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**Opening remarks by
MR. SHA ZUKANG
UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS
TO THE 18TH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION FOR SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT**

**delivered by Mr. Jomo Kwame Sundaram
Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development**

New York, 3 May 2010

Distinguished Chair
Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a pleasure to join His Excellency, Dr. Luis Alberto Ferraté Felice, in welcoming you to this important session of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

The Commission turns its focus in the current biennium to the five issues of transport, chemicals, waste management, mining and the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption Patterns.

We must work together on all these topics to ensure that policies and practices support sustainable lifestyles for growing populations. We need to ensure that future generations may not only survive, but also thrive. That is why we are here today.

Significant new challenges have emerged since the Commission last reviewed the issue of transport, together with energy, at its ninth session in 2001, and then at its fourteenth and fifteenth sessions held in 2006 and 2007.

First, for the past two years, global energy markets have been highly volatile, with significant impacts on the transport sector.

Second, the global financial crisis - with its negative impacts on employment and disposable incomes - has led to significant negative economic impacts on many transport businesses and service providers.

Third, further recent scientific evidence of the negative impacts of greenhouse gas emissions underscores the need for urgent global action to curb the projected growth of anthropogenic emissions, including emissions in the transport sector.

It is important to note some progress towards the 2020 goal on sound management of chemicals agreed – at the World Summit on Sustainable Development. The Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, the implementation of related international legal instruments, the strengthening of information sharing and risk

communication, the establishment of programmes on risk assessment, the contributions of the Major Groups and the development of indicators and monitoring, have, together, contributed to the promotion of chemical safety.

However, global progress has not been sufficient. Sound chemicals management is frequently accorded low priority, and is consequently under-resourced, with implications for the health and welfare of billions of people.

In most regions, urbanization and economic growth are the main reasons for high waste generation. Rapid growth and development in both urban and rural areas have increased the overall volume of human generated waste, including industrial and hazardous wastes. Rising incomes have enabled waste management infrastructure to expand in some cases, while in others, growth in waste volumes has outstripped the expansion of management capacity.

Research and information exchanges on waste management are vital. Studies have revealed that a dearth of quality data for waste monitoring is a major obstacle for global waste management. We need to improve the transfer and diffusion of appropriate technologies and know-how.

The 3 R's – Reduce, Reuse, Recycle – are the core ingredients for proper waste management, both at the individual and global levels, and offer great potential to gain materials efficiency, and limit energy consumption. Recycling not only reduces the extraction and processing of natural resources, but also saves energy used for such activities.

While higher prices for most metals before the crisis increased incentives for recycling, mining subsidies —whether explicit or implicit—decreased such incentives. Mining provides livelihood for millions of people in developing countries. But its activities have also been associated with serious environmental and social impacts on communities living near extraction sites, while generating limited benefits to producing countries in terms of economic growth and poverty reduction.

Since 2002, major international multi-stakeholder initiatives have been launched, targeting more transparency of the revenues generated by mining activities by both companies and governments. The mining industry has also stepped up engagement in social issues, for example, through its support of corporate social and environmental responsibility (CSER) activities. Adequate capacities are often lacking at national and local levels for planning and enforcing environmental, safety and health regulations.

Excellencies,

Whether measured by footprint analysis or by the number of endangered species, degraded ecosystems and land, deforestation or decrease in fish stocks, it is clear that development has exceeded the carrying capacity of ecosystems in many geographic areas.

With an ever-increasing global population and its inherent and far-reaching challenges, we must accelerate our efforts to achieve sustainable development goals and to meet our commitments to future generations.

I wish you all a very productive and successful 18th Session.