



With breaking stories and
newswire products from

UN NEWS CENTRE



New UN report calls on Asia-Pacific nations to transition to green economy



Asia-Pacific's share of world domestic material consumption grew from under 25 percent in 1975 to over 53 per cent by 2005

19 September 2011 –

A new United Nations report calls on countries in Asia and the Pacific to embark on a 'green' industrial revolution that takes advantage of improvements in resource efficiency so that they can prosper in the 21st century.

The region currently accounts for more than half of the world's total resource use, according to the UN Environment Programme ([UNEP](#)), which says this is due largely to the fact that it has over half the world's population and nearly 30 per cent of its gross domestic product (GDP).

The report [launched today](#) in Beijing by UNEP and its partners estimates that per capita resource consumption in the region, including of construction materials and fuels, needs to be around 80 per cent less than today if sustainable development is to be achieved.

The region's growth has come at a high cost, according "Resource Efficiency-Economics and Outlook for Asia and the Pacific," including pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, biodiversity loss, deteriorating ecosystems and rapid resource depletion.

Total materials consumed in 2005 alone – including biomass, fossil fuels, metals and industrial and construction materials – amounted to around 32 billion tonnes, says the report, which adds that the figure could rise to 80 billion tonnes by 2050 if a different course of action is not taken.

UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner noted that dramatic economic growth has lifted more than half a billion people out of poverty in Asia and the Pacific, but with "profound" social and environmental consequences.

"This new report spotlights the challenges but also the opportunities for a transition to a low carbon, far more resource efficient green economy not as an alternative to sustainable development but as a means of implementing it," said Mr. Steiner.

The report calls for a region-wide effort on improved efficiency backed up by smart public policy measures, including fiscal policies such as ecological taxes and budget reforms.

"What is required is a new industrial revolution that provides food, housing, mobility, energy and water with only about 20 per cent of the per-capita resource use and emissions found in current systems," it states.

News Tracker: past stories on this issue

[UN-backed forum examines low-carbon industrial future for Asia](#)