

**South Africa's Statement to the Second Preparatory Meeting of the United
Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) – RIO 20
Green Economy in the context of Sustainable Development and Poverty
Eradication
07 March 2011
New York**

Thank you Co-Chair

South Africa associates fully with the statement made by Argentina on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Furthermore, the South African delegation appreciates with gratitude the synthesis report put together by the Secretariat as a good basis for our deliberations today.

Co-Chair,

Allow me to remind delegations that Rio 20 will also mark the tenth anniversary of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) which produced the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI), a clear course of action towards implementation of Agenda 21. In this regard, we remain committed to sustainable development with poverty eradication as its overriding objective.

Co-Chair, as the world has been facing serious economic crisis since 2008, the South African Government, Civil society and business developed a framework to respond to the crisis. In that response, we recognized the opportunities in industries that combat negative impacts to the environment and natural resource base and believed that we should develop strong capacity in clean technologies and industries in order to ensure sustained growth. This move requires significant support and lesson sharing. South Africa has adopted a resource efficient, low carbon and pro-employment approach as

one of the key drivers of our economic growth path; we see this as a fundamental principle of a green economy

For South Africa, poverty eradication remains the overriding objective of sustainable development. Discussions towards Rio 2012 should first and foremost take into consideration principle 2 of the Rio Declaration which states that countries have the sovereign right to exploit their own resources pursuant to their own environmental and development policies. There should be no one-size fit all prescriptive models to countries, developed and developing alike. Countries should be allowed to make decisions on their growth path in light of the current crises without fear of being discriminated against.

Mr Co-Chair, we would strongly advise against any form of protectionism or conditionalities and standards under the guise of a green economy which might generate unjustified restriction in the areas of trade, financing and official development assistance. In fact, the green economy approach must be pro-development and enhance job creation while ensuring protection of environmental resources and natural assets

Finally, Co-Chair, the potential areas for support to realise resource efficient and low carbon growth that is pro-employment include the areas of science, innovation and technology, strengthening of institutional capabilities and capacities as well as promotion of partnerships in developing countries.

1. What specific investments should a government prioritize as part of a green economy strategy?

Mr Co-chair,

With your permission we would like to address question one. We are of the view that many sectors could be prioritized as part of a green economy strategy. Green buildings and the built environment provide opportunities for initiating public/private partnerships. Efficient public transport infrastructure, particularly bus rapid transit (BRT) systems, would have positive benefits for both the environment, economic and social pillars of sustainable development. Similarly, investments in renewable energy, for example wind and solar energy sources, would contribute to a transition to a green and sustainable future. Resource conservation and management have the potential to be generators of green jobs, as does sustainable waste management practices, water management and sustainable agriculture.

Check against delivery