Report GRF-South Africa meeting Stellenbosch; July 2nd, 2013

Philip Vergragt, coordinator GRF-SPC; and Harn Wei Kua, National University Singapore.

Att: Gerald Steiner (Graz U.), Reuben Kadalie, CSIR, Halina Brown (Clark U., USA); Mapula Tsangela (Director Sustainable development and Green Economy, SA Ministry of Environmental Affairs); Pieter van Heyningen (Stellenbosch U.; Stellenbosch Innovation District; Ndivhuho Raphulu, Director, NCPC; Harro von Blotnitz, University of Cape Town; Harn Wei Kua (NUS), Michelle Audouin (CSIR); Philip Vergragt (Tellus Institute, Boston; Clark University, Worcester, MA, USA; SCORAI; GRF-SPC)

After the SCP-Roundtable we convened to follow up and brainstorm about how to follow-up: how to establish a working relationship between SCP players in S. Africa and GRF-SPC; and how to possibly establish a GRF-SPC “hub” in S. Africa.

From the side of S. Africa the emphasis was on creating a transfer from research to implementation and commercialization; especially for renewable energy (solar cells; I-shack project): “research for impact”. Stellenbosch Innovation District can play a decisive role here: cleantech, agro, tourism, and ICT. The desirability of a transdisciplinary PhD program was also mentioned. A related suggestion was co-supervision of PhD students.

NCPC mentioned the existing global clearinghouse on cleantech; we also like to mention here the new UNEP Clearinghouse on SCP as part of the UN 10YFP. <http://www.scpclearinghouse.org>. GRF-SPC itself is working on its own database of relevant publications; more to follow.

GRF-SPC emphasized the wish to make connections between different regions; to create meeting opportunities in regional and global conferences; and to collaborate with existing regional organizations. An opportunity for this would be the upcoming global GRF-SPC conference; planned for June 2014 in Shanghai, China; most probable date June 16-18, 2014. GRF would welcome participation from South Africa; and the suggestions for a high-level keynote speaker from (South) Africa.

The shared feeling was that a collaboration between SA-NCPC, the SID, the CSIR (Council for Scientific and Industrial Research) and the African Roundtable for SPC; possibly with the Universities of Cape Town and Stellenbosch, and others; would be a good starting point for a regional GRF-SPC chapter.

Ndivhuho mentioned the upcoming AGM of UNIDO in September; which would be a good opportunity to make other regional connections; we have contacted Rene van Berkel, the Chief Cleaner and Sustainable Production Unit of UNIDO, on this. S. Africa has emerging middle class (3 m white, 1 m black). Inequality is biggest topic.

Earlier, in his speech, Ndivhuho emphasized resource efficiency and how to integrate the brown economy in a blue economy. Skills and employment are key. Three key areas: big polluters; low hanging fruit; and alternative energy suppliers.

As concrete follow-up activities, the following suggestions:

1. Mention GRF-SPC on the NCPC, SID, and other relevant websites; with links to GRF website <http://grfscp.wordpress.com> .
2. Possibly: create a consortium between SID, NCPC, CSIR, Cape Town and Stellenbosch Universities, and the Ministry of the Environment; and call it GRF-SPC South Africa Chapter.
3. Participation in GRF-SPC global conference 2014 in Shanghai; keynote speaker.
4. GRF participation in UNIDO-AGM
5. Develop co-supervision with GRF faculty of PhD projects.
6. Possibly: Organize a thematic workshop in S. Africa next year. Referring to NCPC’s website (<http://ncpc.csir.co.za/?page_id=272>). Notice that “carbon footprinting” is mentioned on this page. So, provided we have enough in-house expertise and interest, we can co-organize a workshop on carbon footprinting methods in S. Africa.