



Statement on behalf of the European Union and its Member States

By

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Opening Statement

-CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY-

Mr. Chairman, Ministers, Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States. The Accessing Country Croatia aligns itself with this declaration

We are delighted to be here in New York at the United Nations headquarters in order to contribute to the preparations for Rio+20 through this 2nd Intersessional Meeting. At the outset, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Polish Presidency of the Council of the European Union and acknowledge the major contribution they have made during the past six months to the overall substantial preparations for the Rio+20 Conference.

We have two important days ahead of us, during which we should start setting the basis for the preparation of the "zero draft" both in terms of contents as well as structure and form. In this regard, we believe that we should aim at having a single outcome document prepared within a single negotiation track.

Since Prep Com 1, we have made good progress towards a better mutual understanding on the objectives and challenges of the Rio+20 Conference, and we all share a common will to accelerate implementation and progress towards sustainable development. At this meeting, we need to engage openly to deepen our understanding of the various viewpoints and proposals on what Rio+20 could deliver in concrete terms.

The EU and its Member States have noted the leadership of the UN Secretary General on issues such as water, energy and food security and we are keen to see that Rio+20 addresses some of the key priority areas, particularly regarding access to and management of scarce resources.

As indicated in our contribution to UN DESA, in our view the main operational outcomes of the Rio+20 should include a green economy roadmap with specific goals, objectives and actions at international level as well as a package of reforms, which includes the upgrading of UNEP into a specialized agency for the environment, leading to a strengthened international environmental governance as part of a more balanced and effective IFSD.

We are grateful for the support that our proposals are already getting from a significant number of countries, as for instance reflected in recent regional meetings both in the context of the African Union and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. In the course of the next two days we will be happy to further explain our proposals for concrete Rio+20 deliverables and to respond to questions that anyone here may raise in that respect.

On the other hand, we are also genuinely interested in many of the constructive proposals made by others, both on the side of UN member states and major groups. Indeed, we are encouraged by the scale, quality and depth of submissions to UN DESA. This indicates the willingness and enthusiasm of many countries, political and major groups, to commit to and engage in discussions on a positive outcome at Rio+20. We have a lot of valuable content here that can set the basis for reconfirming the political commitment towards sustainable development, establishing a clear vision for green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, enhancing and improving the institutional framework for sustainable development.

The idea of global goals has been mentioned in several contributions, in various forms, and we are considering them carefully. We have clearly indicated in our joint contribution that goals would be instrumental to give renewed impetus to sustainable development. Beyond our current exchange of views on various options, the official report of the UNSG High-level Panel on Global Sustainability will provide us with important additional insights and suggestions which we wish to analyze in due course.

We also look forward to engaging in an exchange of views on structure and format of the outcome document. Form and process can determine outcomes, and we need to opt for formulas that ensure the most effective and positive final results.

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The EU and its Member States underline that funding for the implementation of sustainable development policies and actions will have to come from a variety of sources, both public and private, and we call for a more effective use of existing resources, as well as the mobilisation of available and identification of innovative sources of finance. The EU and its Member States are the world's largest provider of official development assistance (ODA) and hence the biggest supporters of developing countries in achieving the MDGs. We collectively delivered 54 billion euros (70 billion US dollars) last year, which amounts to more than half of global aid. Our commitment to the collective target of 0.7% of GNI has been reaffirmed at the highest political level and we continue to work hard to pursue our efforts on volume and effectiveness.

In terms of civil society participation and in order to ensure a maximum effectiveness, ownership and legitimacy of Rio+20, the EU and its Member States have been supporting an open and inclusive process. In this perspective, we wish to express our full support to all the requests made by the major groups to the Bureau as regards their active participation during the negotiations and at the Conference itself.

Rio+20 can mark the start of a profound, world-wide transition towards a global green and inclusive economy and a more effective sustainable development governance. The EU and its Member States wish to reaffirm their strong commitment to remain actively involved in the preparations of Rio+20 in order to ensure a successful outcome in June next year.

Thank you for your attention.