

Eighteenth Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD 18)

General statement – Overview of the progress towards sustainable development

Statement by Switzerland

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Let me start by congratulating you and your fellow bureau members for your election. Under your guidance and leadership, we are looking forward to a rich exchange of experiences in implementing important aspects of sustainable development.

What is particularly interesting about the current working cycle is the fact that the topics are very much interrelated. They are largely part of one and the same thematic cluster, maybe more than it was the case in previous working cycles. This is a true opportunity for a stimulating and holistic discussion about how to put the complex vision of a sustainable development into practice.

What is also striking is that all of the issues we are deliberating over the next two weeks are vital elements of a green economy.

- The promotion of more sustainable consumption and production patterns - one of the key topics of this CSD - is an important driver in bringing about the global shift towards a green economy. It is the road that leads to long-term prosperity without destroying the natural resource base of a healthy economic future. Chemicals, waste, mining and transport are key sectors in this regard.
- Chemicals, for example, offer tremendous economic opportunities and benefits. At the same time, chemicals can pose a challenge and risk to the environment and the human health which must be addressed in order to bring about a green economy and to achieve a development that is truly sustainable.
- Likewise, there will be no green economy without waste management policies that reduce social and environmental impacts all along the life cycle of goods and services.
- And of course, a transformation to a green economy is only possible if the economic gains are not set off by the external cost of the transport that it generates.

Since Green Economy will be one of the two main topics of the 2012 Conference on Sustainable Development, the current CSD cycle will also feed into the preparations for this landmark event.

Mr. Chairman, over the last few decades Switzerland has certainly gained some relevant experiences in the areas on our agenda. We are happy to share them over the next two weeks and are likewise eager to learn from the experiences of others.

Thank you and much success for a productive meeting.