



THE QUESTION OF RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

The Economic and Social Council

Being the twelfth of the seventeen UN Sustainable Development Goals, 'responsible consumption and production' has been one of the most hotly debated topics in the 21st century.

1.3 billion tonnes of food is wasted every year, while almost 2 billion people go hungry or undernourished. The food sector accounts for around 22 percent of total greenhouse gas emissions, largely from the conversion of forests into farmland. If people everywhere switched to energy efficient lightbulbs, the world would save US\$120 billion annually. The facts are there to support an urgent action against the wastage of water, food and resources.

Following the news of a note from a Chinese prisoner found in a Tesco Christmas card, Britons are also once again reminded of the terrible conditions workers might be in to produce the goods and services we buy today. Sweatshops in Bangladesh allegedly producing clothing for Primark and Cacao farmers in Ecuador getting as low as 6.6% of the value of chocolate sold whilst retailers gets 42%, just to name two. Although more and more fair-trade or 'ethical' brands are appearing on the market, whether they are making a real difference remains a question.

Some economists argue that this is a market failure and has to be addressed, whilst others, mainly of the Chicago school, are reluctant for governments to intervene. Depending on the stance of your country, many different viewpoints may be taken to discuss this topic.

Points to consider-

- Should governments actively encourage responsible consumption?
- Should there be punishments for 'irresponsible' production or consumption?
- What are the economical or social impacts of 'irresponsible' consumption?
- How could UN encourage people to buy more fair-trade products?
- Should there be guidelines for reducing energy/water wastage?

Goal No. 12 on official UN website-

<https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals/goal-12-responsible-consumption-and-production.html>



Ethical consumerism on Wikipedia-
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethical_consumerism

Article on sweatshops in Bangladesh-
<https://waronwant.org/sweatshops-bangladesh>