given that 20–25 per cent of overall carbon dioxide emissions are from the production of internationally traded products (Afionis et al 2017), the consumption-based accounting approach, which accounts for emissions at the point of consumption, attributing all the emissions that occurred in the course of production and distribution to the final consumers of goods and services, should also be applied. Using both production and consumption carbon accounting would intensify mitigation efforts and help advance the goals of the Paris Agreement and SDG 12.

The world's poor are disproportionately affected by unsustainable consumption and production

The costs and risks of environmental degradation and nature loss, caused by unsustainable consumption and production, fall disproportionately on the poor. Around 1.6 billion people, including 60 million indigenous people, directly depend on natural ecosystems for their livelihoods (FAO 2014). At the same time, many indigenous peoples remain among the world's most marginalized, impoverished and vulnerable peoples. 2017 was the second-worst year on record for tropical tree cover loss. One of the main causes is the expansion of agricultural production, of which one third is internationally traded (Global Forest Watch 2018). In many cases, as part of this expansion process, access and rights to land and natural resources are also being transferred away from more marginal and vulnerable groups who have traditionally managed and used them, thereby alienating them from their basic means of production, survival and security (UNDP 2016).

Decades of overfishing have taken a significant toll on ocean health, contributing to poverty, food insecurity, ecosystem imbalances, distorted markets and unemployment. A third of all assessed fisheries are classified as overfished and almost 60 percent are fished to the limit. This is compounded by poor management, harmful fisheries subsidies, illegal, unregulated and unreported

fishing, and inadequate seafood traceability all of which has serious social, environmental and economic impacts (FAO 2018).

Marine plastic pollution has reached crisis levels with an estimated eight million tonnes of plastic waste entering the world's oceans every year. It is poisoning marine life and affecting human health and livelihoods in ways we are only now beginning to understand. This is a global commons problem that requires a global response, but as of today, there is no dedicated international treaty in place to holistically and comprehensively tackle the issue. The multiple national, regional and global agreements, action plans, conventions and voluntary measures have not been able to stop the ongoing flow of plastics to the oceans. It is also a matter of inequality, since Small Island Developing States are exposed to concentrations of plastic litter that often are disproportionate to their own consumption and populations, due to a combination of being located near the so-called ocean gyres, which are known to accumulate marine litter, and the inability of waste collection and treatment systems to cope (Lachmann et al 2017).

Move away from a linear production model to create a more inclusive, equitable economy

A circular economy aims to look beyond the current take-make-waste extractive industrial model. It redefines growth, gradually decoupling economic activity from the consumption of finite resources and focusing on providing positive society-wide benefits. It entails a reconceptualization of design and production, and treating waste like a resource. Underpinned by a transition to renewable energy sources, the circular model builds economic, natural, and social capital (Ellen Macarthur Foundation 2019).