

**Statement to the Press by the CSD-18 Chairperson,
H.E. Dr. Luis Alberto Ferraté Felice, Minister of the Environment
and Natural Resources of Guatemala,**

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Achieving green and equitable growth and development at the heart of CSD-18

On Monday, 3 May, the Commission on Sustainable Development started a new two-year cycle reviewing five sustainable development themes—mining, chemicals, transport, the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production, and waste management. These five themes come together to form what we call the ‘materials cycle’ that starts with the excavation of minerals and other natural resources to their transformation into goods and services to their final processing and recycling as wastes.

The central question for the Commission—and for which we hope next year’s session will provide some definitive policy responses—is: how to achieve green and equitable growth and development for a growing population through better management of materials? More specifically, how can we de-couple development from resource use?

Striking a balance: the need for reforms in unsustainable consumption and production patterns

Quite simply, the world is consuming too much energy and materials. Certainly, over-consumption occurs largely in the developed world, and parts of the emerging and developing worlds. But at the same time, over a billion people suffer from under-consumption, including of basic necessities such as food, water, and shelter. Here is an example of the inequality in consumption: The 20 per cent of the population in the highest-income countries accounted for 77 per cent of total private consumption in 2005, while the poorest 20 accounted for only 1.3 per cent. This CSD cycle must address both over- and under-consumption around the world.

There are many other concrete challenges. The volume of municipal solid waste in 2006 is estimated to be 2 billion tons globally, and is currently increasing by 8 per cent per year. Another example: worldwide, an estimated 1.2 million people are killed, and as many as 50 million are injured, in road accidents each year. When it comes to chemical management, we now know that babies are coming into this world with over 200 toxic chemicals in their blood.

CSD: a unique forum to help mobilize political will

What can CSD do about things like these? CSD is the most neutral forum to discuss these sensitive values and principles. CSD is a unique forum that allows all sides of sensitive issues get a fair airing and hearing, from the points of view of all member states and major groups.

CSD’s first task is to assess where we are today, identify what has been done and where policy action is still needed —not only in the five themes of the cycle but also in a range of cross-cutting issues. CSD does this against the broad-based, multi-sectoral backdrop of Agenda 21 and the

Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, rather than through an exclusively environmental, or economic, or social sectoral lens. CSD combines all these lenses in a single wide-angle prism.

On specific issues such as biofuels, the green economy, or payment for ecosystem services, CSD allows consensus outcomes to be woven out of the threads of diverse positions. No other forum integrates economic, social and environmental dimensions of the materials cycle from such a range of countries and major groups as does CSD.

CSD will help mobilize the political will and forge partnerships needed to accelerate the implementation of decisions. The high-level segment of next week is intended precisely to build such political will. Ministers who will attend hold a range of portfolios including the environment, development, finance, agriculture, mining and transport. Such heterogeneity embodies the multidisciplinary spirit of sustainable development.