

Country: Switzerland

Committee: United Nations Environmental Assembly (UNEA)

Agenda: Ensuring sustainable consumption and production

Switzerland is a country in middle Europe, it is a gorgeous place with natural beauty. It has a population of a little bit more than 8.4 million people, to find out if a country is sustainable or unsustainable, we must focus on some factors, the quality of life, the per capita income and expenditure, the waste generation, and the power consumption.

Many of the people in Switzerland are aged, and the median age of this place is 42 years. There are dense webs of towns (large, medium and small) in urban areas of the country, about 74% of Swiss people live in urban areas. Many cities like Zurich have great opportunities and quality life, this means that many people earn well and are irresponsible towards consumption. Switzerland's Per capita income is around \$87,000 per year. Their yearly household expenditure per capita is \$50,533, to put things in perspective, India's yearly household expenditure per capita is around \$1,100.

The per capita waste generation is 700kg per year, if we compare this to the Indian per capita of waste generation, which is 164kg per year, the waste generation is too much, though 53% is recycled, and the energy consumption per capita is around 6817 kWh, if we again compare this to India's energy consumption per capita, which is 935 kWh only, this shows that people in Switzerland consume a lot more power.

Switzerland has been working on making itself a more sustainable country, Switzerland may be a high consumer country but most Swiss consumers prefer physical shopping for local product over products from big companies, if the prices and quality are comparable, technology also helps here, since they can always check the ratings, reviews and availability of the product and can pay with online wallets or digital payments. Buying physically has sustainability advantages over online shopping since while shopping online a lot of people do impulsive buying, and when a product is shipped or returned, the packaging material is wasted.

According to a survey, 9/10 Swiss people re-evaluating the consumption patterns to consume less for many various reasons. Many collaborative platforms like Uber and Airbnb were also used to share cars and stays, which made these platforms a way to increase sustainability. There is a recent trend of buying organic products, which is leading to a growing sector of Organic farming. In last 20 years the country has doubled its recycling rate, they now recycle 50% of their waste and they have a no landfill policy (meaning that all waste is to be recycled, composted, or incinerated with energy recovery).

This document mostly focus on consumption since consumers are the kings, and what the consumer wants, the markets will provide. Businesses should change designs and material of products in a way to make them more sustainable. Businesses should encourage and give discounts to customer for choosing sustainable options (Ex: Giving discount to customers for bringing their own bag or mug to shop or get coffee.). Producers should be responsible of the product's disposal or recycling after it's end of life. Switzerland should further increase its recycling rate rather than incinerating the waste. They should also invest in research and development to create a replacement for plastic out of biodegradable materials.

Switzerland is also a country with high meat consumption, it has been scientifically proven that vegetarian food is more sustainable than meat consumption, so, Switzerland should increase their vegetarian diet and reduce their meat consumption. Since Switzerland has a large livestock, they should try to set up biogas plants, which will be a brilliant way to manage the manure of cows and have another renewable source of energy.

Reference Websites

- [1] <https://santandertrade.com/en/portal/analyse-markets/switzerland/reaching-the-consumers>
- [2] <https://www.ceicdata.com/en/indicator/switzerland/annual-household-expenditure-per-capita>
- [3] <https://www.indexmundi.com/facts/india/household-final-consumption-expenditure-per-capita>
- [4] <https://www.worlddata.info/europe/switzerland/energy-consumption.php>
- [5] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Recycling_rates_by_country
- [6] https://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/climate-change_switzerland-should-cut-down-on-meat-for-the-planet-s-sake/45151414
- [7] <https://www.foodpackagingforum.org/news/swiss-industry-discusses-packaging-of-the-future>
- [8] <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-consumption-production>