

STATEMENT BY
H.E. DIMITRI ALEXANDRAKIS,
AMBASSADOR OF GREECE TO BRAZIL
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Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

Greece would like to express its deep appreciation to the Brazilian authorities for their hospitality, warmth as well as efficiency and to the Secretariat for organizing the “Rio+20 UN Conference on Sustainable Development”. The world is standing at an important crossroads trying, on the one hand, to find solutions to the serious global financial challenges, and, on the other hand, to draw a path towards a model of development that will minimize pressure on natural resources and ecosystems. The challenge of a green economy that lies ahead of us is also an opportunity that can help us address and alleviate a number of social problems that affect countries in all stages of development.

Greece would like to see specific results at this Conference that will take into account the effects of policies on present as well as future generations. For us, the principles of intra-generational and inter-generational equity, along with the precautionary

approach and the “polluter pays” principle should be at the core of the outcomes of Rio+20.

Greece attaches great importance to the promotion of education and particularly of Education for Sustainable Development. Together with other Mediterranean countries and relevant Inter- and Non-governmental Organisations we are promoting the elaboration of the Mediterranean Strategy of Education for Sustainable Development to be hopefully adopted within the UN Decade of ESD (2005-2014).

Greece would like to see a strengthened institutional framework for sustainable development at the international level. In this context, we believe that the UN system needs to be reformed so that environmental issues are addressed in a more coherent and effective way. Greece has been supporting from the very beginning the need to strengthen the role of the United Nations Environment Programme and to upgrade it into a specialized agency for the environment.

In addition, we believe that one of the pillars of an upgraded UNEP needs to be the strengthening of its regional dimension. This will further enhance its effectiveness with a view to speedier positive results. Climate change adaptation, integrated coastal zone management, regional seas protection, disaster recovery and water management can be identified as top

priorities and policy areas where regional action and cooperation must be further elaborated.

Greece, as a member state of the EU, is attempting to address its own environmental problems through policies and initiatives that are in line with the European Union's strategic directions in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication. Promoting energy savings and energy production through renewable energy sources is a key priority for us. Greece is already strong in solar and eolic energy and we plan to expand their use rapidly.

We see the green economy not only as vital for all three pillars of sustainable development, but also as a very promising ground for regional cooperation and, at the same time, local economic and social development. In this respect, countries in the Mediterranean region have been cooperating effectively for years in programmes, plans and initiatives, such as UNEP's Mediterranean Action Plan and the EU Water Initiative's Mediterranean Component that Greece is leading successfully since 2003. The EU Water Initiative celebrates this year its 10th anniversary since its launching in Johannesburg in 2002. In this respect, we need to further enhance dialogue and cooperation on transboundary waters for the mutual benefit of riparians.

Furthermore, Greece attaches utmost importance to the conservation and the sustainable use of marine biological diversity, including in areas beyond national jurisdiction, and supports the initiation, as soon as possible, of the negotiation of an implementing agreement to UNCLOS that would address the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

Mr President,

It is important that this Conference takes decisions that push forward with all pending issues. Greece supports all steps aiming to enhance the welfare of people across the world and we reaffirm our commitment to the promotion of an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable future for our planet and for the generations to come.

Thank you very much.