



Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

If all countries in the world would adopt the lifestyle and the consumption patterns of the western world, an ecological disaster would be inevitable. Already now we use more resources than our planet can renew. "Overshoot day" the date of the year when we have used what we are entitled to, fell 2015 on the 13th of August. For the rest of the year we lived off the substance at the expense of the future generations. "Green technology" alone will not solve this problem. To survive in the long run we have to change radically our wasteful ways of producing and consuming what we need for life and develop sustainable consumption and production methods. This can only succeed if we live out of a spirituality of simplicity and frugality to which Pope Francis invites us in his encyclical 'Laudato Si'.

What do the SDG call for?

Developing countries have still to assure the basic needs of their people. That is why rich countries are the first to change their wasteful lifestyles by:

- achieving sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources
- halving per capita food waste and reducing food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses
- substantially reducing waste generation through recycling and reuse
- ensuring that people get the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature
- phasing out harmful subsidies to reflect their environmental impacts ...



What can we do?

Through their vow of poverty religious are called to a simple lifestyle. Many religious communities have deeply reflected about their procurement practises, consumer habits and ethical investment of their funds. The Africa-Europe Faith and Justice Network (AEFJN) has often reminded members of the necessity of a fundamental transformation of our economic and financial system and encouraged socially responsible shopping.

As the market and its actors are constantly changing it is important to stay informed through websites like www.ethicalconsumer.org. We can support regional producers by buying from "Farmers Markets".

Words to challenge us

- Purchasing is always a moral - and not simply economic - act... Today, in a word, the issue of environmental degradation challenges us to examine our lifestyle. (Laudato Si' 206)
- Education in environmental responsibility can encourage ways of acting which directly and significantly affect the world around us, such as avoiding the use of plastic and paper, reducing water consumption, separating refuse, cooking only what can reasonably be consumed, showing care for other living beings, using public transport or car-pooling, planting trees, turning off unnecessary lights, or any number of other practices. All of these reflect a generous and worthy creativity which brings out the best in human beings. (LS 211)
- It is my hope that our seminaries and houses of formation will provide an education in responsible simplicity of life, in grateful contemplation of God's world, and in concern for the needs of the poor and the protection of the environment... Such sobriety, when lived freely and consciously, is liberating. It is not a lesser life or one lived with less intensity. On the contrary, it is a way of living life to the full. (LS 214,223)
- When people become self-centred and self-enclosed, their greed increases. The emptier a person's heart is, the more he or she needs things to buy, own and consume... Obsession with a consumerist lifestyle, above all when few people are capable of maintaining it, can only lead to violence and mutual destruction. (LS 204)
- We are able to take an honest look at ourselves, to acknowledge our deep dissatisfaction, and to embark on new paths to authentic freedom. (LS 205)