



Statement on behalf of the European Union and its Member States

By

**Istvan TEPLAN
Senior Adviser to the State Secretary for the Environment
Republic of Hungary**

**Second Preparatory Committee
of the
2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development
("Rio + 20")**

Institutional framework for sustainable development (IFSD)

**United Nations
New York**

8 March 2011

Mr. Chairman,

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

The European Union and its Members States share the view expressed in the Report of the Secretary General concerning the contrast between the dramatic growth in the number of institutions in the last decades and the continuing deterioration in the natural resource base and persistent poverty. This contrast calls into question how much the grasp of the existing institutional framework matches its reach.

We agree with the SG report that our efforts to strengthen the Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development should above all focus on strengthening an architecture that supports effective implementation and policy-integration of sustainable development concerns at all levels. A clear forward-looking approach is needed, building further on the commitments and achievements of the Rio and Johannesburg Summits on Institutional framework for sustainable development.

In this regard, the EU and its Member States have identified the following three objectives, namely International Environmental Governance (IEG), broader sustainable development architecture, and multi-level governance.

1. On one hand, there is growing awareness that we can only tackle the economic, financial, environmental, climate and social challenges by addressing the three dimensions of sustainable development in a coordinated and integrated manner. A strengthened institutional framework for sustainable development is thus needed. The UN needs to perform better on the three overarching objectives as specified in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation – poverty eradication, managing natural resources and changing unsustainable consumption and production patterns.

We therefore are in favour of a better architecture for sustainable development. The UN regional commissions should play a more significant role in promoting sustainable development through bottom-up approach and efficient regional and country deliveries.

2. On the other hand, strengthening International Environmental Governance is a key element and condition for improving the Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development. The outcome of the Consultative group of Ministers on IEG and of the very recent UNEP 26th session of the Governing Council is an excellent basis for further work. This process has yielded substantial results with regards to

strengthening the environmental pillar of sustainable development by identifying incremental improvements, system-wide improvements, and options for broader reform.

In particular, the UNEP GC has transmitted its ideas on system-wide improvements for six functions and its five options for broader reform to the Prep Com 2 for further analysis and action within the broader framework of IFSD.

The EU and its Member States strongly urge the Preparatory Committee to take up these invitations from the UNEP GC. This includes initiating a full analysis of the financial, structural, and legal implications and comparative advantages of the options identified in the Nairobi-Helsinki outcome. In so doing, the Preparatory Committee brings the process from Nairobi back to New York, thereby contributing to a constructive and informed discussion on the way forward.

The EU and its Member States strongly support the upgrading of UNEP into a specialized UN Agency: *“a UN agency for the environment, based on UNEP, with a revised and strengthened mandate, supported by stable, adequate and predictable financial contributions and operating on an equal footing with other UN specialised agencies.”*

This proposal is about upgrading UNEP into a stronger organization, better equipped for meeting growing challenges and more capable of contributing to sustainable development, and not about adding a new institution on top of what already exists.

Referring to one of the questions put in the attachment to the organization of work of this PrepCom, we also think that such an agency will help to streamline reporting mechanisms so as to reduce the reporting burden of developing as well as developed countries of servicing Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), whilst respecting their legal autonomy.

The EU and its Member States do not see the different proposals for broader reform as mutually exclusive. We have already said on many occasions that the process of strengthening of UNEP and its upgrading into a specialized agency is part of a broader strategy for strengthening sustainable development governance within the UN system. We remain ready to discuss alternative reform options and invite other delegations to come forward with more details on their proposals in view of finding common ground and identifying commonalities with regards to social, economic and environmental governance.

3. Finally, we need to address the different levels of governance, where cross-sectoral consultation and coordination is often still missing. We

need to ensure that the framework we design promotes mutually supportive actions at global, regional, national and sub-national levels.

Multilevel governance for sustainable development depends, at the national level, on national sustainable development strategies (NSDS's) in place; such strategies also exist at sub-national levels and many local authorities in the world, including in the EU, have developed a local Agenda 21.

The potential of each level of sustainable development governance can be strengthened horizontally by the coordination of interdepartmental mechanisms.

The EU and its Member States acknowledge the importance of major groups, whose role and input should be integrated into the preparations and outcome of the UNCSD 2012 Conference, including youth, which is still underrepresented in many cases. The specific potential of overarching strategies can significantly be enhanced by the work of Sustainable Development Councils who can strengthen civil societies engagement for sustainable development and offer valuable fora for civil society discussions.

In conclusion, Mr Chairman, I would like to underline that the current status quo is not an option. We are all confronted with the consequences of our fragmented and overlapping institutional architecture regarding sustainable development, which is limiting our chances of responding efficiently and effectively to today's multiple challenges. This is why we have all embarked on this process of strengthening the IFSD, on which we hope to make substantial progress and achieve a concrete outcome next year in Brazil.

Thank you