



Statement on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States

By

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**Green Economy in the context of sustainable
development and poverty eradication**

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

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

Mr Chair,

The EU and its Member States see green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication as a major vehicle for sustainable growth.

Against this background we like to make a number of brief points:

- First on what we see as important to establish a green economy;
- Second on some of the concerns about a green economy that have been voiced;
- And finally on how UNCSD can help move the green economy forward.

Let me first highlight what we see as important features of a green economy.

First, a green economy is part of the broader concept of sustainable development, but does *not* replace it. Green economy is – as the title of UNEP's recent Green Economy synthesis report reflects – *one* of the ways to achieve sustainable development. But greening our economies is essential: without it achieving long-term sustainable development – and indeed lasting economic growth – will simply not be possible.

Second, in addition to preserving our environment, a green economy must – and can – help to deliver growth, decent jobs and eradicate poverty. Economic growth will come about in numerous ways: through investment and innovation; through more efficient use of natural *and* financial resources; and by preventing damage to the environment and human health. However, while a focus on growth and jobs is necessary and a number of measures can deliver quick win-win solutions, a medium and long term vision is essential. Some of the fundamental changes that we need will take time to materialize. This requires us to actively identify and address transitional problems.

Third, a green economy needs to put the management of natural capital at the centre. This requires identifying the value of ecosystem services and biodiversity and internalising external costs and benefits. The recent study on "The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity" (TEEB) is a step in the right direction. Nature and biodiversity are not a luxury for the rich but a necessity for the poor.

Fourth, the active engagement of a broad range of actors will be needed: all parts of governments and relevant UN bodies will have a key role to play, as well as civil society, the private sector and consumers.

Fifth, and finally, there is no "one-size-fits-all" model. Green economy policies have to be designed nationally and regionally, taking the needs and specific circumstances of individual countries into account. At the same time, there are common challenges and solutions, and countries will benefit from exchanging experience and good practice. There will also be a need for action and improved cooperation at international level.

Let me add that we in the European Union are laying down policies to green our own economy – for instance by developing a broad strategy on resource efficiency. We are committed to furthering these goals with others on a global level.

Mr Chair,

The EU and its Member States now wish to share some thoughts in response to concerns that a green economy could constrain economic growth and social development.

We are aware of these concerns. However, we do firmly believe that a green economy is relevant and offers opportunities to *all* countries, irrespective of their level of development and the structure of their economies. Emerging success stories, project and partnerships from around the world, strengthen our conviction that "green economy thinking" can indeed resonate in *all* countries.

Better management and more efficient use of natural resources such as water, forests and soils will help underpin the livelihoods of millions of people, and contribute to eradicate poverty. Green economy policies can support the agricultural sector and contribute to food security.

Furthermore, the use of renewable energy and increased energy efficiency will contribute to reducing climate change and other environmental impacts, and to enhanced energy security.

In addition, by making the right choices upfront, countries at earlier stages of development can "leapfrog" unsustainable practices and avoid being locked into unsustainable development pathways, for instance in terms of energy, housing and transport infrastructure.

The road towards a green economy will not always be straightforward. However, we should not get discouraged by overstating the challenges and obstacles. And where the challenges *are* real they can and must be addressed, both at national and international level.

Access to the financial resources needed to invest in a green economy is essential. We therefore need to enhance access to public, private and public-private finance and explore innovative means to increase investments, which should be based on sustainable development criteria. Improved international governance as well as capacity building to strengthen institutions and policy making are also essential elements.

Mr Chair,

Let me finish by making some brief general points on how, in the view of the EU and its Member States, UNCS D can help move the green economy forward.

First, we hope that UNCS D will result in a common, high-level commitment to green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication.

Second, we hope UNCS D will agree on a UN Green Economy Roadmap which clarifies the steps needed at national and international level to implement actions in support of green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication. This roadmap could include a menu of actions, a timeline for their implementation, identify key actors and set targets and appropriate indicators, building on existing initiatives.

Third, we hope UNCS D will also agree on a toolbox, or best practice guide, of actions, instruments, case studies and policies which can be implemented by public authorities, companies, and other organizations, taking into account the various needs of different countries.

I thank you for your attention.