

UNITED NATIONS – Second Intersessional Meeting of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

New York, 15-16 December 2011

Thursday, 15 December 2011

Statement of Italy

***Delivered by Mr. Paolo Soprano – Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea
Vice-Chair of the UNCSD Preparatory Committee***

Mr Co-Chair, distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Italy associates and aligns itself with the statement made by the European Union on behalf of its Member States and would like to further highlight some specific issues.

Italy is convinced that Rio +20 represents a unique opportunity to strengthen our commitment on sustainable development and respond to present challenges in an integrated and responsive matter.

As for Green Economy in the context of Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication

There is a global common need to foster the transition towards an economy that is inclusive, equitable and strongly oriented to poverty eradication.

Rio+20 should guide such transition by defining, at international level, a set of goals, objectives and actions as part of a broad green economy roadmap. Such international agreement should catalyze new investments and financial resources, offering win-win opportunities, in particular, in the field of sustainable management of natural resources.

The roadmap should have a guiding role, allowing countries to define their way forward according to specific regional and national context and priorities, and to implement their commitments through the support of effective international cooperation.

The transition towards green economy cannot be achieved without changing our current patterns of consumption and production. Last year at CSD19, notwithstanding the unfortunate failure to reach consensus, we experienced an outstanding spirit of mutual cooperation among different negotiating groups that brought us to an agreed text for a 10 year framework of programmes on SCP. Such text, we believe, could represent one of the Rio+20 milestones agreements which will lead us throughout the next decade on a more sustainable path.

As for the assessment of progress towards the fulfilment of SD objectives

Regarding the assessment and the evaluation, it is essential to measure the progresses towards the achievement of sustainable development objectives through the use of indicators. Currently there is no single, universally acceptable definition or assessment metrics for sustainable development. The various international meetings from Rio, through Johannesburg, to recent CSD meetings called upon governments, the international community and main stakeholders to develop ways to measure and assess progress.

Sustainable Development Indicators are needed to increase focus on sustainable development and assist decision-makers at all levels to adopt appropriate and effective sustainable development policies, in line with their specific conditions and priorities.

The ongoing work on internationally agreed sustainable development indicators is very promising and in the future it will help monitor progress. One of the main objectives of sustainable development is to strengthen the synergies between economic and social development and environmental protection. Such efforts will be effective only if we support the development and adoption of indicators that reflect those synergies and that are capable of complementing traditional indicators measuring GDP.

As for the Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development

The successful implementation of sustainable development commitments lies on the effectiveness of sustainable development governance and its institutional framework. Rio+20 needs to define a strong package of reforms in order to match the increasing challenges of sustainable development with an appropriate institutional framework based on all three pillars of sustainable development.

To this extent we underline the need to strengthen the environmental pillar of the SD governance structure and its interrelatedness with the economic and social ones. This can be done by upgrading UNEP into a specialized agency with a revised and strengthened mandate, supported by stable, adequate and predictable financial contributions and operating on an equal footing with other UN specialised agencies. Italy, as well, is convinced that this agency should be based in Nairobi.

As for the participation of civil society

Independently on what will be adopted in Rio next year, the responsibility of a correct and full implementation process is not only global, but also regional and national, and governments as well as the private sector and civil society play a central role in it.

Italy believes that one of the prerequisites for the achievement of sustainable development is the broad involvement and participation of civil society and major groups in decision-making processes. To this extent, the role of national Sustainable Development Councils is crucial as it represents an effective consultative instrument which ensures an inclusive participation and an open dialogue with the key actors of civil society.

At the same time it is important to promote effective and efficient measures focussed on encouraging and facilitating the broad public participation of all stakeholders, including business and private sector, trade unions, NGO's, youth organizations, in the promotion of partnerships and alliances.

Finally Mr. Chairperson, 2012 will, indeed, an important year for all of us working and committed to realize concrete actions towards the fulfilment SD objectives. We are convinced that our efforts and our ability to work together in defining a strong and effective SD outcome for Rio, will represent a strong contribution at the global level to the debate and definition.

Thank you.