

**Joint statement
on behalf of the
Regional Commissions of the United Nations**

**Nineteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development
Opening session
2 May 2011**

Mr. Chair,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured to address you on behalf of the five Regional Commissions of the United Nations: the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA).

The Regional Commissions are responsible for organizing, in collaboration with relevant partners, the Regional Implementation Meetings for each of the thematic cycles of the Commission on Sustainable Development. The Regional Implementation Meetings for the current cycle were held in each region between October and December 2009. The discussions revolved around progress and achievements, challenges and constraints, and policy options with regard to all five thematic areas.

Mr. Chair,
Delegates,

Regional realities, priorities, challenges and policy solutions differ substantially. This is reflected in the approaches of each of our Commissions to the challenges of sustainability, as mandated by our Member States. It is reflected in how we address established and new concepts.

Despite these differences, the outcomes of the Regional Implementation Meetings and the lessons arising out of related work undertaken over the years by the Regional Commissions reveal a number of common policy directions, many of which are also —to our satisfaction— reflected in the reports of Secretary-General. As already expressed during the Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting, the Regional Commissions would like to stress the following policy areas and measures, for the consideration of delegates during this session of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

In **transport**, there is a need for integrated transportation strategies which explore inter- and multimodality, and which are conceived as part of broader strategies for land use and infrastructure investment. Public transport options must be improved and expanded in both urban and rural areas, as a key factor in

ensuring social inclusion, poverty eradication, access to basic services and emissions reduction. Improvements are also needed in fuel efficiency and in the development of fuel alternatives, and in the safety of all modes of transport, particularly road transport. Countries can benefit from integration efforts to explore the full potential of multi-country infrastructure in ensuring access to markets and geographical integration. Countries can also benefit from transferring, and nationally adopting state-of-the-art technology such as less polluting transport systems. In this regard, ECLAC and ECE have prepared, with the collaboration of other Regional Commissions and institutions, two side events on sustainable transport. ECLAC, in collaboration with Columbia University and the government of Spain, will host “Sustainable transport policies, eco-efficient infrastructure and green economies in the Americas” on May 3 at 1:15 in Room B. ECE and ESCAP will host “Transport for Sustainable Development” on May 11 at 1:15 in Room 2. We believe these side events can provide useful elements for delegations in the course of the negotiations during the next few days and warmly invite all present to attend.

In **mining**, regulation and enforcement mechanisms are needed to put into practice the polluter-pays principle and the precautionary approach, while taking into consideration the full life cycle of a mine. This implies environmental, social and sustainability impact assessments, adequate land use planning, including the restriction or prohibition of mining in sensitive areas; and legislation —and its enforcement— on mine operations, closure and rehabilitation. There is also a need for mechanisms for ensuring that the benefits generated by mining activity are distributed equitably within and across generations, for instance through investments in human capital and appropriate infrastructure development. Governance systems, too, are needed. These must be rooted in enhanced integration, and linkages between the mining sector with other development sectors, broad participation by multiple stakeholders and ensuring access to and transparency in the handling of information. Enhanced capacity for accident prevention and preparedness, and support to enable small and medium-sized enterprises engaged in mining to adopt commercially viable, sustainable practices, are also critical.

On **chemicals**, gaps in financing and incentives, infrastructure, institutions, technical capacity and public awareness, at the national and regional levels, must be addressed in order to ensure adequate implementation of multilateral agreements and of a Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM). Capacity must be built to address accidents and monitor the long-term environmental effects of chemicals on human health and the environment, as well as to enforce the polluter-pays principle and to reduce demand for toxic chemicals by providing alternative products and processes. Successful conclusion of the ongoing negotiations on an agreement on mercury is essential. Providing legal advice and technical support to developing country Governments in updating their laws and regulations to bring them in line with relevant multilateral international agreements should be actively encouraged. A strong emphasis should be placed on the integration of sound management of chemicals into national policies for economic growth and poverty reduction.

With regard to **waste management**, the CSD outcome should point towards the adoption of integrated waste management strategies that consider prevention, recycling, energy recovery, and disposal; the development of waste management as a formal income-generating service sector that contributes to poverty reduction, including models for better community engagement; the strengthening of administrative and technical capacity of local governments; investment in adequate infrastructure; better enforcement of the laws relating to the Basel Convention, with greater control at ports and training for customs officials; and, finally, the adoption of measures to address the particular vulnerability of small island developing states to waste trafficking.

Regional and interregional cooperation should be considered important instruments in the implementation of policy measures in all of these areas.

With regard to the cross-cutting issue of **sustainable consumption and production**, the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production (or 10YFP) should consider the lessons of the Marrakech Process concerning the importance of regional approaches. The 10YFP is a critical link between the CSD process and that of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (or Rio+20) and particularly the discussions on a “green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication”. It should enable a systemic shift —rather than incremental changes— through a more effective focus on sustainability concepts by policies that affect consumption and production. Commitment to concrete means of implementation will be needed to support action.

We anticipate that one of the major challenges for the effectiveness of a 10YFP will be to integrate it into policy areas that are critical to any transformation in consumption and production, such as fiscal policy; small and medium-sized enterprise development; innovation, science and technology policies; and infrastructure development. While discussing effective institutional frameworks for sustainable development, we invite member states to consider the instrumental role that the multidisciplinary capacities of the Regional Commissions can play in this regard.

I thank you for your attention.