



Delegation of the European Union

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Permanent Mission of Spain

Statement on behalf of the European Union

by

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**on the occasion of the 18th Session of
the Commission on Sustainable Development**

OPENING STATEMENT

New York, May 3, 2010

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Mister Chairman, Mister Assistant Secretary General,
Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,

Much has changed in the world since Johannesburg in 2002 when we looked at the challenges related to the thematic issues of the current CSD cycle: transport, chemicals, waste, mining and sustainable consumption and production (SCP)

On one hand, we can see remarkable improvements, both in the well-being of many societies and in the state and availability of science and technology. However much remains to be done to address the global challenges of tackling poverty, hunger, environmental degradation, and misuse of available resources.

In this sense, while looking at the topics of its current cycle, we believe that CSD18 constitutes an excellent opportunity to re-visit the core message of sustainable development, in the light of the recent Report of the Secretary General, stating that "the three pillars represent not three separate targets but a single one, that development is the midwife of sustainability, just as much as sustainability is the life support system for development" as well as the way in which sustainable development is being implemented.

In order to achieve this goal, it is crucial, particularly during this review year, that we take this opportunity to share best practises and exchange information on the various topics of the CSD thematic cycle.

Mr Chairman,

The EU and its Members States would like to highlight some key points based on our experience:

On **transport**, we would like to highlight that mobility is an essential part of a sustainable world, especially for a high standard of living, international trade and tourism. But, it causes significant environmental and health problems, for instance air pollution which particularly affects children. Moreover, transport, being largely dependent on fossil fuels, is one of the big drivers of climate change.

We are looking forward to exchange best practices tomorrow on how to address these negative effects, with a focus on managing demand, while establishing sustainable transport systems and changing mobility habits, improving transport energy efficiency and promoting clean transport in general.

Mr Chairman,

We would like to recall that **waste** is linked to many of the Chapters of Agenda 21 - either as a cause of a number of environmental problems, or as a result/output of human activities. There are clear connections between waste management issues and the need to change unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, as well as to protect and manage the natural resource base of economic and social development.

The EU and its Members States aim to achieve, both internally and internationally, a decoupling of environmental degradation and resource consumption from economic growth.

This can be done by promoting the **waste hierarchy**, ie by favouring waste prevention over its reuse, followed by recycling, recovery of energy embedded in waste, and with disposal as the last resort. As well as ensuring the safe and environmentally sound management of waste in line with high technical standards. In addition, it is also our priority to continue to combat illegal shipments of waste, improving the overall environmental performance of products throughout their life-cycle, and addressing unsustainable patterns of consumption and production.

The EU and its Members States see **mining**, as the most telling example of connecting economic, environmental and social challenges and opportunities. Raw materials are crucial for the functioning of modern societies; they can provide new job opportunities and wealth. But, when not managed sustainably, they provide wealth only to the few, cause environmental degradation, poverty and, in the case of limited resources, can even raise tensions and conflict. The EU puts great emphasis in its mining-related policies, to finding new solutions "to do *more* with less", to increase the wealth and welfare of all people and to lower pressure on eco-systems.

Access to raw materials could be increasingly limited in the future and it will become ever more necessary to minimise the generated waste, increase recycling and reuse of water and other resources, and minimize the energy used to produce raw materials and products.

Mr Chairman

Chemicals provide us with both great benefits but also raise important challenges. As part of our daily life, chemicals contribute to improved living standards, but their production often makes unsustainable demands on consumption of natural resources. If chemicals are not managed soundly over their whole life-cycle, they can negatively influence human health and the environment.

The EU chemicals system, REACH¹, aims to address the above challenges, by setting out rules for registration, evaluation, authorization and restriction of chemicals. Through REACH, responsibility has moved from governments having to prove risks to requiring manufacturers, importers and downstream users to make sure that the substances they develop, place on the market or use, do not harm human health or the environment throughout their life cycle.

We wish to underline the importance of implementation of the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals and the need to adopt a global system of recognizing and communicating risks/hazards.

We believe that the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) constitutes an important global framework for strengthening capacities for sound chemicals management and narrowing the capacity gap between the developing and the developed world. All countries should use the SAICM process actively, in order to achieve the 2020 goal of ensuring that chemicals are produced and used in ways that minimise adverse effects on the environment and human health.

The EU and its Member States have strongly supported the efforts made to improve International Environmental Governance in the chemicals and waste sector and warmly welcomes the synergies decisions adopted by the Extra-Ordinary Conferences of the Parties (COPs) of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions. However, we think that there remains a need to avoid further fragmentation for chemicals not already covered by

¹ Regulation on Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals. It entered into force on 1st June 2007 and streamlines and improves the former legislative framework on chemicals of the EU.

Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) and we think this CSD cycle could usefully discuss this issue.

Mr Chairman

On **sustainable consumption and production**, as underlined by the SG report, our development patterns have exceeded the carrying capacity of ecosystems in various geographic areas. To meet the basic needs of a growing population within the Earth's limited resources, we have to rethink the concept of growth and to come up with a more sustainable model both for production, consumption and for the economy as a whole that could deliver important social benefits.

To accelerate the shift towards Sustainable Consumption and Production, the EU and its Members States are committed to shape and launch a 10-year framework of programmes (10YFP). Next to contributing to the goal of changing unsustainable consumption and production patterns, the 10YFP can also be a major response to the current political demand for input on how to green our economies. We are looking forward to exchanging early views on a common vision for the 10YFP without delay, and share our experience while also learning from the experience of other regions concerning efforts to promote SCP patterns.

Our regional plan of action on SCP² constitutes a framework that includes good practices as well as measures which improve the environmental performance of products throughout their life cycle, stimulate demand of better products, fosters greener technologies and help consumers to choose better through more coherent labelling.

The EU would like to emphasize the encouraging results obtained from the Marrakech Process (MP). We have also contributed to this process by promoting SCP in emerging economies, co-funding capacity building activities within the framework of international Marrakech Task Forces. Furthermore, during the past few years we promoted SCP activities specifically in Asia through the SWITCH programme with some 90 million Euros.

Sustainable consumption and production are interlinking the other issues of this CSD cycle which all have potentially serious implications for human health, decent work, and the sustainability of our natural resources, ecosystems and biodiversity. The importance of taking a life-cycle approach, improving education, for all societal sectors, and ensuring a gender perspective needs to be highlighted. We need to promote policy coherence for interlinked issues and strengthen the coordination and cooperation amongst the key actors. It is crucial that, during this review year, we share best practises and exchange information about means of implementation to achieve sustainable development.

Finally, as an integral part of the CSD Programme the EU has always supported the SIDS Day. This meeting is planned as the Preparatory Committee Meeting (Prep-Com) for the High-Level Meeting in which Member States will undertake a 5-year review of the Mauritius Strategy for the Implementation of the Barbados Plan of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island States in September. The EU will actively participate and contribute to the process.

The EU looks forward to an ambitious and successful outcome of this CSD cycle that will accurately reflect the core of sustainable development in relation to all these topics.

Thank you for your attention.

² the Sustainable Consumption and Production and Sustainable Industrial Policy Action Plan, (2008)