

COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
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Speaking Notes (Delivered version, 01 May 2006)

Opening: Overview of overall progress of implementation of Agenda 21, JPOI

Mr. Chairman,

Austria, as Presidency of the EU, has the honour of speaking on behalf of the European Community and its Member States. The Acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania, the Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro, and the EFTA country Norway, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.

The EU wishes to acknowledge the work of the CSD Secretariat and Bureau to prepare this important and critical session of the second cycle of the CSD multi-year programme of work. I can confirm our commitment to working with you and all participants towards a successful outcome and to continue playing a leading role in promoting sustainable development and strengthening its environmental dimension.

We welcome the reports given to us this morning concerning processes and events on various aspects of the sustainable development agenda. These will provide significant inputs to our deliberations over the coming two weeks. The EU shares the view that an exhaustive oral report by the Secretariat on each of the thematic issues would further facilitate meaningful discussions amongst delegations.

We acknowledge the importance of the report on the overall review of progress in the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation that was submitted to us according to the decision taken at CSD 11. It will guide our efforts to implement the Millennium Development Goals as well as the JPOI.

The report contains signs of hope in some areas. Poverty has been reduced in some continents. Significant progress is being made in extending access to safe drinking water and sanitation. Some progress is visible with regard to the Johannesburg 2005 target on national sustainable development strategies. Furthermore, the report elaborates on progress under the Marrakech Process on Sustainable Production and Consumption Patterns. Finally, it reports a rise in ODA levels and a continuing shift from loans to grants.

The SG's report demonstrates that there is an inherent link between sustainable management of natural resources, provision of food and safe drinking water, protection of human health, increasing risks of natural disasters and the current state of development at global level. Ecosystems must be preserved if we want to continue benefiting from the services they provide and ensure long-term human well-being. This is indispensable for long-term poverty eradication and sustainable development.

Mr. Chair, this should be the basic thinking for our work in the next two weeks.

The current CSD cycle is to address a significant number of challenges facing all countries. These challenges will require not only policy change but also a change of individual and societal behaviour. We believe that our exchange of experiences should focus on 'success factors', which have contributed to effective programmes, projects and policies. We must also be aware that we are dealing with a group of issues that are intricately related. Therefore, the EU wishes to see strong emphasis placed on means of implementation and

other cross-cutting issues, in particular the promotion of sustainable consumption and production with individuals and companies, as well as of corporate social and environmental responsibility and accountability with the private sector.

Likewise, an integrated approach will be essential for addressing and overcoming financial constraints in paving our way to global sustainable development. Policy decisions made today will have far-reaching environmental, social and economic consequences. Therefore, we should bear in mind, throughout our deliberations, that there is a cost of inaction.

I wish to express my appreciation to all those who have worked in attracting the finance community to join us in this year's CSD session to promote mutual communication and awareness.

We believe that CSD 14 will identify central challenges and constraints to pave the way for meaningful discussions and decisions at CSD 15 on policies and action to overcome these. Inter-sessionally, further analytical work and review of practices should continue while enhanced contribution by partnerships and stronger involvement of the private sector should be pursued.

In the coming year, in the run-up to CSD 15, these challenges should be further studied to provide guidance for ministerial discussion and adoption of policy decisions, in a spirit of dialogue with potential implementers, investors, UN-agencies and IFIs. It will also be important to start discussions on appropriate follow-up arrangements that need to be agreed upon at CSD 15.

Mr. Chair, in 2001 the EU adopted a comprehensive sustainable development strategy, which is currently undergoing an ambitious review. The revised strategy will be adopted in June 2006 by our Heads of States and Governments and will confirm our collective commitment to approach policy making in an integrated manner, and promote synergies and coherence across policies, both internal and external.

Furthermore, also in support of this strong commitment to contributing to a global sustainable development, the EU has adopted a timetable for Member States to increase aid budgets and to achieve 0.7% of GNI by 2015, with an intermediate collective target of 0.56% by 2010, and calls on partners to follow this lead. These commitments should see annual EU aid double to over €66 billion in 2010.

We have come to this review session to share views and experiences on key challenges and obstacles to implementation. We are willing to integrate the concerns of actors worldwide into our thinking and learn from others in order to form a clearer global picture. Mr. Chair, we are also looking forward to hearing the ideas of all stakeholders and participants on concrete actions and possible solutions to be decided upon at CSD 15.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.
