

**Intervention by Mrs. Ragnheiður Elfa Þorsteinsdóttir, Director  
Delegation of Iceland.**

Distinguished Co-Chairs

Secretary General of the Conference

Dear colleagues

Iceland would at this juncture like to highlight four main areas of importance for green economy: the marine environment, renewable energy, sustainable land management and gender equality

The protection of the marine environment is one of the greatest global environmental challenges. Ocean acidification is a relatively new concern, and in a longer perspective it could become one of the most worrying aspects of climate change. Healthy seas sustain the productivity of the ocean and mitigate global warming.

In the context of the green economy and poverty eradication it must be kept in mind that fish and fish products play a major role in food security as well as being important source of income for developing countries. Capacity building and improved management to secure sustainable utilisation of resources is the key to rational and responsible conservation and management of living marine resources.

Iceland is of the view that energy efficiency and access to energy should be at the core of our deliberations. The world's vast but underexploited renewable energy resources should play a pivotal role in the green economy.

Harnessing geothermal sources around the world is gaining a growing recognition as one of the renewable energy options with wide potentials for many developing countries. Areas like Central and South America, East Africa, Southeast Asia stand to benefit significantly from their geothermal resources, when utilized.

The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment ranks land degradation among the world's greatest environmental challenges: Negatively affecting climate, biological diversity, food security and livelihoods of the rural poor. Iceland proposes that soils, land degradation and reclamation will be addressed at the Earth Summit 2012 as a major aspect of advancing sustainable development.

It is paramount that gender considerations are promoted in all stages of policy making, implementation and financing; including decision-making, equitable benefits and access to funds. Integrating gender perspectives into green economy policies and ensuring women's equal participation in decision making at all levels is key to accelerating sustainable development and achieving a more inclusive outcome.

In all the aforementioned priority areas, capacity building remains fundamental. In cooperation with the United Nations University, Iceland has for a number of years trained professionals from developing countries in the field of fisheries, geothermal energy and sustainable land management. The Government of Iceland also runs a gender equality studies and training program as a part of its development cooperation efforts.

Let me say a few words on Economic Instruments. Economic Instruments are important and used in Icelandic Environmental Policy, for instance in the form

of the levy of a fee on hazardous waste and a deposit fee on beverage containers. The environmental tax scheme also includes energy and air pollution, excise duties on fossil fuels for transport purposes, water pollution, waste, transport, and natural resources. More information on Economic Instruments are in the Action Plan for Iceland's Climate Change Strategy.

Finally let me draw your attention to the fact that the Nordic countries have high environmental standards and use economic instruments to protect the nature. At the same time they have managed to gain economic growth and preserve their social welfare systems.

Thank you.