

Check against delivery

United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

**Statement by
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Madame/Mr. President,

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Croatia would like at the outset to express its deep gratitude to its Brazilian hosts for organizing this significant gathering. We appreciate the leadership of the UN Secretary-General in making sustainability his top priority in the work of the UN. The continual support of the Conference Secretary-General and his dedicated secretariat throughout the preparatory process is deeply appreciated.

Croatia fully aligns itself to the earlier EU statement delivered by President Barroso.

Turning to the Rio+20 Conference itself, this is **also a historic point for Croatia**, who recently celebrated its 20th anniversary of UN membership. As the first UN international conference that Croatia attended as an independent country, Rio 1992 set an **incredible first benchmark for Croatia's commitment to multilateralism**. Croatia continues to fully subscribe itself to Agenda 21 and subsequent important outcomes in the area of sustainable development, and will strive to further improve its efforts post Rio+20.

Twenty years on, Rio+20 and its preparatory process has again presented the international community **with the greatest opportunity and challenge in contemporary policy making**. Progress has been achieved in a number areas in the sustainable development agenda. However, today the international community still faces considerable challenges towards

eradicating poverty and in ensuring the full integration of economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Ongoing impacts of global crises in all three areas of sustainable development, and the fact that some of the time-bound Millennium Development Goals remain off-track, **makes the outcome of Rio+20 more critical.** The **renewed political commitment made here**, will underscore the greater importance of multilateralism, as the best asset to mobilize inter-generational solidarity and responsibility at all levels.

Madame/Mr. President,

The Rio+20 Conference provides us with **a unique opportunity** to safeguard the needs of future generations, **by shaping a new common vision and agenda for change.** This must be underpinned by sustainable growth, poverty reduction, enhanced social equity and preservation of our limited natural resources.

The outcome to be adopted by this Conference - while not meeting all our expectations - contains valuable elements that will serve as strategic policy tools for translating Croatia's political commitment into concrete action at all levels.

However the story does not end in Rio. The real job lies ahead of us. We must not repeat history, but **maximize our efforts in using this outcome to accelerate implementation in a wide range of actions.**

Croatia's take back from this conference will be to further develop more sustainable economic and inclusive growth, decent jobs creation based on agreed principles. For Croatia, these are the central tenants for a Green Economy and the model of growth that will achieve sustainable development, as well as achieve poverty eradication.

More importantly, recognition of the Green Economy for the first time by this Conference will set the course for the right kind of growth - that if fully committed to – should shore up a more sustainable management of our natural resources. **Important achievement in this direction will be the imminent adoption the 10 Year Framework of Programmes for Sustainable Consumption and Production**, which Croatia warmly welcomes.

Madame/Mr. President,

Croatia has already embarked on this journey nationally, **by implementing a Green Growth Strategy adopted last year.**This has allowed Croatia to initiate concrete cross-sectoral activities driving gradual reform from doing business as usual, towards a greener future for its citizens. **Amongst others, this calls for utilizing clean technologies, renewable energy and sustainable transport, water and waste management, sustainable agriculture and tourism.**

Furthermore, Croatia will nurture an enabling environment for mainstreaming affordable green innovations and investments that boost employment and job creation, whilst preserving our natural capital. A good case in point is the adoption of an ambitious plan to achieve 100% sustainable forest management of state-owned forests. **As the initiating country of the UN International Year on Forests for 2011, Croatia fully understands the social, economic and environmental benefits this can bring to Croatian citizens and to the forestry sector.**

Croatia has also **recognized the importance of the "Blue Economy"**, which extends the principles of the Green Economy to the conservation and sustainable use of marine resources. As the Mediterranean Country with more than 1.000 islands on the Adriatic Sea, Croatia **endorses the**

recognition at Rio+20 of the importance healthy oceans, seas and coastal areas as well as their sustainable use and their resources.The commitment made here to take a decision under the UN Convention on Law of the Seas (UNCLOS) is another important step for marine biodiversity protection.

Furthermore, Croatia has **fully subscribed to EU priorities for developing clear and concrete global commitments in the remaining priority areas of sustainable energy, water, sustainable land management and ecosystems, and resource efficiency in particular waste.** While specific and quantifiable goals would have made the outcome more action-oriented, Croatia will nevertheless treat these issues as a policy priority.

Croatia underscored that the achievement of sustainable development has **to be entrenched in the values of democracy, human rights, rule of law, governance, gender equality and empowerment.**

Madame/Mr. President,

An optimal mix of concrete and time-bound measures for long-term solutions will be an important contribution to the overarching post-2015 framework. This framework should encompass the three dimensions of sustainable development in a holistic and coherent way. In this regard, we welcome the process to establish Sustainable Development Goals, which we view as being fully complimentary with the Millennium Development Goals. **Furthermore, the agreement we will make here, to be guided by the outcome document when defining future SDGs, is one Croatia fully endorses especially when dealing with the five priority areas.**

Madame/Mr. President,

Croatia welcomes our collective efforts to improve the institutional governance the global level. **The establishment of a new High Level Forum for Sustainable Development should strive to ensure high political engagement in reviewing implementation.** It should also serve as a catalyst for promoting more coordinated and more coherent action at the regional, national, and local level.

These institutional reforms if implemented correctly, should improve synergies between existing processes and overcome duplication and unnecessary overlaps. We should strive to maximize effective use of financial resources and reduce administrative burdens by building on existing arrangements.

Croatia joins others in welcoming the agreement to reinforce international environmental governance by strengthening and upgrading UNEP, with a common base in Nairobi. Its strengthened mandate and universal membership, supported by stable and adequate financial contributions are important steps in the right direction. **However, given the urgency environmental protection demands, we will continue to argue for the creation of a UN Environment Organization.**

Madame/Mr. President,

In our opinion, all relevant stakeholders alongside governments will have critical roles in translating this Conference into concrete action. The decisions we make from global to local levels will ultimately affect us all. This will require at times, leadership and fully-informed actors. Education and awareness-raising will be indispensable if we are to be successful in our efforts. **By involving all stakeholders including governments, the private sector – especially small and medium enterprises, the academic**

community and civil society as a whole, we can create a win-win situation for everyone.

Rio+20 represents an important turning point for a better future. Given the greater sense of urgency **Croatia on its part, will heed the clarion call for action made by many at this Conference.** Rio+20 has provided us with a vital second chance and it is incumbent on us to make a real difference. Speaking also as a father, the legacy we leave our children and their children is now in our hands.

Thank you.