



February 2011 Newsletter

**Dear SCORAI,**

Here on the east coast of the United States we are practically shoulder-deep in snow and there has been a healthy trade taking place in replacement snow-removal equipment.

As usual, on the top right, you will find a menu "In This Issue" that serves as a Table of Contents to help you navigate through the eNewsletter. If you have newsworthy items that you would like to appear in the next issue, please send them to me no later than January 25. Note that the deadline to submit items is the 25th of each month.

Regards,

Maurie Cohen

## **Report on the Second North American Sustainable Consumption and Production Workshop on Green Building**

The United States and Canadian governments, jointly with the United Nations Environment Program-North America Regional Office (RONA) and in the context of the Marrakech Process, held the Second North American Sustainable Consumption and Production Workshop (on the theme of Green Building) in Ottawa on January 31-February 1. The meeting, comprising approximately 85 participants from governments, business, civil society, and academia, was designed to provide input into the annual conference of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-19) in New York in May 2011 and the upcoming Rio+20 Conference in 2012. An interesting approach was the use of "sustainable building" as a focal point for discussion so as to provide substance and concreteness, but at the same time to reflect on broader issues. Three background documents, prepared by the lead organizer for the event, One Earth, were distributed in advance: 1) a general overview on sustainable consumption and production authored by Emmanuel Prinnet; 2) a targeted paper on key topics in green building; and 3) an outline of existing United States-Canada collaboration on green building.

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The first morning of the workshop was devoted to both a rich variety of introductions and more than a dozen brief presentations (<http://scpgreenbuild.wordpress.com/agenda>). I was particularly struck by the emphasis on post-performance measurements for both new LEED-certified buildings and on retrofitted existing building (what some described as moving from LEED to LEEP-from design to performance). Also noticeable was an emerging interest in home size. Leadership on green building is important, as demonstrated by an impressive presentation Sadhu Johnston, Deputy Manager of the City of Vancouver. A final workshop report will be forthcoming.

The afternoon of the first day centered on a "world café" consisting of rotating break-out groups oriented around the guiding question: *What actions can we take within the existing areas of collaboration, and what are additional areas for United States-Canada and international collaboration given our review of current issues and multi-jurisdictional and international opportunities?* The discussions were lively. Priorities included databases on life cycles, harmonization and standardization of design protocols, financial innovations and the Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) model, communication and engagement (the often-mentioned "tambourine" approach), building codes and standards, city-based and municipal approaches, training issues and skills gaps, communication on best practices, and formalization and support information at the municipal scale.

Professor Bill Rees then gave a sweeping and disturbing keynote address in which he asked why *homo sapiens*, as a uniquely gifted species with intelligence, compassion, and foresight, is not able to address systemic challenges to its survival. His compelling call for action and deep change made quite an impression on the participants, and provided a wider context for the more technical, procedural, and policy-oriented discussions on green buildings of the earlier part of the day. Rees injected into the proceedings a sense of urgency, but also cast a wide sense of pessimism. From my own less pessimistic perspective, I tend to see our current crises as symptoms of deeper issues of modern civilization that we finally (but possibly belatedly) are starting to address.

On day two, workshop participants reconvened to discuss the way forward with presentations by senior figures from the United States and Canadian Green Building Councils about their respective activities and bilateral forms of cooperation, as well as an overview by a representative of the Building Owners and Managers Association (a cross-border organization that maintains its own green certification program). This part of the agenda was followed by a further round of break-out sessions where I participated in a group that discussed the international dimensions of SCP and green building with an eye toward CSD-19 and Rio+20. In a plenary session, we heard from groups on sustainable cities, zero-energy and "equilibrium" housing (the Canadian variant),

University

Richard Wilk  
Indiana University

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finance, and building codes. The main proceedings of the workshop ended with a discussion of international developments and contexts and keyed in on the Marrakech Process and the formulation of a 10-year framework of programs.

The Vancouver-based NGO One Earth did an excellent job organizing and facilitating the workshop and the event was quite useful and timely. The interaction between sustainable building professionals and experts on SCP was very fruitful and there was a pervasive feeling that similar workshops on other sectors such as transportation, urban planning, and agriculture and food, as well as on cross-cutting issues, would be highly valuable and instructive. Participants were also hopeful that it would not be necessary to wait another two years before convening again as there is some significant momentum now to advance a multistakeholder process in North America on SCP.

Submitted by Philip Vergragt

## **Ban Calls For A Green Economy As Crucial For A Sustainable Future**

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has called for "revolutionary action" to achieve sustainable development, warning that the past century's heedless consumption of resources is "a global suicide pact" with time running out to ensure an economic model for survival.

"Let me highlight the one resource that is scarcest of all: time," he told the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, in a session devoted to redefining sustainable development. "We are running out of time. Time to tackle climate change. Time to ensure sustainable, climate-resilient green growth. Time to generate a clean energy revolution."

Describing sustainable development as the growth agenda for the 21st century, Mr. Ban recited a litany of development errors based on a false belief in the infinite abundance of natural resources that fuelled the economy in the last century.

"We mined our way to growth," he said. "We burned our way to prosperity. We believed in consumption without consequences. Those days are gone. In the 21st century, supplies are running short and the global thermostat is running high."

All this now needs rethinking to secure the balanced development that will lift people out of poverty while protecting the planet and ecosystems that support economic growth, he told the assembly of heads of State and government, international economists, business and industry leaders and civil society at the meeting in Davos.

"Here at Davos--this meeting of the mighty and the powerful,

represented by some key countries--it may sound strange to speak of revolution," he said. "But that is what we need at this time. We need a revolution. Revolutionary thinking. Revolutionary action. A free market revolution for global sustainability.

"The ancients saw no division between themselves and the natural world. They understood how to live in harmony with the world around them. It is time to recover that sense of living harmoniously for our economies and our societies," said Mr. Ban.

"Not to go back to some imagined past, but to leap confidently into the future with cutting-edge technologies, the best science and entrepreneurship has to offer, to build a safer, cleaner, greener and more prosperous world for all. There is no time to waste," he warned.

"It is easy to mouth the words 'sustainable development,' but to make it happen we have to be prepared to make major changes--in our lifestyles, our economic models, our social organization, and our political life," Mr. Ban told the meeting in Davos.

Reprinted from [UNEP](#)

## **SCORAI Seeks Communication Volunteer**

SCORAI has an immediate opportunity for a volunteer to manage the network's website and to assist with other modes of electronic communication. The desired candidate should have the following qualifications and skills:

- \* Ability to fix problems encountered in the functioning of the website
  - \* Familiarity with Adobe Dreamweaver, Illustrator, and Photoshop
  - \* Knowledge of and experience using HTML, CSS, and XHTML
  - \* Previous graphic and web design experience (editing images in Photoshop, laying out documents in Illustrator or In Design, preparing images and materials for the web, creating and using Dreamweaver templates and pages, etc.)
  - \* Working knowledge of PHP, MYSQL, and data-driven websites also helpful, but not required

Interested individuals should contact Maurie Cohen at [mcohen@adm.njit.edu](mailto:mcohen@adm.njit.edu)

## **Upcoming Conferences**

17th Annual International Sustainable Development Research Conference, May 8-10, 2011, The Earth Institute, Columbia University, New York City.

<http://www.isdrc17.ei.columbia.edu>

Third Biennial Transformative Consumer Research Conference, June 24-26, 2011, Baylor University, Waco, TX.  
<http://www.baylor.edu/tcr>

United States Society for Ecological Economics Conference (Building the Green Economy), June 26-29, 2011, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI, USA.  
<https://www.msu.edu/~ussee>

Fifth International Consumer Sciences Research Conference (Consumer Behaviour for a Sustainable Future), July 18-20, 2011, Bonn, Germany.  
<http://www.consumer11.org>

## **Recent Publications by SCORAI-ers and Others**

Ekström, Karin & Kay Glans, eds. 2011. [\*Beyond the Consumption Bubble\*](#). New York: Routledge (includes contributions by SCORAI-ers Rick Wilk and Maurie Cohen).

Sim, Stuart. 2010. [\*The End of Modernity: What the Financial and Environmental Crisis Is Really Telling Us\*](#). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

## **New SCORAI Affiliates**

SCORAI welcomes the following new participants to the network during the month of January. Total membership is currently 211 people.

*Josefin Wangel*, KTH-Swedish Royal Institute of Technology (Sweden)

*Matthew Slater*

*Inga Bathke*, Institute for Ecological Economy Research (Germany)

*Vicky Salazar*, Environmental Protection Agency (United States)

*Stefanie Bowles*, Government of Canada, Policy Research Initiative (Canada)

*Hilary French* (United Nations Environment Program (United States)

*Mikkel Stenbæk Hansen*, European Topic Centre on SCP (Denmark)

*Manisha Anantharaman*, University of California-Berkeley (United States)

*Michael Calvert*, Government of Canada, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (Canada)

*Nils Larsson*, International Institute for a Sustainable Built Environment (Canada)

*Samuel Short*, Cambridge University (United Kingdom)

## **Forthcoming Reports in the Next Issue...**

Report on the High-Level Intersessional Meeting of the Commission on Sustainable Development on a 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production, January 13-14, 2011, Panama City.

Report on the Green Economy Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue organized by the North American Roundtable on Sustainable Production and Consumption, February 2, 2011, Ottawa.

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