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## COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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### OPENING STATEMENT

Mr. Chairman,

as the European Union Presidency, it is an honour for Slovenia to address this important international forum on behalf of the EU.

The EU believes the CSD plays a unique role on sustainable development issues within the UN system and needs the capacity to deliver ambitious results. One of its added values is to review and decide on different aspects of sustainable development in an integrated manner, addressed also at the high level segment. In this respect, we would like to acknowledge the important conclusions and recommendations in the Chair's reports of the CSD regional meetings on this cycle's topics.

Agriculture and rural development are important issues in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. The recently enlarged European Union has also placed great emphasis on actions towards achieving the internationally agreed development goals. The EU's commitments in the field of agriculture and rural development tackle two major challenges:

- Firstly, to look more closely to the objectives of poverty eradication, food security and sustainable management of natural resources in the light of policy coherence, and
- Secondly, to take into account social, cultural and environmental impacts throughout the lifecycle of sustainable agricultural production.

The EU has thus developed a number of initiatives and standards for sustainable agricultural production. Among environmental issues integrated into the Common Agricultural Policy are cross compliance, organic farming and agri-environmental measures, measures on Natura 2000 network of protected areas and other measures (e.g. conservation of genetic resources in agriculture, soil protection measures, and quality label systems as well as standards for sustainable use of pesticides).

We also consider that this CSD cycle offers an excellent opportunity to highlight the synergies between the UN conventions and the implementation of policies in related areas. For example, the implementation of the **Convention to Combat Desertification** in affected countries will contribute to the attainment of the MDGs, namely by reducing land degradation, water scarcity and loss of biodiversity. Additionally, special attention should be paid to the negative impacts of climate change. The EU Member States believe that the 10 Year Strategic Plan and Framework to Enhance the Implementation of the Convention (2008-2018) brings a new impetus to the **Convention** activity as well as to the fulfilment of the commitments agreed by the international community in

the Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. We are therefore committed to elaborate a road map to contribute to an enhanced implementation of the Convention.

Water is becoming a scarce resource, underscoring major development goals for many countries, especially in the context of poverty reduction. The review of CSD 13 water and sanitation decisions allows for both reaffirming commitments taken and drawing concrete conclusions on how to overcome the deficiencies and shortcomings in implementation and to better monitor progress. Water and sanitation is also a very relevant inter-linkage issue between the thematic themes in this session. Integrated water resource management with strong stakeholder participation and a gender and pro-poor perspective is also a key instrument to ensure a balanced development by integrating water considerations in other sectoral policies.

Fostering the sustainable use of natural resources and soil preservation are major challenges set out in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) and highlighted throughout the Secretary General's reports on Agriculture and Land to CSD 16. To address these challenges, the EU sees a key role for integrated planning and management of land and other resources inter alia by improving the administrative systems. In this respect, various functions associated with land must be taken into account, such as agriculture, rural development, soil protection, climate regulation, forestry, biodiversity conservation and sustainable tourism as well as institutional, health and educational systems of the societies involved. Better harmonization of information is needed to move toward a more sustainable use of soil resources. This will help to reduce environmentally-induced migration which is likely to be a major issue impacting the UN ECE region in the years to come.

This CSD cycle is also devoted to Africa and its sustainable development. In this context, we would like to stress "The Africa-EU Strategic Partnership: (Joint Africa-EU Strategy and Action Plan)" adopted at the 2007 Lisbon Summit. The parties agreed to work together on development issues, based on sectoral partnerships and dialogue, on peace and security, governance and human rights, on trade and regional integration, as well as on policies toward reaching the MDGs.

The EU considers that the following issues are key for achieving sustainable development in Africa: ODA, Aid Effectiveness, Policy Coherence, Global Partnerships, Agriculture, Climate Change, Biodiversity, Desertification, Infrastructure Development, Peace and Development, Trade and Markets, Mainstreaming of Gender Issues and Continuing Challenges.

We are confident that the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership and its First Action Plan (2008–2010) will facilitate the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals on the African continent. Our joint commitments and responsibilities demonstrate our determination to successfully address all present and future development challenges.

The CSD 16/17 themes are closely interrelated and the inter-linkages between them as well as the cross-cutting issues identified at CSD 11 are at the core of sustainable development. This session offers a unique opportunity to address and review these issues in an open forum. It also provides the chance to improve the knowledge base needed in our endeavours toward meeting sustainable development objectives. To enhance the integrated approach, the EU proposes to focus on the following three priorities:

1. Inter-linkages between agriculture, land management, and natural resources, focused on water, climate change, biodiversity, forests and desertification;
2. Cross-cutting goal of reaching sustainable consumption patterns, focused on food chain; and
3. Promotion of policy coherence and broad ownership of strategies as well as stakeholder engagement in national sustainable development and poverty reduction strategies, including in research and education.

The EU would like to emphasise the importance of CSD in the full and effective participation of Major Groups. We wish to highlight the role of women and youth, and indigenous and local communities. Shortly after the closure of this year's session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, we would also like to take the opportunity to reiterate our appreciation for the recent adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous communities as traditional knowledge holders have a vital role in the development of rural areas. Therefore, their rights need to be protected and their initiatives for sustainable development further encouraged.

We attach great importance to the UN "Delivering as One" and are convinced of the significance to secure coherence, complementarity and appropriate financial instruments, including both, multilateral and bilateral cooperation. The contributions coming from different donors need to be coherent and based on the principles agreed under the Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness. We will work toward joint multi-annual programming based on partner countries' poverty reduction strategies and the countries' own budget processes. Other tools include common implementation mechanisms, shared analyses, joint donor wide missions, and co-financing arrangements.

The implementation of the multi-annual work programme of the CSD is now approaching its mid-way. It is felt from our experience and from comments of other member groups that the CSD can be further strengthened and improved. Such a CSD would be an important commission in fostering sustainable development in the UN system. The EU has always put special focus on action-orientated policies aimed at achieving progress on global sustainable development goals. In a review year, we should not forget the importance of the forthcoming policy sessions and we should devote sufficient time to results-orientated discussions and exchanges of views among all participants. We would like to call upon all parties involved to share good ideas and best practices and to prepare a solid ground for final decisions to be made in the next year.