

**Proposal for CERES Summer School 2017 -
Engaging with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Gaps, Opportunities and Challenges**

Working Title: Achieving Transformative Change? The Incorporation of Sustainable Consumption and Production in the Sustainable Development Goals

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Abstract

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have been hailed for presenting a transformative global agenda for development. Unlike the Millennium Development Goals, the passage of the SDGs was preceded by extensive negotiations on the nature and scope of the final goals and targets. These discussions were facilitated through an inter-governmental Open Working Group of the UN General Assembly and involved the active participation of non-governmental actors, including civil society and the private sector.

Relying primarily on documents from the Open Working Group sessions, we examine the incorporation of the concept of Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) into the SDGs. We focus on the arguments presented by different actors – countries, UN agencies, civil society and private sector organisations – during discussions on possible goals and targets related to SCP, and their framings of this concept. Our findings suggest that though SCP has been included as a standalone Goal 12 in the SDGs, the prominence accorded to this objective in earlier UN Conferences on Sustainable Development has been diluted by the overarching emphasis on poverty eradication in the goals, and by a perception that SCP is primarily the responsibility of developed countries. Building from this analysis of the politics of the SDG formulation process, we provide some preliminary thoughts on how far Goal 12 to ‘Ensure Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns’ and its corresponding targets reflect the stated transformative character of the SDGs and the central importance of sustainable patterns of consumption and production for achieving sustainable development.