



Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Commission on Sustainable Development
Ninth Session
16 - 27 April 2001, New York

**STATUS REPORT ON THE INDICATORS OF
CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION PATTERNS**

BACKGROUND PAPER NO. 13

Prepared by the
Division for Sustainable Development

STATUS REPORT ON THE INDICATORS OF CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION PATTERNS

1. The Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) at its third session noted the need for studies of quantifiable and measurable indicators to facilitate policy analysis on consumption and production patterns.¹ The nineteenth special session of the General Assembly also called for development of core indicators to monitor critical trends in consumption and production patterns, with industrialized countries taking the lead.²

2. Following the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly, the Division for Sustainable Development of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DSD/DESA) initiated consultations and held a workshop in March 1998 to develop a core set of indicators for consumption and production patterns. A core set of 17 indicators was selected through that process. These indicators were presented in "Measuring Changes in Consumption and Production Patterns,"³ which was presented to the Commission on Sustainable Development at its seventh session in 1999. The list of the core set of indicators is contained in Annex 1. The Commission, at its seventh session, decided to further develop, test and improve the indicators for sustainable consumption and production developed under the Commission's work programme, focusing on the practical use of the indicators for policy development, taking into account the special needs and conditions of developing countries.⁴

¹ E/1995/32, Report of the Commission on Sustainable Development on the third session, 11-28 April 1995, Chapter I, A.4. Changing production and consumption patterns, paragraph 39.

² Programme for the further implementation of Agenda 21, adopted at the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly, 23-28 June 1997, paragraph 28 (c).

³ Measuring changes in consumption and production patterns: A set of indicators, ST/ESA/264, Sales No. E.98.II.A.3, United Nations, 1998.

⁴ E/1999/29, Report of the Commission on Sustainable Development on the seventh session, 19-30 April 1999, Chapter I, C. Decision 7/2 Changing consumption and production patterns, paragraph 7 (f).

3. The Division for Sustainable Development has since consulted with a number of agencies and identified lead agencies to develop methodologies for these indicators, as indicated in Annex 1.
4. To date, methodologies for 13 indicators have been developed and they are posted on the web-site of the Division for Sustainable Development, (<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/cpp1224m.htm>). For three other indicators, lead agencies have been identified and methodologies are being developed. For the indicator on “residential energy and water use per household”, the indicators, “intensity of energy use” and “intensity of water use”, can provide the information needed through sectoral disaggregation, with the residential sector as one component.
5. The work on these indicators has been carried out in parallel with work on the broader set of CSD indicators of sustainable development. Some of the consumption and production indicators are also included in the revised broader set of CSD indicators of sustainable development.
6. Indicators of consumption and production patterns can be used as a supplement to the broader set of CSD indicators of sustainable development to address specific aspects of consumption and production patterns.
7. The Division for Sustainable Development would like to express its appreciation to the agencies which contributed to this work. The Division would also like to encourage member states and organizations to test these indicators.

Annex I

	Indicators	Main features	Lead agency
Key resources			
Energy			
1.*	Annual energy consumption per capita	Monitors energy consumption	United Nations Statistical Division
2.*	Intensity of energy use	Monitors energy use per unit of production/services (for selected sectors)	International Energy Agency
3.*	Share of renewable energy in total energy consumption	Monitors the development of renewable energy sources	United Nations Statistical Division
4.	Energy prices	Monitors energy prices in relation to GDP and disposable income	EUROSTAT
Materials			
5.	Total material requirement	Monitors total material throughput, including hidden or indirect material flows required for a national economy	World Resource Institute
6.*	Intensity of material use	Monitors material use per unit of production/service (for selected sectors).	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
Water			
7.	Intensity of water use	Monitors water use per unit of production/service for selected sectors.	EUROSTAT
Land			
8.	Land use	Monitors land use (forestry, agriculture, settlements, infrastructure and recreation).	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

* These indicators are also included in the broader set of CSD indicators of sustainable development.

	Indicators	Main features	Lead agency
Consumption Clusters			
Mobility			
9.*	Distance travelled per capita by mode of transport	Monitors the use of different modes of transport (foot, bicycle, train, boat, car, bus, plane).	EUROSTAT
10.	Number of road vehicles	Monitors the total number of vehicles (possibly by type and fuel efficiency).	EUROSTAT
Consumer goods and services			
11.**	Retail sales of selected goods per capita	Monitors retail sales of goods (e.g. electronics, home-appliances, clothing).	Wuppertal Institute
12.**	Market share of more sustainably produced goods and services	Monitors social and environmental interest of consumers and producers	Statistics Canada
Buildings and housekeeping			
13.***	Residential energy and water use per household	Monitors total water and energy use in households due to consumer behaviour and housing design and construction	
14.	Average household size	Monitors the number of persons per household	United Nations Statistical Division
Food			
15.**	Market share of more sustainably produced food	Monitors social and environmental interest of consumers and producers	Wuppertal Institute
Recreation			
16.	Spending on recreation as share of disposable income	Monitors the demand for recreation activities	United Nations Statistical Division
17.	Time spent on leisure, paid and unpaid work, and travelling	Monitors time-allocation and distribution, and reflects lifestyles	United Nations Statistical Division

* These indicators are also included in the broader set of CSD indicators of sustainable development.

** Methodologies for these indicators are being developed.

*** This indicator can be covered by the residential component of the indicators of intensity of energy use and intensity of water.