



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C.

UN Commission on Sustainable Development -19
Opening Plenary
May 2, 2011

Intervention Delivered by: **John M. Matuszak**,
Division Chief, Sustainable Development and Multilateral Affairs, OES/ENV

Thank you Chair

In his Earth Day Proclamation this year, President Obama encouraged “all Americans to participate in service programs and activities that will protect our environment and contribute to a prosperous, healthy, and sustainable future.” He emphasized how our entire planet must act and how “American leadership will continue to be pivotal as we confront the environmental challenges that threaten the health of both our country and the globe.” He went on to note the importance of national and local programs, as well as the vital nature of partnerships and community-driven strategies to protect our land and water for future generations.

Our challenge over the next two weeks is to define pragmatic sustainable development solutions to the important issues of CSD-19. We need to consider new ideas, and agree on practical and realistic solutions that can be implemented.

We need to encourage science, research and education. These investments are critical if we are to take advantage of scientific and technical know to define innovative solutions to the challenges before us.

We need to utilize information technologies to share data and information and to connect communities and decision makers in crafting and implementing solutions.

We also need to strengthen participation in decision making and implementation at all levels including women and underrepresented groups where they are not fully involved. In many cases government's role is to empower civil society, business, and other non-state actors to do their part in bringing about sustainable development. It is only with the support and participation of civil society that the sustainable solutions we develop can be durable and self-sustaining.

Regarding the issues before us, the United States is committed to the development of a ten-year framework of programs that advance the shift towards sustainable consumption and production. To make this happen, we envision a framework that will be open to all contributions guided by a light secretariat. We hope that the framework will allow for collaboration on many different topics under SCP to facilitate our quest for sustainable development.

Throughout this CSD cycle, the United States has shared our experiences with what we have found to work. We encourage all work to be efficient and effective. We aim to continue and strengthen our work and caution against new efforts that are duplicative. The United States, as with many other countries, is actively cutting budgets to reduce our deficit and cannot make new financial commitments or support costly new initiatives. We must engage with all stakeholders to make powerful and effective efforts that leverage our collective resources.

Our work at CSD is vitally important. We will only succeed if the CSD-19 outcomes move all of us to action and implementation that result in protection of the environment and improvement in peoples' lives!