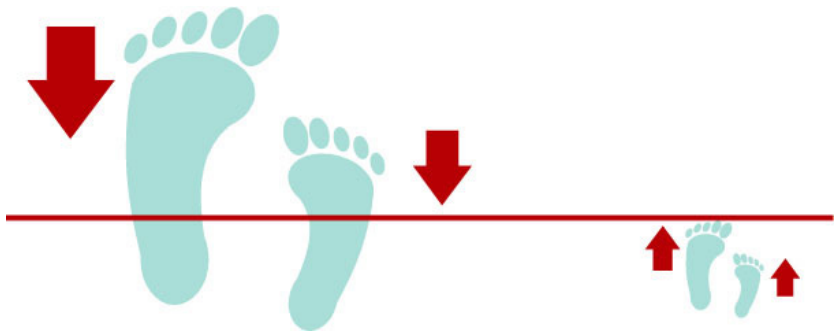


# A study on gender equality as a prerequisite for sustainable development

What we know about the extent to which women globally live in a more sustainable way than men, leave a smaller ecological footprint and cause less climate change



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# Foreword

This document is an ideas paper in the form of a study describing what we know both about gender equality as a prerequisite for sustainable development, and about the extent to which women live more sustainably than men, leave a smaller ecological footprint and cause less climate change. I would particularly like to thank Dr Marie Thynell for her contributions to the section on transport in the southern hemisphere and for her wise counsel regarding transport issues in general in this study. I would also like to thank Anika Löfgren from the Ministry of the Environment, Marita Axelson and Gunilla Sterner, both from the Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality, Pehr Sundström (Statistics Sweden), Eva Nauckhoff (Sida), and Karin Bradley from the Stockholm Royal Institute of Technology. Many thanks also to Stephen Croall for translating the text from Swedish into English and to Marika Abrahamsson and Lars Edman for kind help with typing and wordprocessing.

The study represents a contribution to the work currently under way in the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), which examines such matters as energy, climate change, sustainable consumption and production, and gender equality.

The purpose of the study is to bring out often-neglected facts concerning dissimilarities in the lifestyles and consumption patterns of women and men, and thus in their environmental impact, by describing how men, primarily through their greater mobility and more extensive travel, account for more carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions than women, in both rich and poor countries. The study points to how a changed behavior among men – notably rich men who are decision-makers - can be crucial in addressing climate change and in enhancing the opportunities of all human beings to enjoy sustainable development.

The opinions expressed in the study do not necessarily reflect the views of the members of the Environment Advisory Council's expert group. The author alone is responsible for the analyses, proposals and views contained in the report.

Gerd Johnsson-Latham  
April 2007

# Brief summary

The study is an ideas paper presented at the 15<sup>th</sup> meeting of the UN Commission for Sustainable Development in May 2007, to link both with the CSD's overall theme of climate change and with its cross-sectoral issues of gender equality and sustainable consumption and production.

The study

a) *offers new pointers* for the work on sustainable development by identifying real gender-specific differences in terms of male and female consumption patterns, lifestyles, access to resources and power, and environmental effects, including climate change – and how these differences are crucially important in sustainable development work.

b) *provides factual information* on how women's and men's (everyday) consumption differs, focusing in particular on mobility/transport, where the gender-specific patterns are very clear, both in a rich country such as Sweden and in poorer countries, in rural and urban areas alike.

c) *presents proposals* aimed at giving women the same access to resources as men – and also, by strengthening both the gender equality perspective and the voice of women in decision-making, enhancing work on sustainable development, not least in the climate field.

The study points to the fact that today, in the light of climate change, the question of how we can create sustainable welfare is being fiercely debated – but usually without any reference to gender. Green technology and innovations are prime topics in this respect. In addition to technology – which men in particular stress as a way of solving problems – it now seems imperative to also look at sustainable lifestyles, sustainable consumption and the 'cautionary principle'. This appears unavoidable, given the fact that despite greater energy efficiency per unit produced, our increased consumption means that the overall level of consumption, and thus of emissions, is rising instead of falling. This is why we need both technology and a more sustainable definition and interpretation of

the welfare concept in terms of time, particularly given the growing threat of climate change.

In accordance with the 1992 Rio Declaration, we also need to examine who the polluters are, *inter alia* from a gender perspective, and we need to discuss what is defined in the Rio Declaration as a ‘common but diversified responsibility’ for dealing with the problems already here.

The study illustrates how a gender perspective can facilitate more sustainable economic growth and well-being, directed more towards counter-acting female time-poverty as compared to material consumption – primarily benefiting rich men – while also creating more job opportunities within the service sector which can help increase overall human wellbeing.

# 1 Background

## Aims

In the spring of 2006, work began at what was then the Ministry of Sustainable Development on a study examining to what extent women live in a more sustainable way and leave a smaller ecological footprint than men, and why and how gender equality is essential to sustainable development. The purpose of the study is to bring out often-neglected facts concerning dissimilarities in the lifestyles of women and men that are of crucial importance to work in the sustainable development field.

The study discusses both problems and opportunities, based *inter alia* on the Johannesburg document from the 2002 UN World Conference, which established a joint but diversified responsibility for sustainability and also established the ‘polluter pays’ principle. The study shows that the polluters are mainly men.

The study also proceeds from the EU’s strategy for sustainable development, adopted in 2006. This document highlights the EU’s responsibility for reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in tackling climate change – and in addition emphasises gender equality and participation as goals and means for sustainable development.

The study examines how the actions of women and men in general affect access to resources and power – which in turn affects lifestyles and consumption patterns – and thereby ecological and human environments and sustainability. It discusses sustainable development, lifestyles, welfare and development in relation to people’s social roles, which affect their mobility and transportation. It further shows how, as a result of gender-specific patterns in transport and other sectors, men account for the bulk of energy use, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, air pollution and climate change.

The study analyses the increasingly important issues of sustainable consumption and lifestyles in relation to gender-related rights, roles and perceptions of welfare. Consumption as it relates to housing and everyday commodities is briefly discussed. The emphasis instead is on people’s mobility and transport, as transporta-



tion of people and goods represents one of the largest and fastest growing sources of greenhouse gas emissions such as CO<sub>2</sub>, which in turn substantially affect the earth's climate. Transport has a clear gender perspective as the free movement of individuals is a matter of power and resources, which means it is associated with the social dimension of sustainable development and thus has considerable albeit often neglected bearing on the ecological and economic dimensions.

The study is based on the Swedish Government's Statement of Government Policy of 6 October 2006, which stressed the need for

- greater attention to be paid to climate change, which is an issue of the utmost importance,
- a more environment-friendly transport sector,
- greater gender equality, with equal opportunities for free life choices and shared responsibilities to give balance to people's daily lives,
- change in systems that conserve the distribution of power and resources from a gender perspective,
- more jobs, including a higher level of entrepreneurship among women,
- better opportunities for buying services that ease the burdens of everyday life.

The study supplements other work on sustainable development indicators and hopefully will provide both a clearer picture of what is required in working with climate issues and the socioeconomic dimension of sustainable development, and better tools for undertaking such work.

- The study shows how women live in a more sustainable way than men, both ecologically and socially.
- The study shows that gender equality both strengthens sustainable development and is a precondition for it.
- The study offers practical examples of the changes required if sustainable development work is to be informed by a gender equality perspective and thus be more effective.

The study will be presented at the UN in New York in May 2007 to the Commission for Sustainable Development (CSD), which

has been focusing since mid-2005 on such issues as energy and climate change and on cross-sectoral concerns such as sustainable consumption and production and gender equality. A feasibility study with preliminary observations was presented to the CSD in the spring of 2006 and is posted on the Swedish Government's website. The current study will also be presented at the Third International Meeting on Sustainable Consumption and Production under the Marrakech process (see below) in Stockholm in June 2007.

## **Organization of the work**

Besides national examples, principally from Sweden, the study also discusses global aspects, including i) the over-consumption of the rich – especially rich men, as they have more income and property than women all over the world – and ii) the unsustainably low consumption of poor people – especially that of poor women, as a result of subordination and lack of resources.

The study is based on analyses of source material from the Swedish Government Offices and Swedish government agencies (primarily Statistics Sweden), the Municipality of Stockholm, and from the EU, the UN, the World Bank, research reports and material from civil society (see list of references). Work on the study has also been enriched by discussions with relevant authorities in Sweden, with officials at the World Bank and the UN, with think tanks in Washington and New York, including Embarq, with NGOs in Sweden and within the EU.

With a limited amount of work input, the issues in the study are exemplified and discussed. The aim is to provide practical examples, encourage further analysis and add a concrete dimension to efforts to balance women's and men's interests in strategies and action programmes on ecological sustainable development, climate change and transportation etc. A parallel aim is to strengthen work on democracy, co-determination and participation in decision-making.

- **Rio, Johannesburg and the UN Commission for Sustainable Development, CSD**  
At the UN Conference on Environment and Development

held in Rio in 1992, Agenda 21 was adopted to guide the international community in its work on the objectives and guidelines for sustainable development in the 21st century. *Agenda 21 emphasizes sustainable development with its economic, social and environmental dimensions as a guiding principle for UN work.* The 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg adopted a plan of implementation reiterating the Rio principles and establishing poverty eradication, sustainable consumption and production patterns and protection of the natural resource base for economic and social development as the three prime objectives. At the UN, the Commission for Sustainable Development (CSD) is responsible for monitoring implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg plan. It conducts its work by focusing on a number of specific, mutually related issues for two years at a time. During the period 2005–2007, the subjects are energy, industrial development, air pollution and the overall issue of climate change.

The study is by Gerd Johnsson-Latham, whose previous work included studies on behalf of the Swedish Government Offices on the subjects of gender discrimination as a cause of poverty and of patriarchal violence as a threat to human security (see list of references). Marie Thynell (PhD) of Göteborg University, an expert on Third World transportation who has worked for Sida and the UN, contributed to the section on transport in developing countries. A reference group with members from the Government Offices, government agencies and the research community has given valuable support and advice throughout. The group comprised Annika Löfgren from the Ministry of the Environment, Marita Axelsson and Gunilla Sterner, both from the Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality, Pehr Sundström, Statistics Sweden, Eva Nauckhoff, Sida, and Karin Bradley from the Stockholm Royal Institute of Technology. A seminar held at the Ministry of the Environment in March 2007 under the leadership of State Secretary Åsa Britt Karlsson resulted in a wide range of valuable contributions from a broader group drawn from political parties, the Government Offices, public authorities and agencies, and the research community, NGO:s, etc.

## The first challenge: Climate change

As noted in the spring of 2007 in reports from bodies such as the UN climate panel, the earth's temperature is higher today than for 1 300 years, and there is more carbon dioxide in the environment than for 650 000 years.

- *The signs of change are there* – melting ice, worsening storms, more mosquitoes, longer and more widespread drought, heavy rainfall and large-scale fires etc.
- *The causes are known*, and they include things we can do something about – ‘man-made’ fuel combustion from oil, petrol and coal (along with natural causes such as forest fires, which are more difficult to prevent than fossil-fuel based transport, for instance).
- *Regulations are in place*, including international agreements – the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol, which however does not have the backing of major actors such as the US and the BRIC countries, i.e. Brazil, China, India and Russia (UNEP GEO Yearbook)

According to the 2006 Stern Review, remedying global change would cost 1 per cent of countries' total GDP – and failing to remedy it would cost 5 per cent. The importance of rapid action in this area was also emphasized at the EU summit of 14 March 2007 and described as a key issue for the Union.

### *Uneven access to resources*

The US and Canada, with 5 per cent of the global population, account for 27 per cent of oil consumption, and Europe, with around 10 per cent of the population, accounts for 24 per cent. The consumption of fossil fuels in fast-growing economies such as the BRIC-countries: Brazil, Russia, India and China is increasing dramatically (IAE, International Energy Agency report 2005).

### *The links between population growth, economic growth and increased pressure on the earth's resources*

The global population now stands at 6.3 billion. According to the World Bank, a further 1 billion will be added during the period

2000-2015. Economic growth is rising worldwide, with a sevenfold increase recorded since 1950, which is bringing further pressure to bear on the earth's resources. (UNEP GEO Yearbook)

Worldwide, oil consumption increased by 20 per cent during the period 1994-2004 and is expected to increase by a further 50 per cent in 2005-2020 (International Energy Agency, IEA, report 2005, in EU note 13809, 13 October 2006).

Any global reduction of energy use per GDP unit produced due to green/smart technology is eaten up by what is known as the rebound effect, as total consumption of cars etc. is increasing substantially. This applies in particular to transportation, which has risen dramatically: by 70 per cent in the ECE over the past 30 years, due not least to the increase in trade (ECE report to the CSD 14 in 2005).

Global economic growth, as a result of goods and service production methods based on Western patterns and lifestyles, has led to a decline in the number of poor people in the world. In 2006, about 20 per cent of the global population lived on less than one US dollar a day (World Bank Atlas 2006).

Of this number, about half lived from hand to mouth in a 'survival economy'. Women remain the poorest of the poor, both in financial terms and in terms of their lack of basic rights such as the right to one's own body, the right of inheritance and the right to property, education, mobility and respect etc.

## **The second challenge in the study: Lack of gender equality between women and men**

*Women are poorer than men – in other words, men are richer than women*

- In Sweden, a country with a relatively high level of gender equality, men earn more than women in all income groups, according to the Government's Long-Term Planning Commission, GLTPC, Interim report by Frida Widmalm.

- As the World Bank has pointed out, gender differences are greatest among the poorest families, and resources are not shared equally within the family but in accordance with the power and influence of the individual (World Bank, 'Engendering Development').

- Studies in Latin America and Asia show that many men spend a large part (1/3–1/2) of their income on themselves before sharing the rest out among family members (Chant).

*Women suffer more from lack of time than men – in other words, men have more leisure time than women*

- Women use more of their own time in caring for others than men do, and worldwide suffer from greater time poverty than men. The World Bank study, *Voices of the Poor*, shows that women often work a 16-hour day, compared with an 8-hour day for men – who thus have a significant welfare advantage over women.

*Women have only a limited range of options – men have a wider range*

- Everywhere, restricted choice of lifestyle is a function of women's and men's differing economic opportunities, ages and ethnicity, but also differing rights, e.g. as regards sexual and reproductive health and rights, the right of inheritance, ownership, freedom, and power over decision-making etc. (Johnsson-Latham, 'Power and Privileges').

*Women give priority to others – men invest more resources in themselves.*

- In order to take paid work, women are dependent on external child care – while men do not have the same needs as they can apply for paid work by letting the women look after the children (Swedish Government Long-Term Planning Commission, 2004).

- A number of studies have shown that women give priority to the interests and needs of the family more than men do, since women's pay largely goes to the purchase of convenience goods while men's incomes are used for capital goods (Chant). Women – including those with low incomes – place greater emphasis than men on the

ethical aspect of consumer choices, and are more inclined to give priority to factors such as child labour and environmental labelling when choosing their goods (Statistics Sweden).

## 2 Key terms, definitions and assumptions

### Sustainable development

The Brundtland Report of 1987 defines sustainable development as both an objective and a method. It is defined as “development that meets the needs of the present without jeopardising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.” This clearly expresses what is fair and how it is imperative to act in a responsible manner so that the fundamental needs of all can be met today, throughout the world and far into the future. Sustainable development and the fight against poverty may thus be viewed as two sides of the same coin, where sustainable development has both a ‘horizontal’ dimension – addressing solidarity and poverty reduction *today* throughout the world – and a ‘vertical’ dimension in the form of solidarity with *future* generations.

### Consumption

Consumption is defined here as both public and private consumption of goods and services – including consumption and production in the home.

- ❖ **The study does not cover illegal consumption – which is manifestly gender-specific, with men as the major consumers**

This study does not deal with the *illegal* consumption and production of drugs, the sex trade, gambling etc, which is widespread all over the world.

Perhaps illegal consumption and production ought to be included in analyses of sustainable consumption including the probably *distinct gender-specific patterns* here, with men dominating as ‘consumers’ in illegal markets.



## **Production, reproduction and the economy**

The broader definition of ‘economy’ used in this study also encompasses what is known as the ‘care economy’, which is dominated by women and which is an essential precondition for the paid work of family members in a market – where men are in the majority (Unifem). This definition, which is frequently used in *gender budgeting* and *gender auditing*, broadens the scope of terms such as ‘economy’, ‘production’ and ‘resources’ used in the traditional economic discourse focusing on goods and services in the market. In the traditional ‘economy’, unpaid work is ignored and thus is rendered invisible (Eklund). Unpaid work is seldom included in national accounting, despite the fact that estimates in Sweden, for instance, show that it roughly corresponds to countries’ GDPs.

## **Gender**

A social construct that ascribes different qualities and rights to women and men regardless of individual competence or desires. This often means that women globally perform the bulk of work without pay in the home while men receive these services yet are regarded both as family providers and as family heads – with all this entails in terms of both obligations, rights and power. Gender and gender power are reflected at all levels of society, where women are often responsible for health and social care provision – both at home and at the workplace – while men are able to use their greater share of leisure time to pursue careers/work and to participate in decision-making at all levels of public life.

## **Gender equality**

Gender equality in the present context refers to a state of affairs in which women and men enjoy the same opportunities in all walks of life. It also means the presence of a gender perspective in decision-making of all kinds and that women’s interests are given the same consideration as men’s in terms of rights and the allocation of resources.

## The interests, needs and priorities of women and men

In all cultures, women and girls are primarily brought up to consider the needs and interests of others, and to provide others with care. This distinguishes the situations of most women and men, boys and girls. It varies in degree, however, depending on financial position, ethnicity and other factors, which means that rich women are able to pay for services that free them from some of the responsibilities customarily associated with the roles and un-paid work of women and girls.

Whatever their individual abilities or interests, men are expected to take greater risks and initiatives, act as the principal family provider, take an active part in public life, move around more, display more aggressive behaviour and be capable both of dealing with violence and inflicting it upon others. This is often key to understanding what is often labeled “gender roles”.

Women’s ‘agendas’, like men’s, *differ* in many respects, depending on age, wealth and other factors. We are assuming here, however, that *men share certain collective interests in their role as males*, irrespective of political and other preferences. As members of the same biological sex, all men are assumed to have an interest in ensuring that their health is secured by means of improved care and research on male diseases (such as prostate cancer). A further assumption is that men share a common interest regarding the rights, services and resources they have access to as a result of their social gender – such as care and help in the home, for instance, via mothers, wives/partners and daughters etc – and inexpensive health care as well as care for elderly people, normally provided for by women.

Similarly, it seems fair to assume that women, too, share a common interest (both as a biological sex and in their socially constructed sex roles). Examples in point include resources for research into cervical cancer, but also action to combat the discrimination of women, vigorous measures to stop violence against women, insistence both on the right to one’s own body and to respect and dignity in the way one is treated, and influence in decision-making.

Women also share an interest in ensuring that they are seen to have the same qualities as men in terms of competence and good sense, and that they are treated respectfully and are able to participate in all forms of decision-making.

- ❖ In what follows, so as not to weigh down the text, only the term 'women' will be used, but it should be taken to mean females of all ages, including 'girls' and old women. The term 'men' will be used in the same way on the male side.

### 3 Sustainable consumption and lifestyles

Issues relating to sustainable consumption and production patterns and lifestyles as tools for reducing the climate threat and other environmental threats have been on the international agenda since the 1992 conference in Rio, primarily as part of the ‘Marrakech process’.

The international dialogue on sustainable consumption and sustainable lifestyles have covered a wide range of important aspects. However, very little attention has been paid to the question of how gender affects people’s consumption and lifestyles, as can be seen for instance from the report “Making the Marrakech process work”.

There is, though, a decision dating from the start of the Marrakech process, following an initiative by Sweden and others, taken by the Governing Council of the UN Environmental Programme, UNEP 2004, specifying that the process should be explicitly informed by a gender perspective. This report is to be seen as a contribution to facilitate such a perspective.

- ◆ The Marrakech process and its aims, including reporting at EU level and at national level in member states

The UN Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 established the sustainable consumption and production objective. The UN conference in Johannesburg in 2002 adopted a ten-year framework for this work, labeled the Marrakech process.

*The EU Strategy for Sustainable Development* also emphasises sustainable consumption, and in 2007 all EU member states are being urged to develop national action plans for sustainable production and consumption.

*A Swedish action plan for sustainable consumption and production* is being drawn up, with a view to strengthening

work on sustainable production, consumption and lifestyles.

Sweden has been proactive in efforts to bring sustainable consumption and production to the fore in all work relating to sustainable development. Sweden's former environmental ambassador, Viveka Bohn, has led the framework group that discusses how lifestyles affect consumption and production patterns. This group also includes Argentina, Senegal, the UK, and an NGO, Consumers International. During spring 2007, the US appears to be considering to join the Marrakech process' work on sustainable lifestyles. Sweden is to host the UN's Third International Expert Meeting on Sustainable Consumption and Production, in June 2007.

*Swedish focus on both sustainable development and gender equality*

Sweden has consistently addressed the issue of gender equality and women's rights – in parallel with its work on environment and sustainable development issues – which has strengthened efforts in the sustainable development field. Sweden has always insisted that gender equality is a part of the sustainability agenda. This has meant among other things that Sweden has emphasized the need to guarantee women the right to land, to their own bodies, to sexual and reproductive health and rights, financial equality with men – and to the right to have the same say as men in decisions affecting any aspect of sustainable development.

In Sweden, how a person's gender affects her/his preferences, lifestyles and consumer patterns is fairly widely understood. This awareness of patterns and causes mean we can take matters a step further and examine how men's and women's lifestyles and consumption have different effects on the environment and on sustainable development, and how gender equality benefits sustainable development (“Rethink”).

The Swedish authorities have introduced ambitious energy-saving measures on a number of occasions. These focus to a great extent on technological solutions (Swedish Energy Agency website, [www.energymyndigheten.se](http://www.energymyndigheten.se)). However, the Swedish Energy Agency has also studied energy use among Swedish households and found that this has steadily increased, despite the fact that what

used to be energy-devouring white goods have become increasingly energy-efficient. The reason is that Swedish 'households' have substantially increased their consumption of home electronics and computers, which also devour energy as indicated in Swedish Energy Agency advertising supplement to Swedish households, in DN, 3 March 2007. It might be interesting to study whether more men and boys than women and girls are responsible for purchases in this area.

*General lack of attention paid to gender differences in sustainability analyses*

Examination of public reports, research material, newspaper articles and so forth confirms that the gender perspective is very seldom considered in sustainability analyses of human consumption.

The 2004 report from the World Watch Institute, which is otherwise so informative, fails to address gender as something that affects people's lifestyles and consumer choices. Nor does the Norwegian research report by Fuchs and Lorek (2005), who carried out a critical analysis of the Marrakech process, make any mention of gender as a factor in people's consumption patterns. In Chile, however, researcher Marcela Tovar and others are studying how the different behavior patterns of women and men affect social sustainability.

## 4 Welfare perceptions and gender equality

### *How is welfare perceived and measured?*

The UN, the World Bank and the research literature offer many different definitions of welfare; a fact that illustrates the fact that the concept has different meaning for different groups. The term, as indicated in the Economist Pocketbook on Economic Indicators, usually covers basic human needs such as food, housing, safety and security, but also freedom of movement, a good environment, education, a free job market and financial security etc. As this study shows, the extent to which people actually enjoy welfare in its various forms is governed by recognisable gender-specific patterns.

Insofar as *indicators* are used to measure welfare, this usually involves *indexes* of various kinds, sometimes covering only a few basic aspects, as for instance in the UN's Human Development Index. Its 'Highest Quality of Life' ranking weighs together nine different factors, including financial situation, life expectancy, political stability, family and community life, climate, political freedom and gender equality (Economists Pocketbook).

*A common problem with indexes is that they only specify averages, not gender-specific variations and similar factors.*

A couple of indexes, however, seek to illustrate the welfare and rights situations of women, including the Gender-related Development Index (GDI), as indicated in for instance the excellent UN publication "The World's Women" (2000).

Another aspect besides these indexes is standard of living, measured in purely economic terms through GDP/capita. There are also indexes that seek to measure environment and sustainability aspects, such as the Environmental Sustainability Index. One way of presenting an index in the environmental field is via ecological footprints.

## *Different welfare models*

The welfare model that has focused on and achieved great material prosperity, especially for the richest 1 billion or so in the world, has been drawn up in decision-making forums dominated by men, and is often based on market solutions and technology – where men dominate; in parliaments, the business sphere etc. Fewer resources are invested in welfare in the form of care, which women are usually expected to provide either without pay or for a relatively low wage.

### ❖ **Government funding to male jobs and projects**

Experiences from gender auditing show, that in many countries, funding for production and services has frequently gone to goods and services to which men give priority. Such examples are e.g. government funding for employment projects, measures for dealing with external threats rather than male violence against women – to infrastructure and to regular air travel rather than public transport. Employment measures in the infrastructural field have mainly provided *jobs for men* – while at the same time strengthening the role of men as family providers and decision-makers. Men benefit more than women from large-scale government grants and tax relief for the automotive industry (which has long been the ‘engine’ in the US economy), as well as from research on road traffic and related activities. Government measures have thus given men jobs, produced cars driven by men – and increased men’s mobility.

- ❖ Sweden has broken with this pattern to some extent, however, as it has invested heavily in public-sector activities that create jobs for women – albeit in a highly gender-segregated labour market.

*Efforts in recent decades to restructure welfare services and make them more efficient have meant that labour-intensive activities have been cut back in many parts of the world. Energy-intensive production, meanwhile, has not been forced to restructure to the same extent, as the price of energy sources, including oil, has been low. This in turn is due to the price of oil failing to ‘internalise’ external public costs such*



as ill-health, air pollution and climate change. A number of observers equate current price-setting with a type of subsidy that leads to distortions in consumption and welfare perceptions and that favours resource-hungry and unsustainable goods consumption at the expense of more service-intensive and job-creating services production and welfare that could create more jobs for women and remedy women's lack of time/time poverty, stress and ill-health.

◆ **Global growth**

At global level, growth in recent decades has brought a realignment of poor and rich countries. Countries like China, India and Brazil now have large groups of rich, while at the same time the majority continue to live in poverty (Rosling). Market-based growth has led to greater material welfare and in many cases has strengthened democratic forces in society. However, growth has often been unevenly distributed (World Social Report 2005) This has led to the emergence both of social movements that seek to reduce the gaps and of groups who feel that material welfare has been increasingly emphasised at the expense of other welfare dimensions. *Some* of these counter-movements opposed to the strong emphasis on material welfare are religious groups, including some fundamentalist groups who actively counter-act gender equality.

**How those who formulate the problem control perceptions of welfare and thus resource allocation**

How welfare is defined determines how public and other resources are distributed in modern, democratic societies. Today and throughout history, power has represented an opportunity – and a privilege – whereby those holding it are able to *define both the problem and the solutions*. Male dominance in decision-making forums all over the world gives men as a group this privilege. As a result, gender gaps in such areas as access to public resources have not been brought into the open (Johnsson-Latham, 'Power and Privileges').

As gender researchers have pointed out, *men are presented as a group representing the interests of all, whereas women are said to have 'special needs and interests' (Hirdman).*

Instead of analysing how men's needs and interests are met out of public funds, women are ascribed special needs and interests – despite the fact that to a greater extent than men they use their time and resources to look after others: their husbands, children and the elderly (Swedish Government Long-Term Planning Commission (LU) 2003). Few analyses if any discuss the needs and interests of men, which instead are assumed – without empirical evidence – to be the same as the needs and interests of 'all'.

*Those who have the privilege of defining the problem are also in a position to decide what should be excluded from the agenda. An example in point is that when environment or climate issues are considered the question of who is primarily responsible for causing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and climate change is not addressed; if it were to be, men would be identified as the 'main polluters' because of their wider-ranging travel habits. Instead, the focus of attention is technology and technicians as a professional group – most of whom are men – are portrayed as the solution to the problem.*

Very limited research or development work on policy instruments or analytical tools takes into account gender-specific differences that are relevant and crucial to the sustainability effort. Similarly, the social dimension of sustainable development is a neglected area in such analyses. Often, this places women at a disadvantage, since the social dimension affects gender-based rights and social position, which are key factors in determining women's access to resources, decision-making and the like.

A recent example is the way gender-specific issues are totally ignored in both the analyses and recommendations of the World Watch Institute's 2007 annual report, *Our Urban Future*. It fails to note that 'our' future in urban areas (just like what is labeled "our" economy is seldom the same for women as for men, due for instance to women in many places being denied both the right to own or inherit land and the same access as men to safe transport that would substantially improve their everyday lives, as well as their health and the health of their children.

The assumption – rarely verified – that men as opposed to women represent the interests of all, means that the nominally gender-neutral field *on the left* below is claimed to be of universal application, although it often contains a strong male bias. For this reason, the field on the right is needed, as it addresses gender-specific differences in order to give a full picture of the situation (Johnsson-Latham, ‘Power and Privileges’).

<p><b>Sustainable consumption</b></p> <p>focus on ecology and economy</p> <p>people = sexless averages</p> <p>“hard” and measureable indicators (GDP per capita etc.)</p> <p>lots of resources and prestige</p>		<p>Gender equality/non-discrimination</p> <p>focus on social aspects and women’s subordination</p> <p>stress on power-relations and men’s interests</p> <p>”soft” indicators (on violence, rights etc.)</p> <p>marginalised knowledge, very limited resources</p>
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As measures relating to the economy, environment and sustainable development etc focus on *economic* factors, they tend not to reach women to the same extent as men, since women – especially poor women – are not present in the market to the same extent. This is illustrated by the declaration in the World Bank Publication “China 2020” which states that “international experiences also shows that market reforms tend to hurt women disproportionately”. Thus resources in the form of government appropriations, staffing, research etc earmarked for the promotion of *economic growth benefit men more than women, as has been noted by economists such as Stefan de Vylder when analysing poverty strategies.*

The circles in Figure 1 below show how economic investments or initiatives overlap relatively well where men’s needs are concerned. The circles in Figure 1 show they correspond less well to *women’s* needs, which in the prevailing gender structure are different from

men's and concern vulnerability and exposure to exploitation, violence, exclusion and lack of power and influence etc.

Figure 1: Economic measures overlaps fairly well with male needs

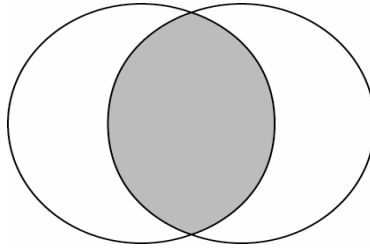
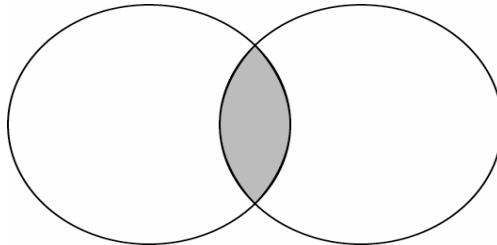


Figure 2: Economic measures respond less to female needs as women due to gender based discrimination are often denied access to (or have limited access to) economic resources in terms of ownership of land, (well-paid) jobs, participation in decision-making bodies which allocate public resources etc.



## 5 How sustainability is measured: ecological footprints and other indicators

There is no generally applicable or generally accepted way of measuring either poverty or sustainable development – or even of defining them properly – but there are a number of illustrative yardsticks such as ‘ecological footprint’. The UN Millennium Goals are measured by means of 48 different indicators showing GDP/capita, educational level, state of health etc.

- ❖ As a rule, one set of indicators is used to measure development in rich countries and *other* indicators to measure development in the southern hemisphere. An interesting exception in this respect is the Swiss Agency for the Environment which has compiled a set of 17 indicators that are deemed to be globally applicable. This document specifies four principal questions of universal interest that the indicators are supposed to give the answers to:

*1. Meeting basic needs: how well do we live?*

Indicators: mental health, income development, violence, unemployment figures.

*2. Justice: how are resources distributed?*

Indicators: poverty, foreign aid, gender pay gaps.

*3. Resource conservation: what are we passing down to our children?* Indicators: Teenage literacy, national debt, investments, science and development activities, habitat diversity, land use.

*4. Decoupling: how efficiently are resources being used?*

Indicators: how transport is increasing faster than GDP, private transport vs public, fossil fuel consumption per capita, material consumption.

Sweden and the EU attach great importance to the development of indicators that describe baseline situations and trends (EURO-STAT etc.). In poverty alleviation work, too, considerable resources are spent on indicators, including ones relating to gender – in contrast to indicators for sustainable development that almost never address this issue.

Statistics on women and men in the OECD are compiled in gender equality terms but without any comment concerning sustainability. In the foreword to the OECD publication ‘Women and Men in OECD’ 2006, the organisation’s Secretary-General notes that women perform better at school, run less risk of ending up in prison, lead less isolated lives than men, and live longer – while men earn more and have a greater chance of acquiring influence and a higher position in economic and social contexts. Nothing is said about how these gender-specific patterns affect sustainable development in society.

Sex-disaggregated statistics are valuable but rarely an end in themselves – they need to be analysed and applied. Such statistics are easily accessible in Sweden because of the large number of single households – and it is easy to study the situation of individuals and thus gender-based economic and social differences in terms of resource consumption. Consumption may be measured, for instance, in terms of ecological footprint and estimated CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per individual, and studies in the UK and elsewhere show that men – largely single householders – are particularly high consumers and high producers of CO<sub>2</sub>.

### *A comprehensive gender equality index*

Based on a gender equality perspective, an index in line with the following would be relevant in terms of gender equality, poverty and sustainable development alike:

1. Level of income (individually based, taking into account that income is not always shared equally within the family).
2. Maternal mortality.
3. Access to sexual and reproductive health and services.
4. Education, including functional training and 'legal literacy'.
5. Economic equality between the sexes, right to land, access to credits.
6. Exposure to violence, both structural/traditional such as sexual mutilation, domestic violence, and violence in connection with armed conflict.
7. Mobility, freedom of movement.
8. (Self-)respect, dignity, access to important networks.
9. Time of one's own and for participating in democratic decision-making, for instance.
10. Amount of unpaid work in the family.

### *Consumption and ecological footprints*

Ecological footprints enable us to measure how many planets like ours would be required if all of the world's inhabitants were to live in the same way as the person whose footprint is being measured.

The average person in the US, for instance, leaves a footprint measuring 12.2 hectares, the average person in the Netherlands 8 hectares and the average person in India 1 hectare (Hart).

#### ◆ **Definition of an ecological footprint:**

The area of land/water needed to support what a person

uses and discards, in terms of food production and consumption, other consumption, waste absorption and infrastructure. See [www.myfootprint.org](http://www.myfootprint.org).

One advantage of this type of index is that the method shows the ecological footprint not only of individuals but also of whole nations and continents. A weakness is that it does not cover the broader concept of sustainable development *with its social dimension, including gender-specific differences and gender-based rights*.

*A significant disadvantage of aggregated figures in the form of national averages is that like GDP/capita and similar indicators they ignore systematic gender-based differences.*

### **Possible analytical work for the future?**

In future analyses of gender equality and sustainable development it would be interesting to examine patterns relating to gender-specific consumption on the basis of four prototypes: a rich man, a rich woman, a poor man and a poor woman.

Thus a possible future study might for instance introduce data concerning the actual consumption of rich and poor men and of rich and poor women respectively, using the weighting described in the [www.myfootprint.org](http://www.myfootprint.org) model as follows:



## Ecological footprints

	<b>Rich:</b> man/woman	<b>Poor:</b> man, woman
<b>1. <u>Food</u> footprint: share of</b>		
a) Animal based products	times/week	times/week
b) Processed, packaged and imported		
<b>2. <u>Goods</u> footprint</b>		
Waste generated	kilos/year	kilos/year
<b>3. <u>Shelter</u> footprint</b>		
Size of your home	m <sup>2</sup>	m <sup>2</sup>
m <sup>2</sup> /person in household		
Housing type		
Electricity		
<b>4. <u>Mobility</u> footprint</b>		
Travels on:		
– public transportation	km/person	km/person
– motorbike		
– car		
– bike, walk, animal power		
– flying		
– litres petrol used/100 km		
in own car		
– travels in own car, alone		
<b>5. Total footprint</b>		
a) Food		
b) Goods		
c) Shelter		
d) Mobility		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>OOO earths required</b>	<b>O earth required</b>

## 6 Actual and unsustainable consumption: by rich and poor men and women

For people throughout the world, there are three areas of private consumption that are of key importance:

- transportation, measured in person kilometres/year, by air, car, boat, including for amusement purposes
- housing, measured in living space per person (with AC, dishwasher and washing machine etc)
- convenience goods, i.e. food (incl. meat), drink (incl. alcohol), clothing, leisure articles.

In terms of present-day consumption, both the rich and the poor are part of the problem – the poor since they have access to **too few** resources, and the rich since they use **too many** resources (in an imperfect market that takes no account of the costs of emissions, ill-health or climate change but allows rich people to consume an unlimited share of the earth's finite resources).

As the following examples demonstrate, human consumption in important respects follows gender-specific patterns that show in general 'the polluter' to be a man. This is true both among the rich and among the poor, as women account for only a minor share of the overall scope for consumption, not least in terms of transport, both for social reasons and because they have less resources than men at their disposal.

In many parts of the world, human welfare has come to be equated with material standard and consumption, not least of goods and certain types of services such as travel, which has increased dramatically over the past 50 years. How people consume is to a great extent dependent on their income, property, gender, age and perception of welfare (WWI 2004).

Today, there are some 970 million people in the richest countries of the world with average incomes of USD 28 500. This is only averages as we know that some 15 % of all people in rich countries are classified as poor.

About 3 billion people live in middle-income countries with mean incomes of approximately USD 2 000, which corresponds to 7 per cent of the level in the richest countries. Mean income for the 2.3 billion or so people living in the poorest countries is USD 450, i.e. scarcely 2 per cent of the richest category (World Bank Atlas 2006). Again, the figures for both middle- and low-income countries are averages as some 15 % of the population in these countries are classified as rich, and often enjoy the consumption patterns of a global middle-class.

In 2007, according to Forbes, the world has almost a thousand people with fortunes in excess of USD 1 billion. Today, these dollar billionaires include more Indians than Japanese. ([www.forbes.com](http://www.forbes.com)) Although a number of these billionaires may lead anonymous lives, the luxury consumption of rich people has a profound impact on other people all over the world, as a result of advertising and films etc. As men are the dominant group among decision-makers in the business community, in politics, in the media and in sport, and as trend-setting icons (in films etc.) it would be interesting to analyse to what extent men – not least rich men – influence the *global* direction of consumption. The contents of many ‘lifestyle’ magazines and commercials give an idea of what direction this is: they encourage greater consumption of luxury goods such as cars, boats, computers, technology, foreign travel, diamonds etc. (E.g. the lifestyle magazine, Best Life: What matters to men). For many people, a basic principle of modern consumption would appear to be ‘everything – now’. The complete contrast would be the notion of Mahatma Gandhi, who said that the ability to chose to abstain ennobles human beings.

Women’s shopping is much talked about. It would be interesting to analyse what kinds of sums this involves in comparison with the purchases of men (in the same income group), which are more likely to involve expensive capital goods such as home electronics, computers and the like, as well as petrol-hungry yachts, motor-bikes and motorcars.

The average person in the US uses about twice as many resources as the average person in the EU. Meanwhile, the EU member states together use more resources than the whole of the population of Asia, which is 4-5 times the size of the EU population (UNEP).

The 2006 report on fulfilment of the UN's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) states in reference to Goal 7, relating to sustainable development, that in 2003 the developed countries (with about 1/6 of the global population) accounted for about half of the world's total emissions – 12 106 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub> out of a total of 25 168 million tons. The report also noted that emissions per capita in the same year were three times as high for rich countries as for poor countries, totalling 12.9 and 4.0 respectively. (The Millennium Development Goals UN report 2006, statistical annex.)

## **Energy consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in key countries**

IEA figures for global energy consumption (2002) show that on average about 25 per cent of all energy is used for transport.

The OECD states that a dozen countries were large-scale users of energy, measured per capita and in tons of oil equivalent in 2006, including Canada, the US, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Belgium, Saudi Arabia and Australia.

One billion of the earth's 6 billion inhabitants use 75 per cent of all energy and account for the bulk of all emissions from industry, toxins and consumer goods.

The World Bank report *China 2020* (2006) notes that China was the world's third largest economy in 1820 but now accounts for less of the earth's energy consumption than the EU. Most of this energy is in the form of coal with an extremely low level of energy efficiency. Today, China has about 3 per cent of the planet's motor vehicles. In urban areas, the number of cars is increasing by 15-20 per cent/year (Zhongan 2004).

As the WCBDC shows, Japan's resource consumption per person differs from the rest of the OECD in that the country has the lower number of driven person kilometres per annum and one of the world's most highly developed public transport systems.

## **A. The consumption of rich men and women**

In recent decades, economic growth and increased consumption in the OECD countries has given people the chance to acquire larger homes and a broader range of convenience goods (“Rethink”). The consumption of transport in particular has risen. Today, people travel much more than previous generations, both from day to day and on holidays, and a large share of the food etc consumed daily comprises goods transported over long distances.

As the 2005 UN report to the CSD showed, the EU has dramatically reduced its resource usage in terms of fossil fuels in housing and industrial manufacturing – but all the energy saved in these areas has been more than offset by increases in the transport sector, which has grown by 70 per cent in the space of 30 years (ECE report to CSD 2005).

Several researchers, among them Bradley, stress that the rich have a much larger ‘habitat’ (i.e. share of the earth’s surface that they use through their consumption) than the poor. This means that the habitats of the rich cost considerably more for the earth as a whole. Yet it is often the poor who are described as the problem and who primarily need to change their behaviour.

Bradley also notes that it is often those who talk most about sustainable development who, through their travels, account for the bulk of the emissions that cause climate change.

The need to provide for the resources required for consumption around the globe makes countries and governments act through a number of means; trade policies, diplomacy and if need be military means, as discussed among others by Klare in the book “Resource wars: a new landscape of global conflict”.

### *The case of Sweden:*

Due to the fact that GDP has risen by 75 per cent in Sweden since 1975, consumption has increased substantially over this period, and many Swedes have enjoyed access to goods and services that could be placed in the ‘bonus consumption’ category. Thus households have increased the share of consumption that they use for commu-

nications, leisure-time activities, entertainments and culture, recreation, charter travel, hotel accommodation, and visits to cafés and restaurants. Also, people in Sweden live in increasingly large homes and travel 50 per cent more than they did 25 years ago, primarily to and from work, school and the shops etc. Over the past ten years, air travel has increased significantly (“Rethink”).

In Sweden, consumption is above the EU average, as the average Swede has more housing space than other EU citizens, drives a car that is more energy-intensive, and eats more meat. As a result, Swedish consumers’ ecological footprint – i.e. their impact on the environment in terms of land surface, or hectares – is estimated at 6-7.0, compared with the EU average of 4.9 (“Rethink”).

Sweden is among both the OECD half that consumes most energy per produced GDP unit and the third that uses most energy per capita. On the other hand, Sweden is one of the least dependent of the OECD countries on fossil fuels, and is among the leaders in terms of renewable energy use. Sweden’s CO<sub>2</sub> emissions have declined by 40 per cent in recent years (OECD Factbook 2005).

In Swedish society, individuals’ opportunities and circumstances are strongly influenced by the person’s sex, as consumption is *distinctly gender-related*. Women, for instance, are more likely to purchase basic essentials in the form of less expensive but recurring consumer goods for the whole family, such as food, clothing and household articles, while are more likely to buy expensive capital goods and own things like homes, cars and home electronics. Also, men are more likely to eat out than women, and consume more alcohol and tobacco/snuff than women (“Rethink”).

Distribution is uneven, and men earn and consume more than women in Sweden (Swedish Government Long-Term Planning Commission 2003 and Nyman). Many of the products found on the market today are created to correspond to the bodies, interests and needs of one sex or the other. Human consumption also reflects the fact that women in general earn less than men and have less money at their disposal (Statistics Sweden).

*Consumption per type of expenditure in Sweden (Statistics Sweden)*

**Expenditure in SEK/capita 2004**

Type	Men	Women	Men's consumption as a share of women's
Eating out	2 010	1 370	3/2
Alcohol	360	160	2.5/1
Tobacco	620	380	2/1
Consumer goods	190	820	1/4
- (incl. hygiene)	40	800	1/20
Household services	620	1 220	1/2
Clothing and shoes	3 010	4720	2/3
Health and medical care	1 470	2450	2/3
Transport	1 350	740	3/2
-of which car repairs and maintenance	670	380	2/1
Leisure-time activities	2 800	2 650	1/1
- of which sport	1 350	970	3/2
- books, newspapers, TV licence	430	690	2/3

As the above table shows, men on average consume more than women in a handful of major areas: eating out, alcohol, tobacco/snuff, transport and sport. Women for their part consume more on average than men in terms of consumer goods, including hygiene, medical care and health, clothing and shoes, books and culture.

Supplementary data to the above table show that men/boys to a much greater extent than women use and own large leisure boats that consume large amounts of petrol. On average they also eat more red meat, drink more alcohol and use more drugs compared to women. It would be interesting to analyse to what extent female every-day consumption is more sustainable than men's.

❖ *Further analysis*

It would be interesting to conduct an ecological and social sustainability analysis and compare men's and women's consumption patterns in terms of the energy content of their respective consumption baskets.

From a sustainability viewpoint, it would also be interesting to relate the consumption baskets to perceptions of welfare and well-being, and what a good life is all about based on studies of the type employed in World Value Systems (Ingelhart et al).

*Effects of consumption, both in our own immediate environment and in the environments of others*

In today's globalised society, where goods are frequently produced in countries other than those in which they are consumed, it is difficult for individuals to see how their consumption, housing and transportation affects the environment – although this picture has begun to change as a result of developments such as the recent drought years in Australia and hurricanes in the Caribbean and New Orleans. Problems such as deforestation, industrial emissions and the like that accompany the production and recycling of certain goods are not always visible to the consumer. Nor, for instance, do greenhouse gas emissions always have clearly apparent consequences in people's own areas – instead, it is more often than not *other* regions that are hit by problems such as flooding and desertification etc. This is particularly true of the poorest small island countries (categorised by the UN as Small Island Developing States, SIDS).

A major reason why lifestyles and consumption habits that degrade the environment are able to continue is that *the problems are not always experienced by those who cause them*. Often, it is women, the elderly and children who are more exposed to environmental risks than men who go out to work, as they live or play from day to day close to waste facilities, transport routes or contaminated land areas. A frequent topic in the debate on environmental justice is why and in what ways certain phenomena are identified as important to environmental health while others are ignored. Once again, there is a gender aspect here, as environmental problems associated with



economic growth are given more attention than environmental problems related to the circumstances of women and children (Bradley).

## **B. The consumption of poor women and men**

Worldwide, about half a million people live in what is termed the 'survival economy', with limited use of the earth's resources and energy compared with the consumption of the rich. The low consumption and limited CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of the poor could be described as the salvation of the rich in that poor people tax our common resources to such a limited extent.

According to the reports of the UN Secretary General 2006-2007:

- 54 per cent of the population of developing countries lack access to modern energy sources.
- 80 per cent of poor people's assets comprise natural resources.
- the poor as being the group worst hit by global warming.
- for many poor island states, global warming represents a threat to national survival.

*Women's non-electrical, dangerous and arduous workplaces in the home*

In sub-Saharan Africa, only 5 per cent of the population have access to electricity. This often affects women more than men, as the home is usually their workplace (even when they also have paid employment), and in the absence of electricity they have neither water pumps nor lighting. Lack of electricity and of safe, accessible transport also reduces women's chances of obtaining education and training, medical care, or a paid job, or of being part of a network etc. Above all, lack of energy means that women's work is heavy and time-consuming, which reduces their chances of taking part in decision-making on the same terms as men, who often have more leisure time than women. (World Bank Atlas 2006, and Blackden). It would be interesting to know the proportion of women in this respect, and how much of countries' development budgets in the energy field do reach women .

The different degrees to which women and men have access to energy is due to the fact that the poverty of women and men differs considerably. Individual poverty – and vulnerability in the broader sense – has its root in power issues that are expressed in a number of gender-specific ways and which give girls and boys differing sets of rights. This in turn affects their options in terms of lifestyle. A composite picture of female and male poverty, as expressed in World Bank and UN documents, and also by NGOs, tends to confirm the following: women represent a large share of the poor in the world, despite the fact that women work longer days and are financially more active – but often in jobs that yield only a little income or none at all. Poor women in the southern hemisphere control or own a very limited share of the earth's land resources, financial resources and technology etc, in relation to poor men as well. Women and girls often lead socially unsustainable lives in that they are often exposed to gender-related violence, which public institutions seldom take action against. Also, women have very little influence on decision-making, whatever the level: in the family, in the village, or in parliament or commerce.

*Differing access to resources and consumption is most pronounced in poor families*

As the World Bank notes, gender gaps tend to be greatest among poor families. Many studies and many researchers such as Marty Sen and Naila Kabeer have shown that the family seldom represents the balanced distribution unit on which economists frequently base their approach. Rather, women and girls eat last and least and are given less money, less education and less space etc. Studies in both Latin America and Asia show that poor men often fail to distribute their income evenly in the household, instead keeping between a third and two thirds for themselves and their own personal purchases (Chant).

Studies also show that consumption patterns in poor families differ considerably in gender terms. The medical and educational needs of boys and men, for instance, are given precedence over the needs of girls and women, while women and girls eat last and least etc. (Johnsson-Latham, "Power and Privileges"). This is seldom noted; instead, poverty is regularly defined in a nominally gender-neutral way as shown in the left-hand column, i.e. in the form of poverty

and ill-health etc. The right-hand column gives a more correct picture and also makes the gender-based differences clear:

Ill-health	Gender-related ill-health
Lack of income	Women's lack of income
Hunger	Women often eat last and least
Insecurity, vulnerability	Violence against women, and discrimination

The World Bank emphasizes that female poverty affects both women in general and society as a whole, since growth is hampered by it (World Bank Atlas).

◆ **Swedish Government Bill 2002/03:122, Shared responsibility: Sweden's policy for global development**

The bill proceeds from a rights perspective that emphasizes the equal worth of all and the perspectives of the poor (which often differ for women and men). It identifies gender equality as a key objective and provides a legal framework for the drive to give women and men equal opportunities and attention, and for efforts to combat gender discrimination.

When discussing issues relating to the poverty of women, it is important to focus on men's behaviour as well, as gender discrimination is an important cause of women's poverty. For several decades now, Sweden has been proactive at the international level in seeking to address the role of men and power issues in discussions on gender equality, and has placed increasing emphasis on the systems that have made women – and many men – vulnerable. In the course of this work, Sweden has called attention to the findings of researchers in the male studies field who have shown that power and violence are not an end in themselves but are also important ways of retaining the privileges of men as a group. It should be noted, however, that women, too, have access to such privileges if they do not openly question prevailing power structures.

## 7 Economy, power, lifestyles and human consumption

The lifestyles of women and men are rooted *inter alia* in economic conditions, power positions and gender, which inform people's perceptions of what welfare represents – and which in turn determine what people can and wish to consume. Time studies show that as a result of their function in the community, women all over the world have the principal responsibility for home, children and the elderly. This applies both to women who work full-time in the home and to those who go out to work, as for instance in Sweden. As the 2003 report of the Swedish Government Long-Term Planning Commission shows, women assume principal responsibility for the care of children at home and sick children, and for running the household. For women, the choice lies between setting aside their own time for such duties or assuming responsibility for ensuring that such care is provided externally, in the form of either private or municipal services. Research indicate that women are more likely than men to consider the interests and needs of children (Nyman).

According to the Long-Term Planning Commission, the reason for this division of labour in the home is that women in Sweden are still generally viewed as the 'junior partner' as family providers – while men are viewed as the 'junior partner' when it comes to household duties (Swedish Government Long-Term Planning Commission 2003).

❖ **For women, social rationality is often more crucial to survival than the economic aspect**

For women and men, individual options relating to work and responsibility for the children and the home are limited by traditional gender roles in society, which steer human behaviour towards what is expected of a 'real' woman and a 'real' man. This is presented by the Long-Term Planning Commission as an explanation of why women tend make socially rational rather than financially rational choices, i.e. choices that make for high social acceptance in their environments (such as looking after

shared children – a task fathers ‘can’ choose not to engage in). Taking greater responsibility for the family home (including what is jokingly referred to as ‘caring for a healthy man’) is also something that brings a high degree of acceptance in many parts of the world.

In Sweden, the costs of domestic services that benefit the family as a whole are ‘budgeted’ to the women of the family. This type of ‘accounting’ gives an erroneous impression that domestic services only meet women’s needs and represent an aspect of female consumption.

Wage labour and higher pay for men than women in general (Statistics Sweden) gives men greater financial scope. This in turn leads to greater consumption on their part, e.g. of capital goods. Swedish research shows that men have greater ‘bargaining power’ as a result of their higher incomes and are in a better position than women to decide what share of the household’s overall financial resources should be devoted to a new car, home electronics and the like.

*In an historical perspective, material consumption occupies a highly dominant position in society throughout over the world.*

For large groups of people, lifestyle has come to be defined in terms of the consumption of goods and services. This is pointed out in a 2004 report from the World Watch Institute devoted entirely to consumption patterns. According to the WWI, consumerism is now so predominant in societies worldwide that, as a model, it appears to have emerged ‘victorious’ from the Cold War conflict between East and West.

For rich countries and groups, the goods and services on offer in a changing, globalised world give individuals an ever-increasing range of options. This is particularly true of men, who enjoy greater freedom than women throughout the world. What we term ‘consumer choices’, however, are seldom ‘voluntary’ even for the rich, but are shaped by our expectations in time and space, by social and other conditions, by economic resources, and by health, age, gender and other factors. Consumption has become a way of expressing group affiliation, status etc and, as sociologist Anthony Giddens has pointed out, also represents an expression of our ‘self-identity’.

### *The emergence of a global 'consumer class'*

A Norwegian study by Nyberg and Sto shows that a global 'consumer class', primarily middle class, is to be found worldwide, displaying similar preferences and consumption patterns – and gender-specific differences. Like other groups, this large group of middle-class consumers is constantly influenced by commercials and by popular culture such as soap operas that are screened all over the world and that show what is expected of 'a real man' and 'a real woman' in terms of relationships, lifestyles and consumer choices. As it is vital to human survival to be socially accepted, we as individuals are prepared to confirm our affiliation, e.g. in the shape of gender. This means that we constantly reaffirm our gender roles, in our gestures, our clothing, our behaviour etc, on a daily basis, several times a day, as Judith Butler and others have pointed out. For men, it is often a question of affirming one's masculinity in terms of power, authority, skills, risk-taking, and the potential use of violence etc. For women, it frequently involves being attractive and caring etc, and not questioning or being viewed as a threat to male authority.

### **The social dimension of sustainable development and how human consumption is a function of human rights production**

In order to analyse and understand the differing situations, social conditions, lifestyles and consumption patterns of women and men, further information is required concerning what men and women produce, both in the home and at work – which is still a function of sex, gender and gender roles throughout the world. It is also an important factor in connection with individuals' use of time and their chances of taking part in democratic decision-making processes.

The Swedish Government's Long-Term Planning Commission has shown that the Swedish labour market is still deeply gender segregated, with women dominating low-paid jobs and as part-time employees with central government, county council or municipal employers. As a result, women are more dependent on the public sec-

tor as a job provider and more favourably disposed towards public activities, in their capacities both as an employee and as the person who ‘consumes’ health and social care services on the family’s behalf.

The majority of men in Sweden are employed by private employers and are thus more favourably disposed than women towards private activities and the market (Swedish Government’s Long-Term Planning Commission).

Men in Sweden earn more than women in all age groups, and the average disposable income (which greatly influences consumption and lifestyle) of women in 2002 was slightly less than 70 per cent of the average income for men. Disposable income per consumption unit for families in which both parents were born outside the EU, meanwhile, amounted to 78 per cent of the average. (“Rethink”)

Men in Sweden are also allocated more expensive public measures in job promotion programmes through costlier training and equipment and through smaller groups etc. Exercise premises that are nominally open to all cannot be used by many immigrant girls who wear shawls. Girls are taught to wait, to allow themselves to be interrupted etc, while boys are raised to be more self-assertive and to dominate over girls. (“Genusperspektiv i folkhälsoarbetet”).

*Women risk having to meet the ‘demographic challenge’ at the cost of greater ill-health*

Women tend to be guided in their vocational choices more by social than by financial considerations. Today, the caring role of women is an increasingly important topic in view of what is known as the demographic challenge, with an ageing population and diminishing public resources – a situation that was long faced by women in Japanese society, for instance. Already, it is women in Sweden rather than men who are expected to take care of ageing parents, which often means accepting principal responsibility both for her own and for her husband’s parents, as in pre-modern societies (Swedish Government’s Long-Term Planning Commission).

In Sweden, stress and mental imbalance is on the increase in the female population, especially among young girls, and there may be

reason to assume that ill-health among older, low-educated women has to do with cutbacks and greater pressure in working life. In a 2005 study, the Swedish National Institute of Public Health concluded that mental illness was the most common form of ill-health among Swedish women.

The same study also shows that men's violence against women is a widespread but neglected public health problem, that for safety reasons women and girls have less access to recreational space, that women live longer than men but are more prone to ill-health as a result of worry, stress and anxiety, due among other things to their poor financial situation and to their responsibility for other people. In addition, the study shows that men's alcohol problems and drug abuse have a much more profound effect than women's abuse, due to the violence they inflict on others (notably women and children) and on drunk driving, which kills and maims others on the roads.

Ill-health is costly, both to the individual and to society, and total expenditure in the Swedish national budget on sickness benefits is of the same magnitude as the sums spent on policy areas such as education and defence (Swedish Ministry of Finance). These are crucial aspects of sustainability which have no ecological implications but relate to the often neglected but vital social dimension of sustainable development. This dimension is further key to social cohesion and fundamental security aspects of societies.

A clear gender pattern is evident among people who retire at the age of 60: *men retire because they are in good shape both financially and physically, while women retire because they are ill and worn out, having occupied poorly paid jobs in the public care sector – despite knowing that their poor financial situation will worsen as a result of premature retirement.*

Globally, women dominate as care providers, both in the home and in paid care jobs at the low end of the pay scale. At the global level, according to the World Bank, the value of women's unpaid work in the home is illustrated by the fact that poor women account for about 75 per cent of all the care received by the world poor – as the poor can seldom afford hospital care and for the most part have to rely on care in the home (World Bank: *Voices of the poor*). In most countries, rich women can avoid household duties by pur-



chasing domestic help, as shown for instance by Marcela Tovar in her research on gender and social sustainability. In the Nordic countries, which have sought to combine gender equality and income equality, only a small group of households use external domestic help for tasks other than childcare and, in some cases, cleaning.

## 8 Women's and men's mobility, transport needs and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions

Throughout history, people's capacity for moving around – i.e. their mobility – has been crucial to their chances of taking control of their own lives, making a living and satisfying their craving for freedom. People have travelled far and wide – but the travel stories have concerned men: conquerors like Genghis Khan, explorers like Herodotos, Marco Polo and Columbus, and scientists like Linnaeus etc. Any women who went out travelling in the annals of history often had to do so in men's clothing.

### ❖ **Mobility has seldom been a part of women's history**

Down through the ages, women have had less freedom than men – not just mothers, but women in general. In modern times, however, the improvement in women's sexual and reproductive rights has changed the picture somewhat: it has increased their mobility and thus their access to both wage labour and participation in decision-making at various levels.

*The fact that women travel less than men – measured in person kilometres per car, plane, boat and motorcycle – means that women cause considerably fewer CO<sub>2</sub> emissions than men and thus considerable less climate change.*

*If women's consumption levels were to be the norm, both emissions and climate change would be significantly less than today. To put it differently, if men were to change their behavior, emissions and climate change might be a much more limited problem as compared to what it is today.*

For women, the alternative has frequently been to stay where they are, i.e. to avoid transport. Another alternative has often been to walk or to use the simplest and cheapest methods of transport, such as the bicycle (Swedish National Road Administration).

The picture below illustrates the situation – how the majority of the earth’s population have only limited mobility or use only simple modes of transport while a minority use motor or air travel.



*Mobility is increasingly about automobility*

At the end of the Second World War, there were about 46 million cars worldwide and 75 per cent of them were registered in the US. Today, the number is estimated at 620 million. Around 9 per cent of the global population own a car (Thynell 2006). Men are assumed to be in a majority among car owners, and in a country that emphasizes gender equality as strongly as Sweden, for instance, they number 75.9 per cent (Swedish National Road Administration, by telephone, 2007-03-20).

Forecasts produced by the EU and the UN and in the private business sector show a steady increase in energy needs in the transport sector (WBCSD).

This is a worrying development, as according to the EU the transport sector is currently responsible for 1/3 of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

Forecasts also show that this area of human consumption is expected to go on increasing – especially if the transportation of goods is included.

*Example: Motoring in rich countries such as Sweden and the US*

In Sweden, private motoring accounts for 2/3 of all passenger transport, while the most recent figures show that private cars accounted for 2/3 and trucks for 1/3 of all driven kilometres (Swedish National Road Administration). In 2006, road transport was responsible for about 30 per cent of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, of which private cars accounted for 60 per cent and trucks for 30 per cent. Over the past ten years, transportation has increased by 14 per cent, and by 2020, passenger traffic is expected to have increased by 35-40 per cent and the freight sector by 50 per cent (Swedish Government Report, SOU 2006:2).

This increase is due to the way we build and plan, including developments such as regional expansion in what is sometimes termed ‘post-industrial settlement’, built to meet the needs of motorists. Regional expansion has boosted male travel while reducing women’s work time and mobility, and has meant that more women now work closer to home, which also restricts their choices in the labour market (Friberg).

According to the US Census Bureau, nine out of ten wage-earners in the US drove their own cars to work in 2006. Three out of four drove unaccompanied. As a group, long-distance commuters are growing in the US: some 3.5 million have a travel time of 2 hours per day – in each direction. Of these, 2/3 are men. Some 10 million Americans drive for over an hour in each direction every day. This increase in car driving has aggravated ill-health in the form of body fat, stress and road accidents etc.

As in Sweden, the greater volume of private motoring appears to be a direct result of urban planning, featuring workplaces in centres of various types, surrounded by ‘suburbias’, where housing areas lack both shops and pavements and are based on car-driving residents. With the men in the family away from home for around 14 hours a day, many housewives and women working part-time say they feel like ‘single women’. Similar observations have been made in Japan.

In Sweden, about one wage-earner in four has less than 1 km to work, while one in three has more than 10 km to work. The Swedish car fleet is older and devours more petrol than the EU average.

❖ **Men are responsible for the bulk of all car driving in Sweden**

Today (2007), some 6.9 million cars are registered in the country, of which only 1.7 are owned by women. Women represent a majority – 2/3 – of all households lacking a car/driving licence. About 40 per cent of all drivers travel for less than 2.5 km a day on average. Men drive cars more than women, among other reasons because they commute more widely. *A very small group – 10 per cent of all car drivers, primarily men – account for 60 per cent of all car driving in Sweden and thus for the same proportion of emissions and environmental impact* (National Road Administration). *A cautious estimate based on the assumption that the other car drivers – women and men – drive roughly the same amount and thus share the remaining 40 per cent of all driving, this would mean that men account for at least about 75 per cent of all car driving in Sweden, expressed as person kilometres.*

The Swedish National Road Administration's report *Res jämt* ('Equal Travel') observes that women are brought up to be sensitive to the needs of others and not to put their own interests first, while men are brought up to show courage and take risks – a situation that is clearly reflected in the way the two sexes behave on the roads. According to Claes Tingvall, at the Swedish National Road Administration, male risk-taking is connected to the fact that men in general regard themselves as independent individuals while women tend to have a much larger capacity to consider the needs of the group. Men, particularly young men, tend to take more risks and drive aggressively, and are also involved in the majority of all road accidents. Women very seldom cause the death of other road users, and if women's behavior on the roads were to be the norm, the number of road accidents would fall significantly. Also, men drive the largest and most petrol-hungry vehicles (Swedish National Road Administration).

The director of the Swedish National Road Administration, Mr Ingemar Skogö, concludes that infrastructure-planning is undertaken by middle aged male engineers, “by men for men”. (Report 2007:110). Whereas women represent a more human perspective by more consideration to road safety etc. it is men who dominate decision-making.

A conclusion from the report 2005:110 is that male and female traveling and needs in terms of transportation differ particularly in regard to three areas:

- ❖ Views on security and risk-taking and in regard to which risks are acceptable and which are not.
- ❖ Priorities in terms of long distances traveling and subsequent budgetary allocations for such purposes versus allocations to well-developed communications in the neighborhoods.
- ❖ Choices in terms of cars and public transportation.

#### *Large-scale investment in roads, automobiles and air travel*

Men also fly to a greater extent than women, and are in a clear majority as regards business travel on regular flights, which consume more energy as they give more space to each traveler compared to charter flights. Women, on the other hand, use public transport – bus and rail travel – to a greater extent; they also travel by air, but then largely on charter trips for holidays. Given the above, women are more favourably inclined towards and more dependent on public transport than men. (Swedish National Road Administration)

Men, on the other hand, prefer cars, and what Swedish researcher Merritt Polk calls ‘automobility’. As Polk points out, this has significant disadvantages to society in that *automobility is a highly resource-intensive mode of travel* and a less sustainable way of solving the problem of how to transport people and goods from A to B (Swedish National Road Administration).

*It is also important to remember, as researchers such as Polk have noted, that for most women the car is a means of transport, while for*

*men it is often a symbol on which they are prepared to spend much of their (and their family's) consumption budget in order to demonstrate their status, attitude, wealth, courage and taste etc.*

A Swedish psychologist Karin Sandqvist (1997) lists seven reasons why driving and owning a car may contribute to a man reaching what is expected of him or appropriate for him to be seen as a 'real man'. She connects them to automobility in the following way:

- A man should be aggressive and powerful and driving a car helps one to feel that way.
- A man should be adventuresome and daring, and a car provides opportunities for such behavior.
- A man should be sexually active, and a car provides practical opportunities for this and also symbolizes potency.
- A man should be financially successful, and a car can prove it.
- A man should be able to provide protection and comfort for his woman, and a car protects against climate and physical work.
- A man should be the respected leader of his family, and with the father behind the wheel, he is obviously the leader...
- A man should be skillful and knowledgeable in technical matters, and working on the car increases his technical competence.

(Sandqvist 1997:163)

*Example 2: Poor countries*

### ***Physical mobility in the southern hemisphere: Rapid change and unplanned urbanisation***

The Western lifestyle has been globalised and is being adopted by growing numbers of people. Globalisation has meant that more and more people now live in urban areas. Today, there are more than 300 cities around the world with over a million inhabitants. In 24 of these megacities, the population exceeds 10 million. The fastest growing region in the world is Asia, and estimates show that it will soon accommodate 60 per cent of the world's 6.3 billion people. (MFA webb page, Stockholm 2006)

Increased economic growth and the spread of modern society to other cultures have together helped to accelerate urbanisation. Most urban households in Asia are new, with all this entails regarding the need for services, jobs, income, a higher material standard, functioning social networks etc. Urbanisation is predictable but not planned for. The global spread of modern lifestyles has necessitated greater physical and social mobility on the part of women in the performance of everyday tasks.

Transport experts in Asia say that thousands of towns and cities will shortly be forced to make major new investments in modern transport systems. Only a handful of professionally trained women occupy jobs that involve transport planning, and these systems will affect important areas of everyday life in the urban areas concerned (Clean Air Initiative Asia). Women's needs seldom serve as a guide in travel planning. This means that women have a more limited range of choices than men, and less access to resources and services. The reproductive and social functions of women and men respectively reflect different needs and have a bearing on travel patterns. Another limiting factor for women is the tendency of welfare systems to target their reproductive roles rather than their social functions.

Studies from Zambia, for instance, show that women participate very little in planning, and that where they do take part it usually concerns grassroots issues relating to the way the neighbourhood is run.

The transport sector can serve to illustrate the changes that have taken place in lifestyle and consumption. Part of the modern lifestyle is to own and drive a car. Most travel in Asia is on foot, despite the fact that this is a strong growth region. The powerful wave of urbanisation currently under way, which is seldom managed or regulated by law or government policy, has also brought with it social transformations and personal challenges in the form of public health problems, the loss of traditional ways of dealing with everyday life, a lack of enduring networks, and fewer established solutions in a wide range of fields. At the same time, modern development yields new opportunities. In this connection, women's participation in the shaping of solutions for dealing with everyday problems such as energy usage, water supply and public transport is of the greatest importance. In many cases, women are



in a weak labour market position, and both their efforts to improve welfare and their footing in the job market need to be strengthened.

- ❖ Research findings show that personal safety and security are of major importance to women when they take decisions that affect everyday life. Often, however, women are forced into informal solutions which as a rule offer neither reasonable safety or comfort, for instance when women are to accompany their children, travel to a hospital or hurry home from work. In this respect, the lack of women in infrastructure planning is a serious problem. Women account for a lower level of emissions than men, which is a result both of the priorities they make and of the fact that they do not have access to the same resources.

A perusal of the global situation shows that investment in social sustainability means green solutions will be increasingly needed. Improvements in transport alternatives that reinforce women's social position could go hand in hand with solutions that strengthen ecological sustainability – as long as the will and clear guidelines are present. Thus ecological and socially sustainable transportation can meet the growing travel needs of women.

Urban areas are generally seen as engines of economic growth, and it is to such areas that most investments go. Economic growth today means that energy and transport needs are increasing while at the same time the transport sector is growing since more and more vehicles are being manufactured and used. Daily mobility in China is still low, and the average person travels just 1 000 kilometres a year, but this figure is growing. (Schipper and Ng 2004.) NO<sub>2</sub> emissions, ground-level ozone and particles, largely from the transport sector, are a problem in all urban areas with rapidly increasing levels of motor traffic. Also, tropospheric ozone, which is an important component in petrochemical smog, is increasing in pace with the increasing use of motor vehicles. In most large urban areas, the main problem is the emission of small but dangerous particles known as PM 10 and PM 2.5 (Schwela et al 2006). Despite active efforts to introduce vehicle and fuel regulation, the soaring emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> and other degrading substances are well beyond official control in most major towns and cities in Asia (Thynell

2007 b). A recently published study by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Clean Air Initiative Asia organisation estimated that the economic costs of air pollution amounted to 2-4 per cent of GDP (Schwela et al 2006).

It also noted that 27 per cent of all CO<sub>2</sub> emissions come from the transport sector, and that this is the fastest growing emission field. The global increase is 2 per cent/year, but in the developing countries this figure is almost twice as large: 3.5 per cent. (ibid) here is a strong link between the growing amount of particles and the increase in health problems in Asia, as the amount of particles in the air is higher there than elsewhere in the world. Beijing is shaping up to be the city with the dirtiest air in the world. The incidence of microscopic dust per cubic meter there is currently 142 micrograms, i.e. almost seven times the level in Paris, which itself is slightly above the current WHO guidelines. Emissions of NO<sub>x</sub> are 25 times as high in Beijing as in Tokyo. Other Asian cities with large-scale emissions are Katmandu, Dhaka, New Delhi and Kolkata (*The International Herald Tribune*, 16-17 December 2006).

In cities like Dhaka, there is a very severe lack of buses plying regular routes, and 60 per cent of all travel there is on foot. Only 3 per cent of travel is by car and 10 per cent by bus. (Fjellstrom in Thynell 2006)

- ❖ Public transport is little developed, and there is much competition for seats on buses. As a result, harassment of various kinds is common, and socially and financially weaker travellers are excluded as they are unable to board the bus. Bus drivers often drive past women waiting at a stop. Both drivers and conductors prefer male passengers, who can be packed together in buses, which means the bus company gets more paying passengers. Understandably, women and girls do not like to be pressed hard against strange men.

Also, it is felt that women move about the bus too slowly, and that it takes longer for them than it does for men to get on and off, which adversely affects profitability.

This negative attitude towards women in transport systems is to be found in many countries around the world. In countries where public transport is more highly developed, transport companies

often reserve half a bus or a whole underground carriage for women and children – at least during rush hour, e.g. Tokyo, Teheran, Mexico City etc. (Thynell 2006).

Conductors sometimes discriminate against poor passengers and female passengers by saying that the price of the ticket is higher than it in fact is, so that they make keep the extra money themselves, the assumption being that harassed travellers will not lodge any complaints. (ibid) Women and girls are accustomed to walking for long stretches along busy streets and roads where pedestrians are not respected by other travellers. Road accidents with female victims, and involving hit-and-run drivers, are not uncommon. (The Independent, Dhaka 5.10.2004).

While access to public transport is poor in towns and cities, it is often worse in rural areas. Women's social and reproductive functions affect their travel habits, their travel budgets and how they get around. The few studies that are available from African settings show the problems women encounter in terms of physical mobility in rural areas. Cars and buses are often few and far between (Heyen-Perschon, 2005a).

Where there are bicycles, they are usually ridden by men. A study from Mozambique shows that women do not even have access to the simplest forms of technology. They walk for 4-6 hours a day and carry heavy loads of 20 kilos or more (e.g. young children and/or water), while the men use the family bicycle as they are the ones who decide how the family's resources are to be used (Overton och Zambeze 1999).

### ***Access to bicycles – a vehicle to health***

In a number of African countries, the bicycle's importance for women's health has been documented. In cases where the medical centre is 20-40 km from the home, access to a bicycle is vital. (ibid)

In some African countries where mortality among the newborn is particularly high, researchers note that many lives could have been saved if women had had the means to reach hospital, but that the lack of proper transport for pregnant women had pushed up the child mortality rate (Heyen-Perschon, 2005b). Studies from Bangladesh show that the critical distance from a medical centre is 10

km. If it is further away, and women cannot walk there themselves, there is much less likelihood of them receiving any kind of treatment whatsoever. ([www.sdnpsbd.org/sdi/international\\_days/women\\_day/2004/women\\_workers.htm](http://www.sdnpsbd.org/sdi/international_days/women_day/2004/women_workers.htm).) Boys, meanwhile, have more chance than girls of obtaining treatment when travel distances increase.

For women, access to a bicycle has been shown to facilitate daily life considerably (as they can then save their strength), particularly in rural areas. In economically expansive Delhi, bicycles are commonplace, and 21 per cent of all work travel is undertaken by bicycle. Here, too, the proportion of women cyclists is very low: just 2 per cent. Also, a study showed that women tended to accompany their husbands, i.e. did not cycle alone (Anand and Tiwari 2006).

Studies undertaken in varying environments show that neither women nor girls have access to private, individual modes of transport as these are mainly used by the men or boys in the family. (Overton och Zambeze 1999.) Walking is still the most common way of getting to work. Of the population of Sanjay Camp (a district of Delhi), 33 per cent walk to work and require an average of one hour to do so. Women walk for shorter distances than men, whose way to work is usually 12 km in each direction (Anand and Tiwari 2006). Researchers found that women in Delhi encountered the same difficulties as women in other parts of the world, i.e. a) long travel periods mean a shortage of time in everyday life, and b) if travel takes longer than an hour, women are less likely to be able to reach a medical or education centre or to take a job.

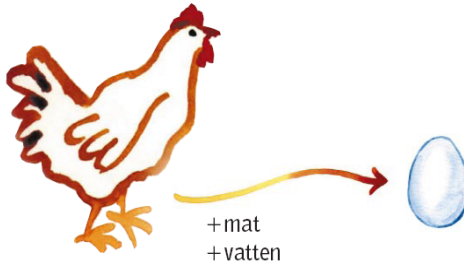
- ❖ Among other donors, Swedish Sida has noted that transport conditions for women and men differ very considerably, a situation that is reflected in Sida's new strategy for urban planning.

### *Energy-intensive transportation of goods*

An instructive example of how the transportation of goods has increased dramatically in recent decades is to be found in Stockholm. There, the local environment authority worked actively in 2006 to both identify the resource use and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of individual households and to show people what types of consumption resulted in what types of emissions and thereby contributed to cli-

mate change. Martin Saar, an expert working for the city authority, shows for instance how 50 years ago a chicken used to be eaten close to its place of production. Today, the 'processing' chain involves some ten different energy and work stages involving transportation, freezing, storing, packaging, further transportation etc, the result of which is a dramatic rise in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions – without any significant change in the product we eat!

## Från höna till ägg 1 - Smart !



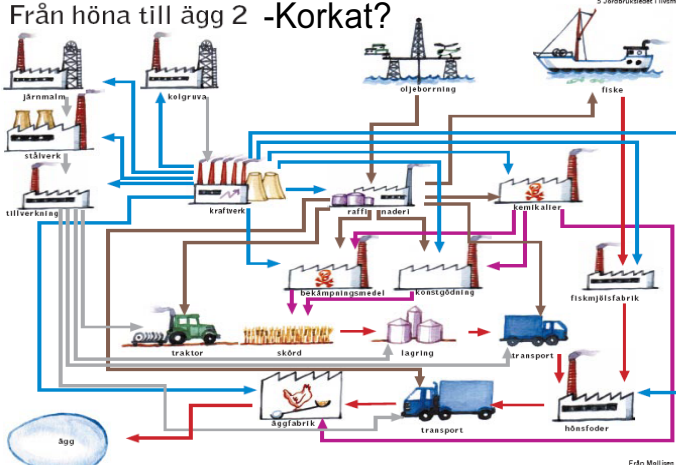
Translation:

From hen to egg – Smart!

+ food

+ water

## Från höna till ägg 2 -Korkat?



From hen to egg – Daft?

**Stages involved:** Iron ore, Steelworks, Manufacture, Coal mine, Power station, Oil drilling, Fishing, Refinery, Chemicals, Pesticides, Fertiliser, Fishmeal factory.

## 9 Sustainable welfare models from a gender equality perspective

What welfare means, and what we should be prioritising in the short and long-term to ensure that people's basic needs and security are met, has long been a topic of discussion among governments and various environment and women's movements. Climate change has led to more innovative thinking in this respect.

No studies show any direct link between material standard and human wellbeing. To the contrary, evidence from the survey "Happy planet" in 2007 indicates that the happiest people are the inhabitants of Vanuatu, whereas the Americans and Swedes end up far less happy. Studies in the US that monitored a sizeable group of people over several decades (1961-1986) show that wellbeing remained unchanged or even declined over the period, despite a dramatic rise in material levels.

People's perceptions of welfare and a decent life are rooted both in economic conditions, power and influence, but also in attitudes and the moral and ethical positions that people take, in their relationships with other people, with nature and with the environment etc. As is evident from attitude surveys such as that carried out by the Church of Sweden in 2006, many people feel that human welfare is determined not by goods or services but by a sense of belonging, proximity to other people, natural and cultural experiences, and the spiritual dimension of human existence. The value of non-material aspects of welfare is also confirmed by international studies of which countries' populations are most satisfied with their lives, which show no clear connection between GDP/capita and wellbeing.

In Sweden, local and regional authorities have been working with 'welfare balance-sheets' that include factors such as health when considering what welfare means.

In a couple of areas, work on gender equality and on sustainable development has proceeded hand in hand:

### *a) Agenda 21*

*Focus on women's rights and participation.*

Agenda 21, adopted back in 1992, emphasises the importance of sustainable forms of welfare through initiatives focusing on sustainable consumption and production. It also notes that gender equality and the strengthening of women's rights and participation in decision-making are key areas in pursuit of sustainable development (Chapter 4.11. SCP, Chapter 24).

### *b) Environmental justice*

The international discourse and research on environmental justice does not focus explicitly on gender-specific differences but examines them and notes who generates environmental problems – and who the victims are. Studies from the UK, US and elsewhere have shown how less well-off social groups tend to be exposed to environmental hazards such as toxic waste and air pollution to a far greater extent than others, while they themselves generate the least amount of air pollution.

In the US and the UK, environmental justice has become a central concept in both the academic and the political debate (Agyeman & Evans, 2004; Bullard, 2000). British housing and sustainability policy identifies environmental equity as a key factor in the fight against social exclusion and in efforts to enhance the quality of life in housing areas. Since the mid-1990s, American authorities have been obliged to perform environmental justice analyses of all public construction projects and investments. Thus, environmental justice policy is about striving for good, fair living conditions at the local level while at the same time taking responsibility for the environmental impact this may have on other regions and/or countries (Bradley, 2004).

### *c) Various gender equality agendas*

An important contribution to the sustainability effort is being made on the gender equality side, not least in the form of the action plan adopted at the 1995 UN World Conference in Beijing. This plan provides a broad, rights-based agenda in which economic welfare is one of a number of welfare dimensions, alongside basic



issues that are also raised in Agenda 21: sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), action against male violence towards women, and women's right to land and other resources etc. The gender equality agenda embraces all three dimensions of sustainability: ecological, economic and social.

A number of women's organisations and groups have also addressed gender equality in relation to sustainable development, energy and environment etc. In preparing for CSD 15, the 'Energia' group, like WEDO, emphasised the importance of tackling everything from overarching issues involving male bias – by boosting women's participation in decision-making forums, women's right to own and inherit land, education, capacity-building and the like – to developing technologies etc that protect women from accidents and ill-health in the home while cooking on dysfunctional stoves.

### *Conclusions concerning sustainable welfare models*

Today, in the light of climate change, the question of how we can create sustainable welfare is being fiercely debated – but usually without any reference to gender. Green technology and innovations are prime topics in this respect. In addition to technology – which men in particular stress as a way of solving problems – it now seems imperative to also look at sustainable lifestyles and sustainable consumption. This appears unavoidable, given the rebound effect – i.e. the fact that despite greater energy efficiency per unit produced our increased consumption means that the overall level of consumption, and thus of emissions, is RISING instead of falling. This is why we need both technology AND a more sustainable definition and interpretation of the welfare concept in terms of time, particularly given the growing threat of climate change. In accordance with the 1992 Rio Declaration, we also need to examine who the polluters are, inter alia from a gender perspective, and we need to discuss what is defined in the Rio Declaration as a 'common but diversified responsibility' for dealing with the problems already here.

Given Sweden's long experience in the gender equality field, we should acknowledge gender-equal conditions between women and men as an essential and powerful tool in the quest for sustainable development.
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A gender perspective implies such things as investing in sustainable economic growth and sustainable welfare that is social as well as economic in character, in the form of cheaper/more accessible/lower-taxed services (for low-educated women and for immigrants, for instance) that help create time – for children, the elderly and oneself – both among those who can afford to buy private services and among others who also need services of this kind. Requirements include:

- better elderly care and better, more appropriate housing for the elderly,
- more staff-intensive care,
- help with maintenance and repairs, cleaning, advice, financial and legal assistance, education and training, transportation, safety and security, purchases/deliveries, health, hygiene etc,
- the development of services that enhance people's welfare and create new, sustainable jobs, focusing on basic needs, the care of children and the aged, and time of one's own for recovery.

## 10 Conclusions and proposals

The study discusses sustainability, lifestyles, welfare and development on the basis of people's reproductive and social roles – in other words, on the basis of factors that determine how women and men manage their daily lives. This in turn sets its stamp on human mobility and transportation, which then affect energy consumption, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and the impact on air and climate.

The study shows how economic growth has been a valuable means of creating material welfare and employment but has now come to be viewed as an end in itself. The other side of the welfare coin has turned out to be stress, ill-health (mainly among working mothers) and a growing threat both to the environment and to the climate (Swedish National Institute of Public Health).

The study discusses how the climate threat has given rise to an intensified debate on the need for flexibility and innovation in the search for alternative forms of welfare – and how an explicit gender equality perspective could function as an important tool in this endeavour.

The study also looks at how women live less sustainable lives in terms of their own health and welfare, due to a lack of rights, to stress and to time poverty. While women are producers/providers of care services, men by consuming such services are in a position to live more sustainable as individuals – although men as a group take more risks and are more inclined to use violence, not only to their own detriment and the detriment of others but also to the detriment of the environment and the climate.

### *A package of measures*

*Applying a gender equality perspective, a welfare model may be developed that is based more on sustainable **service production** than on the energy- and resource-devouring production of goods and transport. This means a type of welfare that involves less stress and lack of time, and that can create new jobs in the service sector – e.g. for women entrepreneurs – and which also, by developing public services, can create jobs for immigrants, young people and men that*

enhance their sense of participation and communal spirit – by giving them time to take part in democratic processes.

An approach emphasising gender equality creates opportunities for greater sustainability in consumption and production, strengthens our ability to deal with the climate threat and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, and promotes a gender balance in decision-making.

In seeking to respond adequately to the climate threat, to ensure gender equality (both as a means and as an end), and to alleviate poverty, the basic needs of poor women – and men – must be met, and the emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> and other greenhouse gases caused by rich men – and women – must be restricted. In pursuit of these twin goals, the following measures will be required, proceeding more decisively than at present from the needs of women and also based on women as the norm:



### **Level 1: Most basic requirement: a new approach and new pointers**

The most basic requirement identified in the study is the need for innovative, out-of-the-box thinking that sees gender equality both as an objective in itself and as a means of achieving sustainable welfare. As stated by the Brundtland Commission, the overall aim must be to create scope for *sustainable* development both today and for future generations. This means we need to:

- *commit to both technology and sustainable consumption*, i.e. to both technological solutions, development and risk-taking – and to in-

novative thinking on lifestyles, consumption patterns and responsibility for the environment and future generations.

- *view everyone, including the rich, as part of the problem, though for different reasons*: define both the rich and the poor as part of the problem – poor people because they have **too few** resources, and rich people because they (we) have access to **too many** resources (since an imperfect market such as the one currently in place fails to take into account the costs of emissions, ill-health or climate change, instead allowing rich people to use up the earth's finite resources – at the expense both of the poor living today and of future generations).

- *strengthen the involvement and participation of all*: address and secure, by such means as gender budgeting, the provision of resources to women from a gender-role and rights perspective in all processes relating to ecological sustainability, climate issues, investments, and employment etc.

- *mainstream gender equality into national work, for instance in the government mandate to the Swedish Commission for Sustainable Development* and in policy instruments such as appropriation directions to relevant agencies. Compiling sex-disaggregated statistics is not enough in itself – specify how they should be used.

- *base actions on an overall power and gender equality objective* in the UN's environment and sustainable development work, and stop viewing gender equality primarily as a matter of giving aid to poor women in the South.

- *emphasise gender equality in the EU's work on sustainable development*, including the measures taken in 2007 in respect of the transport sector and in action plans for sustainable consumption and production. Incorporate these objectives into relevant instructions.

- *emphasise gender equality as a prerequisite for sustainable development in the Nordic Council's sustainability work*, in the light of the Nordic countries' shared perception of gender equality.

- *incorporate a consistent gender equality objective and perspective into work on sustainable consumption and production*

- *appoint a special task force as part of the Marrakech process on gender equality issues*, based on the holistic, integrated approach outlined in this study.
- *address the fact that men receive a disproportionately large share of public resources*, e.g. by such means as implementing and elaborating gender budgeting and gender auditing in areas like infrastructural investment and community planning. Address issues related to men's risk-taking, aggressiveness and violence, and the implications such behaviour has for sustainability and resource use.
- *question indicators that fail to take account of gender-specific differences – and put together indicators, including indexes, that are based on gender analysis*, inter alia by assigning such a task to Statistics Sweden. Show who are the polluters by means of sex-disaggregated statistics and analyses.
- *develop a gender-equal, sustainable economy in light of the Stern Review and similar reports*, and address gender-specific differences concerning who the polluters are. Also include external costs to the environment and to people in the form of 'air pollution, ill-health and climate change.
- *combat poverty not just through development assistance but also by promoting the rich commit to adjusting their lifestyles and consumption* in order to create welfare for broad groups, now and in the future.
- *specify sustainable consumption and production as a way of 'delivering' the UN's 8th Millennium Development Goal*, concerning how the rich world can help reduce poverty not primarily through development assistance but by making its lifestyles more sustainable in order to reduce the threat of poverty, not least for future generations.
- *take action to prevent men from using resources 'in the name of all'* but in reality for themselves by means of high-level policy statements and guidelines for funding distribution, and also in gender impact analyses.

## **Level 2: Sustainable and gender-equal transport**

Here, we need to:

- *boost women's participation in decision-making* on community planning, traffic systems and transportation.
- *specify gender equality as an objective and as a method in general analyses* at both national and international level,
- *work actively to ensure that a disproportionately large share of public resources does not continue to benefit a small group of comparatively rich men* – for instance in terms of influence, transportation etc – by such means as gender budgeting and auditing.
- *invest more resources to improve women's mobility*, including public transport (trains, buses, and possibly boats), which cause less environmental damage and which create real options, freedom and time for non-car drivers as well.
- *consider introducing individual emissions rights* as a way of improving gender equality and sustainability in the transport sector (for both road and air travel).

## **Level 3: Strengthen the social dimension of sustainability**

Here, we need to:

- *design sustainable, gender-equal welfare models focusing less on goods and more on services* that reduce the ill-health, stress and time poverty of people (mostly women).
- *pay greater attention to the social dimension of sustainability, which is of particular importance to women and children who often are denied access to resources and decision-making.* Consider and combat the social costs of 'economic restructuring' that leads to stress-related ill-health.

- *act along a broad front to combat women's exclusion and poverty, both by combating the discrimination of women in relation to land rights and the right to one's own body etc, and in terms of the equal distribution of resources and participation in decision-making.*

- *make clear how women live more sustainably to the benefit of others but often at the cost of ill-health to themselves – and take action to remedy the situation.*

- *make use of both market forces – and of public support to groups with less resources, whose interests and needs are not being met in the market.*

- *create jobs and make the everyday lives of women and men easier by such means as tax relief for enterprises with labour-intensive operations.*

- *upgrade respect for reproductive work, via for instance attractive wages in the female-dominated public sector, especially in care services.*

- *strengthen girls' self-confidence and right to respect by means of clear-cut policies, funding and staffing resources, inter alia in schools.*

- *question male roles/forms of masculinity that lead to unsustainable ecological and social development, and show zero tolerance for violence as a way of solving problems. Work actively in schools and elsewhere to reduce aggressive behaviour among young males.*

- *use gender impact analyses etc – but do not allow guidelines and social engineering to replace the need for insight and the assumption of clear managerial responsibility.*

❖ *spread the study around – to relevant agencies and the Government Offices, to other national bodies, to schools etc. as discussion material, and within the EU, the OECD, the UN and the development banks.*



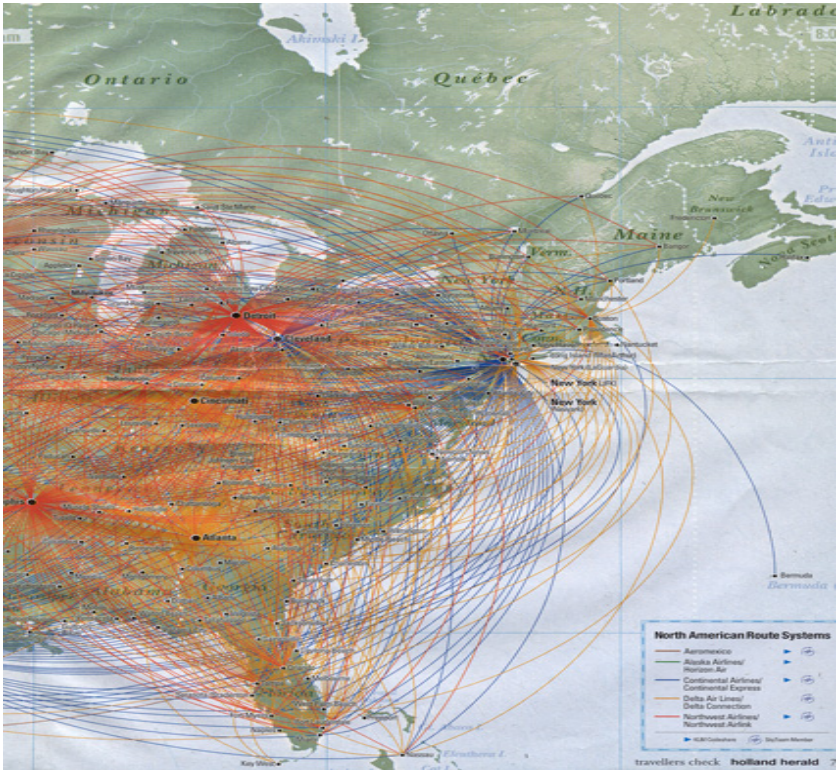
# Annex 1. Transport, energy and CO2 emissions

**Source: World Business Council for Sustainable Development**

	US+Canada	EU	China	Japan
Energy consumption	106 EJ	71	52	21
CO2 emissions	1.8 GtC	1.1	1.2	0.3
Energy for transport	25 EJ	2.3	3.6	

North America produces 20 tons of carbon dioxide per person/year, Europe approximately eight tons and Africa one ton.

# Annex 2. Illustration of daily air travel in North America



## Annex 3. Gender geography

**Source: Kabeer, 'Gender mainstreaming, poverty eradication and the Millenium Development Goals'**

Researcher Naila Kabeer describes a 'geography of gender' and shows how socially constructed power structures and roles establish different frameworks for women's situations in life – and thus for their lifestyle and consumption choices. Kabeer shows how patriarchal structures determine what opportunities women have in terms of wage labour and income, and describes certain extreme forms of patriarchy, in the family, in the clan and in economic structures. There, property is transferred from man to man, the bride moves in with the groom's family, brides are bought, men watch over what they describe as family honour, women are kept hidden and sons are given precedence.

In parts of the Middle East and Western Asia, for instance, very few poor women have paid jobs, and those that do are employed primarily in the agricultural sector. In many parts of India, however, the impoverishment of poor people has led to greater acceptance among clans and families of paid jobs for women as a way of improving family livelihoods. The most common form of employment for these women is in domestic service, in the service sector in general, and in manufacturing. Pay is low and working conditions often poor, but such jobs nevertheless improve women's situations in life and given them a stronger position in the household or the group; this in turn has made it easier for them to oppose domestic violence and have a say in what the family consumes. In South-East Asia, many women are in a freer position, can sometimes inherit property, and decide along with the men how household resources are to be distributed. In sub-Saharan Africa, conditions vary between and within regions. In many areas, however, women are considered subordinate to their husbands and to the men in the clan, and are sometimes viewed as 'minors' or as the property of men. In several regions, the family is not an economic unit – instead, the women's and the men's finances are kept separate. Land, which is often the most important resource, is owned neither by women nor men but is controlled by the clan, which is usually ruled by the menfolk.

In Latin America, conditions for poor women vary considerably, primarily depending on ethnicity. The poorest of all are usually Indian women working in domestic positions; they are poorly paid, have long workdays and risk being treated in a humiliating manner. By international standards, Latin America has a large proportion of poor women in paid employment – albeit at a low wage – working mainly in the manufacturing and service sectors.

In the Caribbean, many women and children live in households headed by females, and the position of women in the region is stronger than in many other parts of the world. In general, they enjoy reproductive rights and access to health care, e.g. in connection with pregnancy, are relatively well educated, and, in contrast to many other regions, are not socially ostracized if they leave their men, for instance after suffering domestic violence.

In Eastern Europe and Central Asia, the proportion of poor women and men has increased considerably, and there was a sharp decline in the situation of the poorest in the 1990s, particularly among the elderly, who are no longer able to collect the pensions due to them.

## Annex 4: Swedish Government Bill 2005/06:155 Power to shape society and your own life: Towards new gender equality policy objectives (Makt att forma samhället och sitt eget liv – nya mål i jämställdhetspolitiken).

The overall goal of gender equality policy in Sweden is to ensure that women and men have the same power to shape society and their own lives.

### *Main points of the Bill*

The Bill proposes a number of new gender equality policy objectives. The overall goal of Swedish gender equality policy is to ensure that women and men have the same power to shape society and their own lives. Proposed sub-goals:

- An equal distribution of power and influence. Women and men shall have the same rights and opportunities to be active citizens and to shape the conditions for decision-making.
- Economic equality between women and men. Women and men shall have the same opportunities and conditions with regard to education and paid work that provide lifelong economic independence.
- An equal distribution of unpaid care and household work. Women and men shall take the same responsibility for household work and have the same opportunities to give and receive care on equal terms.
- Men's violence against women must stop. Women and men, girls and boys, shall have equal rights and opportunities in terms of physical integrity.

Power is a key concept in gender equality policy and this should therefore be clearly expressed in the overall policy objective. The objective reflects the Government's opinion as to what distinguishes a gender-equal society – one in which women and men have the same power to shape public life at the collective level and

to shape their own lives at the individual level. Here, 'power' should be taken to mean that women and men have the same right, ability and opportunity to shape society and their own lives. Women and men having the same power signifies not only that women and men are to have equal amounts of power but also that they are to have power resources of the same kind and in the same areas, in both public and private life.

# Annex 5. A Gender Perspective on Public Health Policy

**Source: National Board of Health and Welfare. Folkhälsorapport 2005. Stockholm**

Gender research in the public health field is pursued in collaboration with other disciplines and focuses on theory and method development for the purpose of improving gender-related health among subordinate groups. Gender research problemises such questions as why women live longer than men but are more prone to self-declared ill-health, particularly with regard to musculoskeletal diseases, reduced work capacity due to illness, and mental disorders such as anxiety, trepidation and anguish. Gender research, especially the branch specialising in masculinity studies, also analyses why men have a higher mortality rate than women due to risk-taking and unhealthy behaviour etc.

Sweden's new public health policy requires a gender perspective in order to raise awareness of issues such as power and gender, including male violence against women, and of the impact labour market conditions for women and men respectively have on women's health. A gender perspective is also needed to challenge the supposedly gender-neutral norms prevailing in current policy and show how this policy may even help create preconceptions about male and female.

## Annex 6: The involvement of civil society

In civil society in Sweden, there is both widespread awareness of and interest in the lack of gender equality and its causes:

In the environment field, for instance, the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation states on its website that the polluter must pay, i.e. that “whoever risks damaging the environment must pay any costs to society that arise from such action” ([www.snf.se](http://www.snf.se)).



## Annex 7. The Stockholm Action Programme against Greenhouse Gases: Smarter consumption, less global warming and better finances.

This is the City of Stockholm's action programme for dealing with greenhouse gases. With the help of Statistics Sweden, 60 households have been chosen to represent a 'mini-Stockholm'. Study is then made of their willingness to change their consumption and lifestyles to conserve energy and resources and thus reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In the process, it is hoped that people will see an improvement in both their financial positions and their quality of life. The project looks at each household's total energy use in all consumption of goods and services. At present, households account for more than half of all CO<sub>2</sub> emissions affecting our climate. Direct energy emissions – from household electricity and transport and heating fuels – are something we know about and compile statistics on. Few, however, reflect on our indirect use of energy. This is almost totally neglected, but is a hidden component of all products and services, food, clothing and housing etc, that we buy and use. When we buy an article that has been produced in another part of the world, we cannot simply ignore either the energy used for the purpose or the emissions that occurred prior to the purchase. It makes no difference where the carbon dioxide emissions take place – environmental degradation affects us all in the form of global climate change. This means that when making a purchase we take a conscious or unconscious initial decision on how much energy we use and how much carbon dioxide we release into the atmosphere as a result.

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desh: Strategies for Intervention. [http://www.cpdbangladesh.org/dp\\_040303.PDF](http://www.cpdbangladesh.org/dp_040303.PDF)

### *Internet*

- [www.sweden.gov.se](http://www.sweden.gov.se)  
[www.energimyndigheten.se](http://www.energimyndigheten.se) (Swedish Energy Agency)  
[www.energia.org](http://www.energia.org)  
[www.forbes.com](http://www.forbes.com)  
[www.myfootprint.org](http://www.myfootprint.org)  
[www.snf.se](http://www.snf.se) (Swedish Society for Nature Conservation)  
[www.sdnpsbd.org/sdi/international\\_days/women\\_day/2004/women\\_workers.htm](http://www.sdnpsbd.org/sdi/international_days/women_day/2004/women_workers.htm)  
[www.sou.gov.se/mvb](http://www.sou.gov.se/mvb)  
[www.un.org](http://www.un.org)  
[www.wbcds.org](http://www.wbcds.org)  
[www.wedo.org](http://www.wedo.org)  
[www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org)

The purpose of the study is to bring out often-neglected facts concerning dissimilarities in the lifestyles and consumption patterns of women and men, and thus in their environmental impact, by describing how men, primarily through their greater mobility and more extensive travel, account for more carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions than women, in both rich and poor countries. The study points to how a changed behavior among men – notably rich men who are decision-makers – can be crucial in addressing climate change and in enhancing the opportunities of all human beings to enjoy sustainable development.

This report can be ordered from the Environment Advisory Council.

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