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Slovensko predsedstvo EU 2008
Slovenian Presidency of the EU 2008
La Présidence slovène de l'UE 2008

COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT Sixteenth Session, New York, 05 – 16 May 2008

LAND Part 2

Statement by
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on behalf of the European Union
New York, 8 May 2008

Mr. Chair, distinguished delegates!

I have the honour to present this statement on behalf of the European Union.

The Candidate Countries Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Montenegro, Serbia, as well as the Republic of Moldova and Georgia align themselves with this statement.*

- On behalf of the European Union the Slovenian Presidency wishes to emphasise and acknowledge the Johannesburg plan of implementation commitment to equitable **access to land, enforceable land rights, with particular attention to equal access of women to land tenure and ownership, and transparent land policy** as a prerequisite for economic growth and poverty eradication.
- Access to land is a prerequisite for gaining **access to other productive resources**. Unequal distribution of resources and scarcity of these can lead to tensions and increased risk of conflicts. In a number of countries, the insecurity of land tenure remains a significant constraint for investment, sustainable natural resource management and economic development.
- An appropriate legal framework supported by robust land policies is required, together with proper tools for their implementation. Clear and unambiguous **land tenure and registration system**, along with an effective **land administration mechanism**, would help promote investments and good land management, including sustainable natural resource management. The use of up-to-date technologies and land registration systems should be promoted, and transparency in land ownership ensured.
- Sustainable land management is based on a sound **land administration** system which ensures that information on the ownership, value and use of land and land plots is properly recorded, surveyed and disseminated. Only on this basis, a more comprehensive and sustainable land management, taking into account the economic, social and environmental impacts of different types of land-use and land development measures, can be pursued.
- The EU promotes consensual land policy processes and supports collaboration between state, civil society, bilateral and multilateral stakeholders, with the ultimate objective of pro-poor land governance. These principles and values are embodied in the 2004 "**EU Land Policy Guidelines**" that provide conceptual and methodological support to land policy development and land reform programmes. The EU welcomes the opportunity to share **experience** gained in many EU

* Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continues to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

candidate countries and new member states, where the regulation of this field has been successfully completed and serves as a good basis for further development.

- Land rights are closely related to the fundamental rights of citizens. The rights of minorities and indigenous peoples are to be adequately recognised. The adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was a milestone in history and we welcome developments where the principles enshrined in the UN Declaration already lead to more equitable land policies and measures at the national level. In this context, the EU wishes to highlight in particular the principle of free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples in relation to interactions involving their lands, territories and resources.
- The EU encourages the continued engagement of governments, international community and United Nations agencies and organisations, financial institutions in land-related activities at regional, national and international level. In this regard we could consider application of the existing knowledge, re-thinking and optimisation of land use, technology and innovation advances, providing payments for ecosystem/environmental services and promotion of viable initiatives by civil society and private sector. These interventions should be build on their comparative advantages and knowledge, should take into account regional initiatives (such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development, African Action Plan, African Water Initiative, Green Belt for the Sahel Initiative) and respect the principles of coordination, complementarity and coherence in line with the **Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness**.
- Looking ahead to **CSD 17** the EU favours mutual sharing of knowledge and experiences. The challenge is to focus on concrete measures, which will speed-up the implementation of the Johannesburg commitments while recognising experiences and differences of countries and regions.

Thank you.