

The Second Intersessional Meeting of the UNCSD

Opening Remarks of Co-Chair of the Bureau of the Preparatory Process for the
United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development,
H.E. MR. KIM Sook, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea

15 December 2011

Excellencies,
Mr. Sha Zukang, Under-Secretary-General,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to thank all of the Member States for endorsing me as a co-chair of the preparatory committee for Rio+20. I fully understand the historic challenges and huge responsibilities that come with the preparatory process.

Rio+20 will be one of the most important global meetings on sustainable development in our time. As a co-chair, I will do my best to make it a resounding success. I will listen carefully and endeavor to have the views of all Member States reflected effectively.

Before talking about today's meeting, I welcome the agreements reached at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Durban last Sunday. The Durban Platform shows the new spirit of the international community in resolving global issues as climate change.

I am particularly pleased that it provides an additional momentum for the success of Rio+20. We have to utilize this momentum and work together in the constructive spirit evident in Durban.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

I am honoured to welcome you all to the Second Intersessional Meeting of the UNCSD Preparatory Process.

Today's meeting is the first opportunity for us to discuss the compilation document, which has been prepared based on an enormous amount of constructive inputs received from stakeholders all across the spectrum.

The submissions from Member States, major groups, the UN and other agencies have been not only numerous, but also of very high quality. We will listen to the key messages emanating from these submissions when Mr. Sha Zukang will introduce the compilation document.

This intersessional meeting is also the last meeting before the preparation of the zero draft of the outcome document, which will be tabled for your consideration in January 2012. In this regard, we must be mindful of the task that was asked from us: **to deliver a focused political document.**

One of our biggest challenges is to move from a compilation document of 6000 pages to a zero draft, which should be short and focused on the two conference themes.

As co-chair of the Bureau, I will work with the other co-chair and rest of the Bureau to produce the zero draft on the basis of our discussions at this intersessional meeting. However, the success of this task very much depends on our capacity to keep our discussions at this meeting focused.

Therefore, I would like to strongly urge you to focus your interventions with a view towards identifying the concrete deliverables you wish to see coming out of Rio+20. There is no need to restate your submissions, since these are all available online.

The preparatory process thus far has been very rich in terms of both ideas and participation.

It has also been very inclusive and the Bureau is quite proud of that. All meetings held at the global, regional, and national levels, as well as meetings organized by major groups, have prolifically contributed to the process.

Many ideas came out during the preparatory process and some of these were further refined based on your submissions.

There are concerns that sustainable development goals should not interfere with the ongoing MDG process and many of you have come up with sound proposals on how to ensure that the two processes do not conflict with each other.

The discussions on the institutional framework also proved fruitful with various proposals.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

Now it is time to discuss which of these ideas are not only feasible, but also deliverable. To be able to successfully proceed with the drafting of the zero draft of the outcome document, the Bureau needs your clear feedback and guidance.

In many ways, I envision Rio+20 as a conference that will be different from previous conferences. It promises to be the conference for delivering on implementation. However, we must build on past commitments. We do not need to decide on technicalities for specific sectoral areas, like water, agriculture, energy, and others. For these areas, we already have a strong policy-base resulting from different conferences and intergovernmental fora, starting from Agenda 21. Now, it is high time to steer our direction forward while choosing an implementation path.

There are many challenges that Rio+20 should overcome. The foremost of these important challenges will be to ensure active engagement by broad-based stakeholders while simultaneously enhancing public awareness. We should be aware of the fact that elections in major countries in 2012 and ongoing economic crises in Europe have the potential to weaken global attention to mid or long-term agendas and Rio+20.

We have to remember that 20 years ago in Rio, we were able to succeed mainly because Agenda 21 became a people's agenda. Therefore, we need strong political leadership and multilateral efforts to enhance global public awareness of the Rio agendas.

Ironically, solutions will only be found if we move away from our stated positions. We should work towards a strong consensus on behalf of humanity, the planet, and our future generations.

We all know that different countries have different circumstances and concerns. Rio+20 should recognize this and not impose a tight, one-size-fits-all jacket on everyone. It can deliver a flexible and broad menu of options available for countries to choose from, according to their national priorities. Only this way may we ensure the broadest possible buy-in.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

We need concrete actions to protect the environment while also ensuring that social and economic development for all can be achieved.

The Bureau has circulated a Guidance Note, which gives ideas on how discussions could proceed as well as options and models for the structure of the outcome document. It will be very helpful if your interventions will respond to the questions posed in the Guidance Note and articulate key elements of your proposal for main contents of zero draft. I would like to kindly ask for your cooperation in this regard.

The more focused your interventions are, the easier it will be for the co-chairs and Bureau to come up with a zero draft of the outcome document that meets your expectations.

I look forward to your focused, concrete, and insightful ideas during this meeting.

I thank you.