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**REMARKS BY
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SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE 2012 UN CONFERENCE
ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

The First Intersessional Meeting of the UNCSD

New York, 10 January 2011

Thank you,

Excellencies,
Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning.

I am very pleased to welcome you to this first intersessional meeting of the UNCSD preparatory process.

Today we will review what we have accomplished so far in preparing for Rio+20, what lessons have been learned and how best to move ahead.

I would like to brief you on two topics.

First, I will update you on the activities undertaken since the first PrepCom meeting.

Second, I will share with you some salient features of the Synthesis Report which was recently released.

Distinguished delegations and colleagues,

The preparatory process is moving ahead satisfactorily.

Allow me to highlight the main elements of progress made.

First, we have prepared two reports that will guide the proceedings of the Second PrepCom meeting. These include the Synthesis Report on Best Practices and Lessons Learned on the Objective and Themes of the Conference, and the Secretary-General's Report on Objectives and Themes of the Conference.

In addition, the Secretariat is preparing a study on the benefits and challenges of a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication. It will be published in time for the upcoming PrepCom.

Second, we have made concerted efforts to ensure that the entire UN system will contribute to the preparatory process.

In this regard, we are using the Executive Committee of Economic and Social Affairs (ECESA) to garner system-wide support.

The Secretariat is also utilizing the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) and the Environment Management Group (EMG) to tap UN resources in support of the Conference.

Third, the Regional Commissions are conducting preparations at the regional level and in some cases, sub-regional levels. The Commissions have developed meeting and event schedules that will support the global preparatory process. These schedules are posted on the UNCSD website.

The issue of national preparations however remains a source of concern due to the lack of availability of funds. However, we have prepared a joint proposal with UNDP to support national preparations in 60 countries, including in-depth studies in 10 countries. We are approaching the donors to seek their assistance in implementing this project.

Fourth, I have had several meetings with senior officials of the host country Government.

The Government of Brazil has expressed full political commitment and support for the Conference and its preparatory activities.

Some programming aspects, including proposed dates of events and activities, are pending at this time.

Finally, ladies and gentlemen, let me inform you that the Conference Secretariat is now fully operational.

The Secretary-General has appointed two Executive Coordinators to assist in the preparation and organization of the Conference. They are Liz Thompson of Barbados and Brice Lalonde of France.

Both are with us today.

Some UN agencies, including UNEP and ECLAC, have responded to my request for staff support and have already seconded staff.

Other agencies and offices are considering how to do the same.

While overall preparations for the Conference are going well, it is clear that we need to intensify our efforts on many fronts to ensure that Rio+20 meet its objectives.

Excellencies,

Next I will present a summary of the preliminary version of the Synthesis Report.

Based on your discussions during today's meeting, this report will be revised and issued as an official document in time for the Second PrepCom in March 2011.

Please note that the Synthesis Report was originally scheduled to be completed in time for today's meeting.

There was, however, a low level of Member State responses to the initial questionnaire that was designed to collect input for the report.

The Bureau decided, therefore, to extend the response deadline and defer the official submission of the report until the Second PrepCom Meeting.

To date we have received 100 questionnaire responses from Member States, Major Groups' organizations and United Nations system entities.

The Synthesis Report reflects these responses about the objectives and themes of the Conference.

Some key findings that emerged include the following:

- There has been stronger commitment to sustainable development since 1992 at the national and international levels.
- The implementation of international agreements, however, is seriously constrained in many countries by limited financial, human, technical and institutional capacities.
- Sustainable development priorities over the next decade include achieving the MDGs and other development goals; securing a global agreement on climate change, a successful finalization of the Doha Development Round of trade negotiations; and promoting a global shift to a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication.
- New and emerging challenges identified by stakeholders included:
 - climate change and natural disasters related to it;
 - the interrelated financial, economic and food crises;
 - energy security;
 - degradation of ecosystems;
 - diminishing natural resources including water scarcity and impact on political instability and social unrest;
 - unsustainable consumption and production patterns;
 - population growth and rapid urbanization.
- Respondents view the development of green economy strategies as a more important task than defining a green economy.
- Strong national political leadership is recognized as an important factor for making a transition to green economy.

- Many respondents considered strengthening of existing institutions and improving coordination among existing institutions as important steps towards improving sustainable development governance.

Distinguished delegates,

We will continue to identify key findings from the report as additional responses are received and compiled during the preparatory process.

Today I ask you to voice your opinions and perspectives on these findings and share other concerns and ideas you may have.

I am grateful to the expert panelists that have joined us today to help guide our discussions.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In concluding my remarks, I would like to mention that the lack of financial resources poses a serious threat to our preparatory efforts.

I encourage donor countries to generously contribute to the Trust Fund to enable the Bureau and the Secretariat to execute its preparatory plan.

I wish you productive deliberations, and I trust that this meeting will set the tone for a successful Second PrepCom Meeting in March.

Thank you.
