



United States Department of State

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Intervention Delivered by: **John M. Matuszak**, Division Chief, Sustainable Development and Multilateral Affairs, Office of Environmental Policy, Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, U.S. Department of State

Thank you Chair

On Earth Day this year, President Obama spoke to all of us when he said, "Earth Day has always been about people from different backgrounds and different walks of life coming together on behalf of a cause bigger than ourselves. And with that spirit of community, we must continue the hard work to ... pass this world on to our children cleaner and safer than we found it."

Our President's message articulates the real strength of the CSD. The CSD recognizes that to achieve sustainable development we should all join our hands in partnership – governments, regions, businesses, NGOs, scientists, labor, indigenous, farmers, women, youth, local authorities and individuals – all of us. Sustainable development is a responsibility that we all share and one to which we must all must contribute.

Government, of course, has a special responsibility to provide clear laws and regulations, and may choose to provide incentives and levy costs. Governments also have the responsibility to share data and information transparently and involve the public in decision making, empowering them to improve their lives without sacrificing the future.

As we address sustainable development in the very important sectors and themes before the CSD in this cycle, there are a few general approaches the United States believes are particularly important to keep in mind:

- The application of science and promotion of innovation, for sustainability;
- Tailored solutions that use an array of tools and approaches including partnerships; and
- The importance of good governance - the transparent sharing of scientifically valid data and information, as well as the involvement of affected parties in decision making.

Scientifically valid data on issues, such as, chemical risks and exposures should lead to innovation and provide newer safer more effective products. Today we need breakthroughs in new battery technology to improve transportation for tomorrow and to provide more use of renewable energy in the future.

One size does not fit all. Sustainable transportation or waste management solutions that work in NYC are not the same as those that work in Montana and likewise those used in Belgium may not succeed in Malawi.

We can use regulatory approaches such as those being considered by the international community to regulate global mercury emissions or those used in the U.S. to increase fuel efficiency. But often voluntary efforts can be very effective. Voluntary programs and incentives lead to increased recycling in the United States. Partnerships are being used to improve the efficiency of fertilizer use, which is improving livelihoods and reducing pollution. The wildly successful UNEP "Clean Fuels and Vehicles Partnership" helped eliminate lead in vehicle fuels. This public-private partnership is now focusing on reducing fuel sulfur levels. To achieve these goals it involves governments, IOs, NGOs, researchers, and both the fuel and vehicle industries.

Citizens need to be informed and involved in decisions that affect them, be it the decision process for where new facilities or transportation infrastructure will go or environmental standards for chemical or waste facilities. Citizens and groups can make a important contributions the result in more sustainable solutions.

In conclusion, we have great opportunities and challenges in this cycle of CSD. We will only succeed if the CSD-18 and 19 outcomes move all of us – developed and developing countries, and major groups – to action and implementation that result in protection of the environment and improvement in peoples' lives!