

ECLAC

Dear Chair

Distinguished delegates

Colleagues

Ladies and gentlemen

I deliver this statement on behalf of the five United Nations Regional Commissions. All five Commissions have been active in the regional preparations for UNCSO, including analysis and discussion of the two conference themes – a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication and the institutional framework for sustainable development.

While there is considerable diversity between and within regions in terms of levels of development, productive specialization and capacity, production and consumption patterns, energy intensity and vulnerability to climate change, to name just a few aspects, there is also substantial common ground on a number of issues, as reflected in the outcomes of regional meetings and in the responses to the questionnaires that were very competently summarized by the Secretariat.

Regarding Green Economy in the Context of Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication, the experience of the Regional Commissions and their exchanges with Member States so far has led to a common understanding that a ‘green economy’ must be defined according to national priorities; must be a driver of sustainable development enabling the convergence of its three pillars; and must promote not only the eradication of poverty but also social inclusion and the reduction of inequalities. Commissions coincide that within the definition proposed in the preview to the Green Economy Report – whereby a green economy is one –that results in improved human wellbeing and reduced inequalities over the long term, while not exposing future generations to significant environmental risks and ecological scarcities? – there is sufficient room to allow for strategies, policies and measures that are nationally defined and that are responsive to national priorities, social and economic realities, natural resource endowments, demographic patterns, productive specialization and other characteristics.

There is also agreement that identifying policy areas and instruments that would lead a green economy as defined above is of greater practical and analytical relevance than fine-tuning definitions. Within the Member States of each of the Regional Commissions, there is a wealth of experiences with green economy measures, including regulation, fiscal policy, infrastructure development strategies, public procurement policies and others that are being shared within and among regions. The aim of all of these policies and measures is, at the end of the day, to do better in all three pillars – the social, the environmental and the economic.

But the regional processes have also highlighted many potential difficulties in implementing green economy strategies, including financial, technological, institutional and industrial constraints. In the process of defining the outcomes of UNCSO, it is

important to refer back to the Rio Declaration, and to ensure that measures taken to promote a green economy are guided by its principles, including Principles 5 and 9 (on cooperation on the eradication of poverty and on endogenous capacity-building and technology transfer), Principle 6 (which calls for priority to be given to the situation and special needs of developing countries, particularly the least developed and most environmentally vulnerable, including the Small Island Developing States), Principle 7 (on common but differentiated responsibilities), Principle 8 (on the need to eliminate unsustainable patterns of production and consumption and promote appropriate demographic policies), Principle 10 (on public participation and access to information and justice), and Principle 12 (according to which trade policy measures for environmental purposes should not constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination or a disguised restriction on international trade).

Regarding the Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development, the Regional Commissions coincide on the need to strengthen existing global and regional institutions and intergovernmental processes. The experience with regional implementation meetings to address the thematic issues of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) has been positive. However, there is room for further integration of the Commissions into the CSD process as well as for greater outreach into national and subnational institutions in different areas of government to help address the common challenge of integrating sustainable development into sector based institutions.

Mr. Chair,

The Executive Secretaries of the five commissions will address these issues in their meeting in Santiago, Chile, on January 13-14. This meeting will benefit from the discussions to be held today and tomorrow. Regional Commissions look forward to the UNCSO as an opportunity to advance in both intra and inter-regional cooperation on sustainable development and to enhance the capacity of the Regional Commissions to support Member States in their respective processes.