



Statement by

H.E. Mr. László Borbély,

Minister of Environment and Forests

of

Romania

and Chairperson of the 19th session of the Commission on

Sustainable Development (CSD-19)

at the Opening of the

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Your Excellencies,
Mr. Sha Zukang, Under-Secretary-General,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are meeting at a time when, despite the turmoils in Northern Africa or Middle East and their consequences, the world is on a path of recovery from the recent financial and economic crisis. Yet, the recovery is fragile and uneven. We are facing many challenges, including climate change, food insecurity and devastation from increased natural disasters. Despite great efforts made by countries and some significant progress, the world economy has remained heavily dependent on high consumption of resources and high emissions and wastes, with worsening degradation of the environment and the ecosystem as well as persistent poverty.

In the past year, we witnessed the successes of the Millennium Development Goals Summit, the high-level review of the Mauritius Strategy for SIDS and the high-level event on biodiversity. All these events had sent a clear and strong message: economic uncertainty should not, and cannot, be an excuse for slowing down development efforts or for backing away from international commitments. In fact, there has never been a more urgent time to implement sustainable development solutions. Only sustainable development, with its emphasis on inter-linkages among social, economic and environmental issues, can provide long-term and durable solutions to global crises.

We are now in the preparatory process of the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. This process provides a historic opportunity for reinvigorating global commitment to sustainable development and for addressing any implementation gaps. The crises and challenges we are facing today highlight the importance of cooperation, consensus building and communication. The involvement of all stakeholders in policy decision making is key.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The current CSD cycle focuses on five themes: transport, chemicals, waste management, mining as well as the ten-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns. This focus presents a great opportunity to initiate coordinated and coherent action to tackle the challenges at hand. These themes are interlinked with each other as well as with other sustainable development themes. During CSD-19, we should build on the results of CSD-18 to draw policies and recommendations towards concrete action in each of these thematic areas.

The benefits of sustainable transport are undeniable. Effective use of public transport systems as well as modal shift strategies to encourage energy efficient means of transport can contribute to reducing the environmental and health problems associated with air pollution and green house gas emissions. Achieving efficient transportation with low environmental impact and broad social benefits will require a set of targeted actions: transport infrastructure must be developed and strengthened; transport planning and management needs to be integrated into urban development policies; transport use should be optimized; transport safety and security for all commuters worldwide, especially women, must be improved.

The global production, trade and use of chemicals have been escalating. Although this increasing demand offers many development opportunities, especially in developing countries, it also poses additional difficulties in the management of chemicals. Improper management of chemicals can put human health, national economies and the environment at risk. We must ensure

the sound management of chemicals over their whole life cycle. National legislation and regulations should be strengthened; management programs should be mainstreamed into MDG-based national development plans; better training and information on chemical safety should be provided. Finally, full implementation of existing arrangements, including SAICM and chemicals related Conventions, should be promoted.

We also need to ensure the safe and environmentally sound management of waste. The volume and variety of waste is on the rise posing further threats of land degradation, contamination of water sources and overall risks to human health and the ecosystem. Sound management requires fostering the development of policy instruments leading to waste prevention and minimization. The accelerating speed of waste production is unsustainable. Legislation can encourage recycling and also discourage the production of goods that are difficult to recycle. Financial and technological resources can help identifying low-cost options for separation of waste and preparation for reuse. Last but not least, emerging new waste streams, such as e-waste, also need to be addressed through appropriate programmes.

Although mining provides a livelihood for millions of people in developing countries, mining activities have been associated with serious environmental and social impacts on communities living near extraction sites, generating few or limited benefits to producing countries in terms of economic growth and poverty reduction. We need to develop mining solutions that are sustainable at the community, national and global levels, while preserving social development and protecting the environment. Sharing benefits with local communities, supporting artisanal and small-scale miners and launching a global initiative for sustainable mining should be priorities in our policy decisions.

In my capacity as Chairperson of CSD-19, I attended the very productive intersessional meeting on 10YFP on sustainable consumption and production patterns in Panama. This meeting served not only as a catalyst but also as a clearing house for discussing the most important issues concerning the 10 YFP on SCP. During the discussions, I sensed a broad convergence on the need to mobilize political will towards launching at CSD-19 an ambitious ten-year framework that goes beyond the status quo and will contribute in a meaningful way to achieving sustainable patterns of consumption and production in all countries. I also sensed an eagerness to establish a well coordinated institutional structure with well-defined functions and criteria for developing effective programmes and to secure their implementation. In this later context, however, more discussion will be needed towards a meaningful agreement at CSD-19.

Distinguished Delegates,

CSD-19 should be a forward-looking and action-oriented session. Our agreements will pave the way for a successful UNCSD in 2012. I urge you to make positive contributions to the discussion in an effort to develop concrete policy actions and adopt practical measures for effectively addressing the current challenges, while eliminating any constraints and obstacles towards sustainable development. Our recommendations should trigger prompt implementation of successful policies in the five thematic areas of this CSD cycle.

Towards this aim, and in collaboration with my colleagues in the Bureau, we will circulate in the afternoon a resource paper for the CSD19 decision. This document is an attempt from the Bureau to focus discussions alongside the interactive thematic discussions on the five themes of the cycle as well as on interlinkages, cross-cutting issues and means of implementation with the intention to facilitate discussions at IPM which in turn would produce the Chair's Negotiating Text. We have

based our paper on recommendations formulated in the SG reports and elements of convergence identified during the intersessional meetings of CSD19.

As you know our discussions during the week will conclude with the introduction of a comprehensive draft negotiating text which I will present aiming at facilitating consensus building during the Commission's session in May this year.

As Chairperson of CSD-19, I pledge to work closely with all of you in order to reach ensure the success of CSD-19. I count on your enriching input and look forward to our productive discussions. I will listen closely to you, delegates, Major Groups, partners from civil society, and build upon your ideas and priorities for action.

We are here to work together towards a common purpose of achieving a successful CSD19. We are on the same boat and we have to roll in the same direction. If we stop we need to rapidly find ways to move ahead. Stopping means acknowledging that we are not able to solve the problems which we are facing today. Every effort matters. But in order to advance, efforts need to go in the same direction. The scope of the IPM is to find this direction.

I thank you.

