

## REPORT ON THE COP 21 SIDE EVENT:

### REDUCING GHG EMISSIONS THROUGH SUSTAINABLE PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

Held on 5 December 2015 at the Cities and Regions Pavilion

The side event opened with the welcome remarks delivered by Mr. Stefanos Fotiou, Head of the Cities and Lifestyles Unit at United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Mr. Yong-Jin Kim, Executive Director of Korea Environmental Industry & Technology Institute (KEITI) and Mr. Mark Hidson, Global Director at ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability's Sustainable Procurement Centre.

#### **Reading of the Seoul Declaration on the role of sustainable procurement in the fight against climate change**



Farid Yaker, UNEP

In the first part of the session, Mr. Farid Yaker, Programme Officer at UNEP, read a Declaration drafted by the participants at the meeting held in Seoul on 19-20 November 2015 on low-carbon procurement. [The final version of the Declaration](#) was endorsed by several partners of the [10YFP SPP programme](#) and Seoul meeting participants. The Seoul participants highlighted that, through sustainable procurement, governments as well as private purchasers can significantly reduce their carbon footprint. Their vast combined economic power can also have an important positive effect on the market expansion of climate-friendly products.

The Declaration therefore calls for the consideration of the climate impacts of goods and services in the procurement process, notably through the demand for low carbon solutions and the estimation of carbon costs in the evaluation of tenders. The Declaration also emphasises the need for an active engagement of suppliers and other supply chain actors to shift towards carbon friendly products, solutions and production processes. It also advocates for an increased collaboration between national, regional, state, and local governments, and the private sector, to support and help markets for low carbon goods and services grow.

#### **Monitoring and measuring the positive impacts of SPP on GHG emissions**

Mr. Jason Pearson, President and CEO of the Sustainable Purchasing Leadership Council (SPLC) presented the results of the work conducted by the working group 2B of the 10YFP SPP programme on *"Monitoring and measuring the impacts of SPP on GHG emissions"*. The core idea at the basis of the working group 2B is that SPP will increase if there is a reliable way of measuring and communicating its benefits. More specifically, working group 2B focuses on measuring the environmental, economic and social impacts of SPP. Mr. Pearson pointed out that the benefits of SPP should not be understood as exclusively pertaining to the environmental domain. In fact, when reducing its energy consumption, an organisation not only addresses key long-term environmental problems such as carbon emissions and air pollution, but it can also simultaneously reduce its operational costs and improve its reputation.



Jason Pearson, SPLC

Mr. Pearson concluded his presentation by mentioning some product- or issue-specific GHG calculators that may be used by public procurers to calculate some of the benefits of SPP.

**How can SPP contribute to reducing GHG emission: case studies from Europe, Asia and North America.**

Mr. Simon Clement, Sustainable Economy and Procurement Coordinator at ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, presented the European GPP 2020 project. Four CO2 procurement impact calculators were developed for four categories of products: Vehicles, ICT, street-lighting, Energy performance contracting.

Ms. Hyunju Lee, Associate Researcher at KEITI, presented the positive impact on GHG emission reduction of Korean GPP policies. In order to estimate the scale of the GHG emissions reduction of GPP, a number of environmental performance criteria were defined, and relevant units of measurement of environmental loads were identified.

Lastly, Mr. Jason Pearson introduced the audience to the Sustainable Purchasing Leadership Council’s case study library available on the SPLC’s website. Special attention was given to the three cases of the U.S. General Services Administration, King County in Washington, and the City of Portland in Oregon. Mr. Pearson also briefly presented the 2016 Market Transformation Campaign, an initiative that encourages purchasers to collectively commit to a set of key actions that will accelerate market transformation in areas of the economy that are central to a transition to a sustainable future.

**Questions & Answers session**

In the final part of session, the audience was invited to ask questions.

This was the occasion for the representatives from ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability, SPLC, KEITI and UNEP to reiterate the importance of defining clear objectives for sustainable public procurement. Mr. Clement underscored the need to provide procurement practitioners with the right tools to take the lead and act in an otherwise very risk-adverse domain. Mr. Pearson highlighted the importance of accentuating the strategic role that procurement can play within an organization. Mr. Yaker added that SPP must be made more appealing, by convincing practitioners that its benefits can be counted not only in terms of environmental or social impacts, but also financially, through a method of calculation that factors in the life-cycle costs of a product.



*A member of the audience asking a question.*

Another question from the audience provided the chance to explore the links between SPP and the economic crisis: is SPP still a viable solution in times of economic hardship? Ms. Hyunju Lee’s reply was that SPP can not only be viable, but also extremely useful in this context, as it can be used as a way to encourage procurers to purchase not only more green, but also in smaller quantities, in accordance with optimal efficiency principles. Mr. Clement agreed and added that the recent economic crisis incentivised governments to rationalise and professionalise their procurement systems and practices.



The **closing remarks** were delivered by Mr. Stefanos Fotiou.

*Stefanos Fotiou, UNEP*