

World Resources Forum 2015, Davos, Switzerland 11-14 October 2015

Chairman's Summary

1. Over 600 participants from 108 countries from every continent gathered and actively participated in the World Resources Forum 2015 in Davos, Switzerland, on 11-14 October, 2015.
2. Attendees coming from government, business, scientific and civil sectors, representatives of international organisations as well as engaged students and young change-makers, debated and exchanged their views on how to increase resource efficiency, invest in innovation for sustainable production, respond to climate change, decrease the socio-environmental footprint of current consumption and production patterns, achieve sustainable lifestyles and ensure high quality of life for all groups of society.
3. Increased global recognition of resource efficiency in international declarations was highlighted by participants. The G7 Summit Declaration explicitly identified resource efficiency as vital element of sustainable development. His Holiness Pope Francis Encyclical Letter on “Care for our common home” noted that the problems of environment cannot be separated from the human issues and that the world’s interdependence requires us to reach a global consensus and create a common plan to prevent further decay and degeneration of our planet’s environment and land.
4. Decoupling of economic growth from resources use and circular economy were the key areas of discussions at plenary sessions and workshops. Stakeholders representing countries at different stages of economic development and capacity discussed the need for suitable cross-border governance frameworks as well as noted the urgency in boosting investment in businesses that can serve as building blocks for circular economy. This could be achieved through development of stronger links between the financial and techno-industrial sectors. In particular, there is a significant potential in exposing financial actors to new business models and opportunities in circular economy
5. There is a strong need for reliable and comprehensive indicators and benchmarks that could produce meaningful data to set targets and goals for policymakers in the field of resource management.
6. Participants engaged in roundtables and working groups at workshops and scientific sessions, funnelling their collective creativity and expertise to formulate policy recommendations on resource governance at all levels from global through to regional to local, suggesting follow-

up activities and topics for further research and investigation.

7. UNEP's International Resource Panel, UNIDO's Global Network on Resource Efficient and Cleaner Production, the Factor X-Club and the ISO Workshop on Guidance Principles for Addressing Sustainability Criteria in Secondary Resource Management were major events held back to back with the World Resources Forum 2015.

Sustainable Lifestyles and Education

8. Lifestyles occur within a larger context that is not always within individual control - people don't consume with the intention of harming the environment. Hence planning for sustainable lifestyles must account for the dynamism of society and the people's aspirations rather than static understanding of society's classification.

9. Education is the fundamental element to change consumer behaviour and to usher in sustainable lifestyles. There are different kinds of consumers and enablers for this change: traditionalists and ecologists.

10. Research needs to provide learnings on principles and values that motivate actions, on how daily choices affect our lives, others and the planet, and on systems and processes upon which modern society depends.

11. Art can also play a crucial role for sustainable lifestyles. In particular, its humanistic and therapeutic nature enable the society to connect to underlying issues of sustainability. Art can also be successfully employed in business and politics to encourage change.

12. The power of communication and imagery is also essential to change behaviour: the Great Pacific Garbage Patch is a powerful wake-up call for the public.

Circular Economy: The Business Case

13. Businesses are becoming increasingly aware that as resources run out and commodity prices increase, it becomes ever more important to decouple economic growth and human wellbeing from resource extraction.

14. Circular Economy has to make a business case by going away from the historical "take, make, break" approach of linear economy. It can act as a framework for various schools of thought on making sustainable and increasingly restorative business and living conditions a reality.

15. Entry level barriers for Circular Economy might be lower in developing countries due to higher pressure on natural resources systems, less strict regulation and increasing consumer demand.
16. The Circular Economy model can be promoted to all types of business model and size from multi-national corporations right down to a micro-enterprise level. Established businesses that are entrenched in a traditional business model and fail to adapt will eventually lose in competitiveness.
17. Practical business experiences gained on circular economy can be developed as a blueprint to share widely through knowledge networks in order to enable the newcomers to "leapfrog" and build on the experience of Circular Economy pioneers.
18. We need to adopt a culture to communicate the real and true values and costs of doing business and to stop externalising costs to the environment.
19. Life cycle based information is needed in product design. Improved awareness of consumers about the actual cost of production to the environment will empower them.

Investing in Resource Efficiency and Circular Economy

20. Investing in resource efficiency and circular economy not only delivers higher profits but can enable more people to benefit from employment. Though new business models and circular economy businesses must be able to perform financially and to deliver their value even after core financing has been withdrawn.
21. There needs to be more taxation of natural resources consumption. At the same time renewable and sustainable energy sources should be tax-free to create incentives for businesses to invest. Currently only 0.3% of all taxes collected pertain to natural resources use, while taxes collected from human resources amount to nearly half of the global total.
22. The recovery of secondary resources in emerging economies is mainly an informal business posing threats and opportunities. A positive market response to invest in sustainable recycling industries hence demands for investment security through clear rules and standards set by governments, the availability of local capacity and expertise supported through international cooperation, and addressing sustainability criteria in secondary resources management through multi-stakeholder standards setting.
23. Direct investment platforms should be developed online and offline to showcase investment opportunities from resource-efficient businesses and connect them with investors

and financiers. Strengthening capacity of resource-efficient businesses to obtain and manage their finance for business growth is essential. This is particularly important for the emerging and transition economies where there is a big mismatch between demand for sustainable goods and services and available supply.

24. 75% of infrastructure that will be in place in 2050 does not yet exist today. This is a huge opportunity and risk for resources governance. Investing in sustainable procurement could help improving the feasibility of sustainable infrastructure growth.

Resource-Efficiency and Circular Economy

25. Although we live in an unequal (resource consumption) world, the resource economics acts as a universally applicable imperative. Therefore, to address resource inequality we need global, multi-stakeholder partnerships to monitor the monetary and financial systems and to give a higher voice to values and ethics in the resource distribution debate.
26. For a resource-efficient economy we have to work with the informal sector and to include it in consultative and governance processes. Materials is all about people and their need to survive. For many developing countries many activities of the resource-sectors – from mining through to recycling will remain informal for a long time. Policies and strategies to address environmental concerns and safety standards for workers should not ignore the needs of the informal sector.
27. To shift towards circularity we need to be able to measure material flows, to foster industrial innovation, to develop new designs and business models, and to usher in a shift in resource governance. For that we need to develop advanced knowledge about materials and their compatibility with the circular economy. A recyclability index could help achieve that.

Political Solutions for Global Resource-Efficiency

28. For political decisions on resource governance, the decisive factors are the vote value, scientific evidence and national constitution and legislation. Very few of the existing governance approaches address socio-economic issues of resource use. Business-focused initiatives of governments have potential, but they often lack of ambition and accountability, and have major problems with public trust.
29. There could be \$3.5 trillion of annual gain in improving resource efficiency globally. The main barriers to obtaining this gain is lack of quality standards, poor cooperation down the value chain and insufficient data on material flows.

30. Designing a circular economy for metals is as urgent as securing continued primary production. Preparations for circular economy for metals must start today and should include changes in product design, improved recycling technologies and infrastructure and development of urban mining plans. Innovation will underpin the emergence of working solutions.
31. Efficiency of food chains is an important issue in the context of global hunger and poverty. Agricultural resources are often used unsustainably and inefficiently. Looking at resource efficiency through the lens of food systems is essential to identify opportunities in agricultural sector and to prevent food waste and soil degradation.
32. There is some integration of demand reduction into the discussion of global resource management, but little consideration of the implications for resource-dependent countries.

Closing remarks

33. Sustainable use of natural resources lies at the heart of discussion about the future we want and of the climate debate. High quality of life and adequate economic growth will require technological, financial and societal innovations in order to preserve our planet's natural wealth for the future generations.
34. The World Resources Forum Latin America and the Caribbean will be jointly organized with the Green Building Council Costa Rica and will take place back-to-back with the International Sustainable Building Congress 2016 on May 17 – 20, 2016 in San, Jose, Costa Rica.

World Resources Forum

Lerchenfeldstrasse 5. CH-9014 St. Gallen
www.wrforum.org • info@wrforum.org • T+41 71 554 09 00