

[Mr. Chairman]

As the excellent Secretary General report testifies, determined people in many quarters continue to work hard to ensure that progress is made in the field of sustainable development. As a result, there are many hopeful signs and numerous success stories. To highlight a few examples only:

- The PIC Convention has just entered into force while the POP Convention will likely do so in the course of this year;
- Trade capacity as well as fair trade initiatives along the entire supply chain are flourishing and create new opportunities, not least for developing country exporters;
- An increasing number of leaders among large companies are changing their license to operate and see corporate social responsibility as a means to strengthen both competitiveness and reputation;
- And there are clear indications that the International community is beginning to get really serious in assuming its responsibilities in the quest for the MDGs and the JPOI goals and targets.

Still, almost two years after Johannesburg, it seems to us that the WSSD has, unfortunately, not yet created a truly new momentum and dynamic for Sustainable Development *to the extent* that we all were hoping for.

To be sure, this is not to be ascribed to Johannesburg. It is rather because in many countries as well as internationally the economic and political environment has not been conducive to keeping Sustainable Development high on the agenda. At both levels, other developments have taken precedence and caught the attention of policy-makers, the media and people at large.

A second important reason is the persistence of fundamental challenges to Sustainable Development. Chief among them are the need for even more resource commitments, political will, policy coherence and a reversal of adverse framework conditions. It is on these grounds that current projections on the majority of internationally agreed development goals are disquieting, Cancun has been a missed opportunity and the Kyoto Protocol has not yet come into force.

But also in the corporate world, mainstreaming sustainability is far from achieved. While we want to underscore that the concept enjoys increasing visibility and important initiatives are being undertaken, corporate social responsibility has not yet taken firm root on a broad scale and remains an add-on activity in the majority of companies which have embraced it.

[Mr. Chairman]

The Commission on Sustainable Development has a critical role to play in our common quest for Sustainable Development at all levels. The CSD can and must contribute to translate vision into action. To this end, we firmly believe that its new format is a tremendous opportunity. Indeed, the new CSD work program, by concentrating on specific thematic clusters, has the potential to provide the much needed focus to the

Sustainable Development debate, while dealing with related topics in an integrated manner. Moreover, the emphasis on experience sharing and the exchange on lessons learned during the Implementation Year is bound to reach tangible and viable results.

Let me conclude by expressing our appreciation for the tireless efforts of Chairman Brende in providing an innovative setting to effectively address the critical issue of *water, sanitation and human settlements*, and by reaffirming our commitment to helping reinvigorate the CSD as the primary international mechanism for Sustainable Development.