



Statement on behalf of the European Union and its Member States

By

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("Rio + 20")**

Opening session

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Opening session

- Draft Statement by the European Union and its Member States -

Distinguished Co-Chairs,
Mr Secretary-General of the Conference,
Dear colleagues,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

The EU and its Member States welcome the Secretary-General's report on the objectives and themes of the Conference that has just been formally presented.

We also welcome the updated "Synthesis report on best practices and lessons learned on the objective and themes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development". This report benefits from more answers received from Member States since it was first presented at the January Intersessional meeting. However, the more contributions we will have from Members, the bigger the chances we will have to succeed in elaborating a common vision for the Conference.

The EU and its Member States also welcome the contributions of the UN system to a better understanding of the two themes of the Conference, and in particular the "Report on benefits, risks and challenges related to the green economy" and the UNEP report "Towards a green economy – pathways to sustainable development and poverty eradication". We hope that these

reports will contribute to clarify what the Green Economy may bring to all countries.

We would like also to express our appreciation to the Government of Brazil for the information about its preparations to the Conference as host country.

The EU and its Member States wish to reaffirm their strong commitment to actively participating in the further preparation of the UN 2012 Conference with a view to continue an open and transparent dialogue on the objectives and the themes of the Conference.

We are looking forward to UNCSD 2012 turning into a cornerstone for all Member States and stakeholders, in the road to achieving sustainable development and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The UNCSD 2012 constitutes a unique opportunity for the international community to recommit itself to sustainable development and establish a clear vision for green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, as well as for an enhanced and improved institutional framework for sustainable development.

The EU and its Member States are hoping in fact that the UNCSD 2012 outcome will set the basis for orienting the global economy and markets towards sustainable patterns that safeguard and maintain the natural resources base of the planet while guaranteeing better quality of life and sustainable growth for all. In this context, we consider crucial the enhanced engagement of civil society and the private sector, therefore complementing the efforts of the current UN system in the area of sustainable development.

Furthermore, the EU and its Member States will actively promote the definition of a better governance architecture for sustainable development, capable of sustaining and guiding the collective effort towards eradicating poverty, attaining the MDGs and promoting sustainable development patterns.

We would like to underline the importance of the involvement of all relevant UN bodies in the preparations towards Rio+20, allowing for an inclusive, transparent and integrated preparatory process. In this regard, we would like to recall the results of the Ministerial consultations held during the recent 26th session of the UNEP Governing Council under the theme of “Contribution of UNEP to the preparatory process of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD)” .

UNCSD 2012 will provide a unique platform for exchanging knowledge about promising strategies, best practices and lessons learned as well as for identifying common approaches and suitable mechanisms for environmentally friendly policies and for channelling international resources equitably and efficiently.

The EU and its Member States firmly believe that the next two days are crucial to lay the ground for open and frank discussions in order to have a forward-looking, ambitious and action-oriented outcome adopted at the Conference.

We have now an excellent opportunity to listen to different views on the substantive themes of the Conference and expected outcomes, share ideas, discuss openly in a constructive manner and agree on the necessary steps that will move the preparatory process forward.

In this regard, I would like to recall and underline what the EU and its Member States wish to see as outcome of UNCSD 2012:

1. On Green economy, a global commitment accompanied by a roadmap defining concrete steps at the international and national level, as well as a best practice guide of actions, instruments, indicators, case studies and policies;
2. On Institutional framework for sustainable development, the transformation of UNEP into a UN specialized agency for the environment, as part of a strengthened and renewed sustainable development governance.

Let us take actions for the future. Whilst it is always important to learn from our past experiences, UNCSD 2012 needs to be forward looking. For this, it is time for action, and not just for discussion. The EU and its Member States will continue to be actively engaged in this process to contribute to the successful outcome of the Conference and hence to the well-being of our planet.

Thank you.