



Statement on behalf of the European Union and its Member States

By

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY



Distinguished Co-Chairs,
Mr Secretary-General of the Conference,
Dear colleagues,

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

The EU and its Member States welcome with appreciation the Synthesis Report on Best Practices and Lessons Learned on the Objective and Themes of the UNCSD. It gives a very good summary of the answers on the UN DESA questionnaires, even if we see with regret that only a limited number of UN member States responded.

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

We have arrived at a juncture where the international community should strongly recommit itself to sustainable development and establish a clear vision for green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, as well as for an enhanced institutional framework for sustainable development.

I would like to take this opportunity to again underline that sustainable development is a fundamental priority of the European Union:

Indeed, next to the EU Sustainable Development Strategy, the core priorities for the EU are set out in the Europe 2020 Strategy (the EU2020) and in its 7 flagship initiatives. Those are our commitment to a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

In our view, UNCSD should be a cornerstone for all stakeholders, in particular for Member States to go one step further in the balanced achievement of the three pillars of sustainable development, namely the environmental, social and economic dimensions, and to tackle its challenges in an integrated manner, thereby finding new ways and means to address the remaining implementation gaps.

International cooperation can only be successful if it is based on both the political commitment and the will to develop and implement strategies for achieving this goal. UNCSD should also highlight the importance of the Millennium Development Goals to be placed in the framework of sustainable development. It is imperative that as a result of UNCSD, cooperation among the different stakeholders, including among regions, through an enhanced engagement of the private sector, should be strengthened, therefore complementing the efforts of the current UN system in the area of sustainable development.

For example, we can do that through a more effective implementation of environmental agreements, or addressing cross-cutting issues or creating through development programmes an enabling environment of social inclusion.

It is also very important to emphasize that UNCSD provides a platform for exchanging best practices, lessons learned and developing capacities. It is our common interest to coordinate strategies, identify common approaches, and provide a supportive climate for achieving sustainable development, including by making trade and environment mutually supportive and by providing adequate financial resources to concrete programs.

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

We are here today at this first intersessional meeting because we need more opportunities to discuss the main themes of the Conference and to find a common understanding as soon as possible in order to have a forward-looking, ambitious and action-oriented outcome adopted at the Conference. The EU and its Member States would caution against theoretical debates, and therefore these two days are crucial to lay the ground for open and frank discussions.

It is clear that we need to develop a common understanding on the concepts related to Green Economy:

To be able to do so, we must use the various policies, both supporting or implementing this concept, in place in several countries: this will help us understand that Green Economy works. This is not an attempt to change or replace the concept of sustainability. On the contrary, Green Economy supports social development, improves livelihoods, health or employment opportunities. We must also keep in mind that it provides opportunities for both developing and developed countries to overcome problems caused by the recent multiple crisis. Green Economy is a key condition for a sustainable future, where human beings live in harmony with nature.

On the Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development, we should also examine the good examples and learn the lessons, especially from the system-wide coherence and one-UN exercises. We should also use a cooperative spirit to eliminate fragmentation, overlapping mandates and to come to terms with a broader institutional reform related to sustainable development, including a strengthened institutional architecture for global environmental governance. Finally, we need to reflect on the role and working methods of the CSD and the ECOSOC.

This informal intersessional meeting is an excellent opportunity to listen to the views of some distinguished panelists, draw ideas from them, and discuss openly in a constructive dialogue.

Thank you.