



Eire 2004 Jaclaranacht an Aonais Eorpaigh
Ireland 2004 Presidency of the European Union

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**12th Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development
Monday, 19 April, 2004
10.00 – 11.30 hours**

Introductory remarks

Mr. Chairman

Ireland has the honour of speaking on behalf of the European Community, 15 Member States and the 10 Accession Countries.

The EU wishes to acknowledge the work of the CSD Secretariat and Bureau as well as the personal leadership and direction which you as Chairman have brought to bear to help making a success of this important and critical session of innovative format of the CSD. I can confirm our commitment to working with you and all participants towards this end and to continue playing a leading role in promoting Sustainable Development and strengthening its environmental pillar. As we have stated on previous occasions, we agree that this new format is an opportunity to revitalise the CSD's role as the specific UN body for sustainable development issues.

We welcome the reports given to us this morning on the processes and events on various aspects of the sustainable development agenda. These form significant inputs to our deliberations over the coming two weeks.

In particular the EU supports the conclusions of the Stavanger Conference on "Water for the Poorest", namely that actors at all levels should prioritise services to the poorest and take steps to mobilize domestic and external financial resources. The EU also welcomes the conclusions of the Rome Forum on Partnerships for Sustainable Development, namely that partnerships are effective and appropriate tools to reach the goals and commitments on sustainable development, building on multilateral agreements.

The EU also considers that stakeholders have a key role to play in this regard.

The EU thanks the Minister for the Environment of the Republic of Korea for his report on the 8th Special Session of the UNEP Governing Council and the Global Ministerial Environment Forum and for his role in ensuring a very constructive and practical sharing by Ministers of their experiences and possible solutions to achievement of the goals and targets before us. The "Jeju Initiative" firmly places the environmental dimension high on the priority list of actions as an integral part of implementation measures for sustainable development. The EU attaches great

importance to the role of UNEP, working in partnership with other agencies, in helping to expedite implementation of the goals and targets, and in particular the integration of environmental issues and in providing the environmental input to the major event in 2005.

The EU welcomes the report on the Marrakesh Meeting and supports the continuation of the Marrakesh process with a view to the formulation of the 10-year framework of programmes for sustainable consumption and production. This aspect is of particular importance to the three issues in focus during this CSD session, i.e., water, sanitation and human settlements and of very high relevance to water management in water and sanitation services, food production and industrial pollution.

Further reports from the Regional Preparations for CSD 12 have yet to be presented. At this stage the EU recognises the valuable contributions being made by the UN Economic Commissions at the regional and sub-regional level.

The EU wishes to thank the Secretary General for the comprehensive and stimulating reports prepared for this session. We particularly welcome the "Overview of t Progress towards sustainable development" in view of our concern to make progress on all of Agenda 21.

It is clear from these reports that implementation of internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the UN Millenium Declaration, among which is MDG 7 on ensuring environmental sustainability, and in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI), is developing in the right direction but there are marked regional differences showing that some regions are not on track.

The EU recognises this factor and wishes to repeat its commitment to achieving sustainable development goals and targets by moving from words to action. These actions include, for instance, the EU Sustainable Development Strategy, adopted in June 2001, and the EU Water for Life Initiative.

I am also pleased to advise that on World Water Day, 22nd of March, the European Union agreed, for its part, to set up a special facility to promote access to clean water and sanitation for people in countries in Africa, the Caribbean and Pacific regions. A formal decision will be taken at the joint Ministerial meeting between the ACP Countries and the EU in May. The suggestion is to have a first allocation of €250 million approved with a commitment to decide on the mobilisation of a second allocation of €250 million by March 2005 at the latest.

At CSD 12 and CSD 13 the international community must focus on and strengthen activities to achieve these goals and commitments. CSD12 must identify the main obstacles and challenges for implementation, based on a thorough review of progress.

EU Priorities for CSD 12 and CSD 13

The EU has had extensive preparations at Ministerial and senior official level for its participation in this the first of the review years to help ensure a successful outcome and to provide a sound basis for the policy year in 2005.

The EU has identified a number of challenges and priority issues in relation to water, sanitation, human settlements and the various cross-cutting issues which should be addressed both at CSD 12 and 13. These have been published in a user-friendly

summary, copies of which are available in the Conference Room. These priority issues will form the basis for interventions by Ireland on behalf of the EU and by individual Member States of the EU over the coming two weeks. The EU is also interested in a sharing of experiences and listening to the concerns of others and is available to respond to any other issues and innovative best practices which may emerge during our review.

The three themes of water, sanitation and human settlements must be dealt with in a way which recognises the strong interlinkages between them, and addresses the cross cutting issues in an integrated manner.

Constraints/Obstacles

The main constraints and obstacles to implementation should receive priority attention, in particular, finance, good governance, capacity building and technology transfer.

The attraction and more efficient use of financial resources from all sources remains the most significant key to making progress. However, additional finance, particularly foreign direct investment, often remains difficult to unlock due to commercial risks, political risk, good governance issues, a lack of good projects and a lack of national capacity.

In the least developed countries, with little or no potential for returns on private investment, Official Development Aid (ODA) will remain a significant source of financing. Therefore, increased ODA volume and effectiveness are essential.

Water

Key issues from the EU point of view include:

- The MDG in relation to access to safe drinking water and the development of Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) and Water Efficiency Plans by 2005, based on the ecosystem approach.
- The strengthening of transboundary river basin management at all levels
- Prioritisation of water issues in National Sustainable Development Strategies (NSDS) and PRSPs.

Sanitation

Key issues from the EU point of view include:

- Greater recognition of the links between sanitation, basic hygiene education, and the MDGs in relation to health, and
- The need for alternative solutions based on more effective and affordable eco-sanitation approaches.

The EU has considerable experience in the area of integrated water resources management and is prepared to take a lead role in making it available to other countries through the EU Water for Life Initiative with particular emphasis on areas with the greatest need.

Human Settlements

Key issues from the EU point of view include:

- Better urban management and holistic strategic land use planning for sustainable development,
- Access to basic services,
- Compact city approach, and

- Sustainable transport.

Cross-cutting and Other Issues

The EU will emphasise the need for integration of the following cross-cutting and other issues -

Poverty Eradication

Mainstreaming of the targets for water, sanitation and human settlements, including the environmental aspects, into national development plans and budgets, Sustainable Development Strategies, and where applicable, PRSPs which integrate the social, environmental and economic aspects of sustainable development.

In my response to the report of the Marrakech meeting I have already referred to the need to maintain momentum on the 10-year framework of programmes on **Sustainable Consumption and Production** and in which developed countries have a lead role in this regard.

Protecting and **Managing the Natural Resource Base of Economic and Social Development**, e.g. through biodiversity action plans.

The **gender equality** dimension should permeate all stages of the CSD process, particularly in relation to the thematic cluster of water, sanitation and human settlements.

Environmental causes of **human health** problems, and more specifically the water and sanitation related diseases and the growing threat of HIV/Aids to sustainable development.

National Sustainable Development Strategies - the important commitment of formulating and elaborating NSDS, or where applicable, Poverty Reduction Strategies which integrate the economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainable development, and to begin their implementation by 2005.

Education for Sustainable Development

Education for promoting a greater understanding of the links between:

- sanitation, hygiene, and health;
- the need to protect the natural resource base; and
- in particular, the role which women, through capacity building and gender equality in decision making, can have in delivering on commitments.

Partnerships and Other Implementation Measures

Multi-stakeholders partnerships play a fundamental role in promoting sustainable development and implementing the JPOI and represent a key component additional to the wider activities being undertaken by the international community and therefore looks forward to the Partnership Fair and Learning Centre.

Outcome of CSD 12

The EU attaches considerable importance to the outcome of CSD 12. We are looking forward therefore Chairman to your Summary Part 1 and the subsequent High Level Segment and Ministerial discussions. The outcome of this session should be focused on the obstacles, constraints and challenges and the best practices to address them.

From CSD 12 to CSD 13

The EU is of the view that the period between CSD 12 and 13 is critical for developing adequate responses and we will of course come back with more concrete suggestions over the coming days.

These responses should help shape the final output of CSD 13, which in our view, should be a series of structured actions, leading to the achievement of the 2015 and 2020 targets, as well as other relevant targets.

These structured actions and commitments will also represent a significant input to the major event in 2005.