



Statement on behalf of the European Union and its Member States

by

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("Rio + 20")

Objective of the Conference

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

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Objective of the Conference

- Draft Statement by the European Union and its Member States¹ -

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

in order to make “sustainable development” happen, we have to be prepared to make major changes: we need to step up, spark innovation and lead by action. The sustainable development agenda is the growth agenda for the twenty-first century, as stated recently by the UN Secretary General.

In our view, at UNCSD 2012 we need to reach political consensus on how to ensure that, in 2050, the 9 billion inhabitants of the Planet will live in decent social, ecological and economic conditions. To be up to this challenge, a transition towards a green economy, considered in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, is imperative. The transition to a green economy should enable countries to achieve economic growth, helping them to realize their national development objectives, while acknowledging that the resources of the planet are finite and that growth needs to respect the carrying capacity of ecosystems and social and equity needs. This should be a renewed commitment to sustainable development and poverty eradication and a basis

¹ Only the text in bold was read out during the plenary

for renewed efforts by governments, international organizations and major groups to implement this commitment.

The main question is how these two themes of the Conference can help us to accelerate progress on the three dimensions of sustainable development. An integrated approach to these themes will take us closer to a solution.

The political commitment and will of the international community compared to 1992 should not only be measured by the number of adopted legal instruments and political declarations, but also by their effective implementation. The reviews undertaken every two years by the CSD as a global platform for sustainable development suggest that a number of pressing challenges such as poverty, social development or environmental degradation have not been fully addressed yet, although some progress has been made worldwide.

Many recent events have demonstrated that the goal of poverty eradication cannot be achieved without the sustainable management and use of natural resources, as the poor in particular depend heavily on those as base for their livelihoods. **Thus, the fulfillment of the MDGs is strongly linked to green economy policies, which contribute to inclusive and equitable growth.** The solution to the challenges posed by the MDGs is a comprehensive one, where economic, environmental and social goals are strongly interdependent.

As stressed by many delegates at Prep Com 1, as well as at the intersessional meeting held last January, the transition to a green economy is also a key driver to complementary social objectives such as the creation of additional decent jobs and the equitable sharing of economic benefits.

In this respect, I would like to underline that social empowerment is a key factor of well-being of any society; furthermore, the role of education for sustainable development at all levels must be enhanced.

The EU and its Member States consider sustainable development as an overarching and long-term goal, based on democracy, equality, respect for human rights and the rule of law, as well as on good governance, gender equality and solidarity. All this must be enhanced through a better integration of the social and environmental requirements in the economic development process, as well as through a stronger institutional framework for sustainable development.

A new and strengthened architecture of sustainable development governance should include the strengthening of its environmental pillar.

The transition towards a new, environmentally and socially sustainable economic system is recognized as the best answer to the global crises of the last years. It requires the introduction of advanced policy measures for sustainable development while also adopting public policies able to tackle the recent economic downturn and at the same time to provide opportunities for sustainable growth and poverty eradication.

UNCSD 2012 should be the occasion to take action on the major cross cutting issues: water, energy and food security should be higher on the agenda. We need to protect our environment to safeguard ecosystems services, food security and access to water. The expansion of access to clean energy in developing countries is another primary vehicle for poverty eradication. There is a call for investment in energy efficiency and renewable

energy for all countries, and the UN Secretary General has announced that 2012 will be the International Year of Sustainable Energy for All.

UNCSD 2012 also constitutes an opportunity to promote partnerships and engage stakeholders. Partnerships can provide strong and very concrete actions and they can be a useful instrument for engaging the private sector, foundations, civil society, academia and other stakeholders for enhanced implementation. We should support all efforts made to implement the visions of sustainability, and hope to see the UNCSD 2012 provide a stage for showcasing strong and very concrete actions and thereby supplementing and support the intergovernmental negotiation process.

To sum up, I would like to underline what the EU and its Member States wish to see as outcomes of UNCSD 2012:

- 1. On Green economy, a global commitment accompanied by a roadmap defining concrete steps at the international and national level, as well as a best practice guide of actions, instruments, indicators, case studies and policies;**
- 2. On Institutional framework for sustainable development, the transformation of UNEP into a UN specialized agency for the environment, as part of a strengthened and renewed sustainable development governance.**

Finally, Mr Chair, the EU and its Member States wish to maintain a high level of ambition for the UNCSD 2012 and are strongly committed to this common endeavour to make this Conference a milestone for the 21st Century.

Thank you.