

“Should sustainable consumption and production be a policy priority for developing countries, and if so, what areas should they focus on?”

In short, the answer is no.

Based on the data of the Sustainable Society Index<sup>1</sup>, SSI-2008, the levels of Quality of Life (Q) and Environmental Sustainability (S) of 151 countries<sup>2</sup> have been calculated.

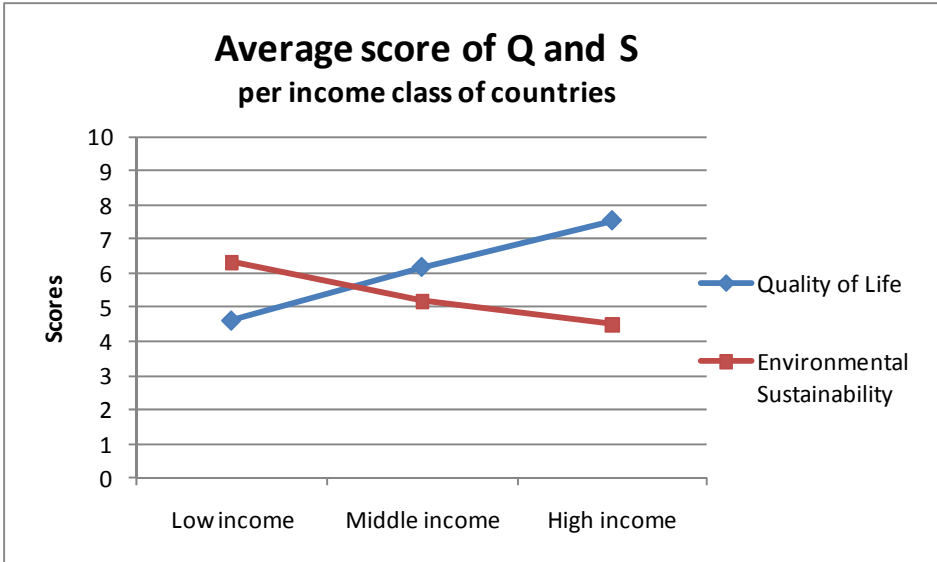


Figure 1- Quality of Life and Environmental Sustainability per income class of countries

The level of Environmental Sustainability is lowest for High Income countries. This raises the question how one can ask from developing countries to improve their level of Sustainability. One should primarily urge High Income countries first of all to improve their performance with respect to Sustainability.

Zooming in on the indicators which are comprised in Environmental Sustainability (Figure 2), it appears that

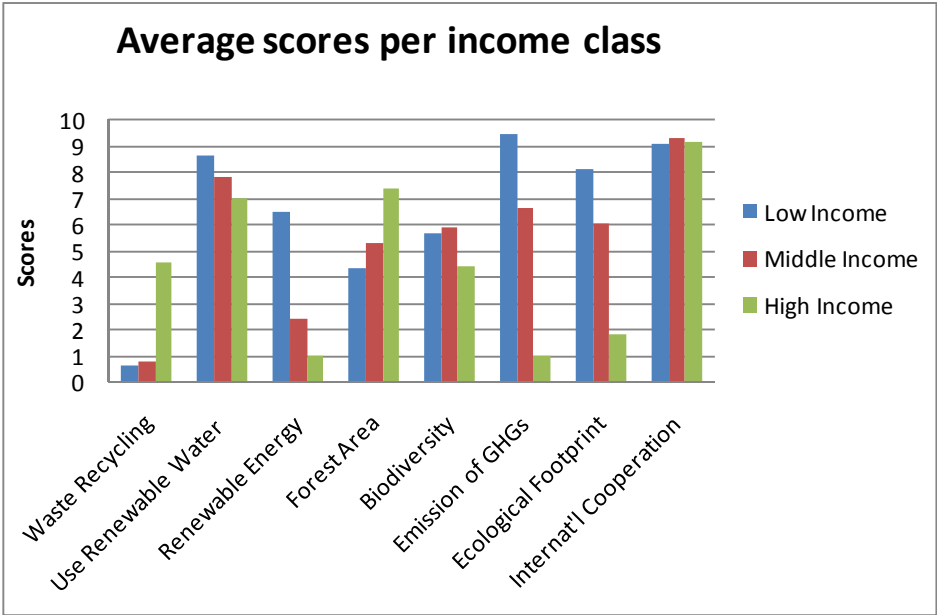


Figure 2 - Average scores of Environmental Sustainability indicators per income class of countries

<sup>1</sup> For more information: [www.sustainablesocietyindex.com](http://www.sustainablesocietyindex.com).

<sup>2</sup> Countries are classified according to the definition of income thresholds of the World Bank.

the scores for Ecological Footprint – a proxy for Sustainable Consumption and Production – Emission of Greenhouse Gases and Renewable Energy are way better for Low and Middle Income countries than for High Income ones.

For two indicators Low and Middle Income countries score – on average – lower than High Income countries: Waste Recycling and Forest Area. These two areas would be the best to focus on. (Bear in mind that the deforestation is mainly due to the consumption in High Income countries). A third one would be Biodiversity. With respect to Waste Recycling it should be remarked that much of the efforts on recycling in developing countries are not represented in the official statistics. Thus the scores could be better than appear from the statistical data.

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