

**COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**  
**Fourteenth Session, New York, 01 – 12 May 2006**

**Speaking Notes (Final version, 01 May 2006)**

**Regional discussions: Europe and others**

- The EU wishes to thank the UNECE Secretariat and UNDESA for organising the Regional Implementation Forum in the run up to this year's CSD session. The UNECE RIF's outcome reinforced our appreciation that countries, also within our own region, experience quite different challenges and opportunities in implementing their commitments on CSD14/15 thematic issues.
- These diverse conditions and situations are well described in the Chair's Summary which is a valuable tool for both this session and CSD 15. Indeed, the results of regional meetings should not be lost when bringing the debate to the global level.
- The EU notes with concern the Forum's assessment that the region is not yet on track to deliver its JPOI commitments relating to the four thematic issues as well as to the other cross-cutting issues as identified at CSD 11. An in-depth political dialogue on common policy objectives and specific countries' needs as well as exchange of best practices and lessons learned are therefore very important steps.
- Examples of policies and initiatives within and outside the EU, also in cooperation with other partners, are contributing to making progress in the region. We have a special responsibility in terms of sustainable consumption and production. Internally, some examples that are relevant to this cycle include the EU Energy Initiative for Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development, the Emissions Trading Scheme and Environmental Technology Action Plan as well as partnerships such as REEEP, REN21, MEDREP and JREC.
- We also welcome the outcomes of the Beijing Renewable Energy Conference and the recent Berlin Conference on sustainable energy consumption, which CSD14 can usefully build on. Externally, with the EU Neighbourhood Policy and the recently adopted EU Strategy for Africa for instance, the EU places a strong emphasis on achieving global sustainable development.
- The EU views resource and energy efficiency as well as sustainable industrial development as central for this CSD cycle taking due account of cross-cutting issues, in particular means of implementation. Preventing degradation in all aspects of sustainable development – the economic, social as well as the environmental dimension – represents a most serious and intricate challenge.
- For energy, this means that we need to develop an integrated approach to the issue of sustainable energy which relates to climate change, air pollution, human health, poverty, security of supply and economic development. Renewable energy and sustainable energy technologies will play a central role in placing the world onto a more sustainable energy path.
- We still face serious difficulties in our region, in particular with regard to access to energy services; energy efficiency and diversification of the energy mix, including increasing the share of renewable energy; and energy security. A conducive investment climate and innovative finance and market-oriented instruments, such as the CDM and JI are essential to tackling this challenge. Working out a framework for progress and co-operation – both between governments and between the private and public sectors – is

one of the most important challenges facing us. Action to reinforce research and development and demonstration efforts is urgent.

- The EU believes that fighting against air pollution requires an integrated approach. CSD14 can usefully address issues such as urban planning and land-use management, health and environmental impacts of air pollution, including indoor air pollution, as well as topics not currently covered by other fora where international cooperation is required such as maritime shipping. In moving forward, we should start by building on those areas where we already have made and can make further progress. An example of this is the UNECE Convention on Long-range Trans-boundary Air Pollution, which has already resulted in substantial reductions of air pollution in Europe.
- Climate change poses a serious and long-term challenge that has potential to affect every part of the globe, undermine poverty eradication efforts and threaten the achievement of MDGs. The adverse effects of climate change are already being experienced, and further change is inevitable. To avoid irreversible impacts, the EU holds the view that the global mean surface temperature increase should not exceed 2°C above pre-industrial levels. For achieving this, a joint global effort is required, with economically more developed countries taking the lead to significantly reduce global emissions of green house gases. This calls for the widest possible cooperation and participation in an effective and appropriate international response to which we are clearly committed.
- Industrial development building on an economically, environmentally and socially sound base is an engine for achieving the Millennium Development Goals and ensuring truly sustainable economic growth. The EU sees a mutually reinforcing relationship between environmental protection, competitiveness and social cohesion. The social dimension was stressed by many during the RIF. We also have now committed to producing an EU Sustainable Consumption and Production Action Plan by 2007.
- Within the EU progress has been made through for example, Integrated Prevention and Pollution Control and through the Environmental Technology Action Plan, as well as through the adoption by industry of voluntary systems such as the Environmental Management and Audit Scheme and the use of consumer side tools such as eco-labels.
- The UNECE region has a leading role to play in sustainable industrial development. There are win-win solutions for sound environmental management, creating decent work and achieving industrial development. We need to implement them. In that respect, the active engagement of business is critical as is the development and promotion of corporate social and environmental responsibility and accountability. Industry has begun to rise to this challenge.
- The EU was satisfied to see that cross-cutting issues received more attention during the RIF than at previous sessions. The UNECE RIF has allowed us to share our thoughts and listen to the views of others, to exchange experience and to talk about what we collectively and individually see as priority areas where more needs to be done. This in itself is a necessary step, bringing us closer to achieving our WSSD commitments. Concerted action and combined efforts such as for instance expressed through the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development will take us crucial steps further.
- We have to ensure that the results of all regional implementation meetings are taken properly into account at the global level. Through the wide dissemination of information and experiences synergies can be created at policy level to feed into regional, national and sub-regional implementation efforts.

- Finally, the EU thinks that some reflection needs to be given here, to optimize the effect of the different RIFs in the CSD process. All RIFs can improve civil society participation, the attention needed for cross-cutting issues, and the necessary coherence with other regional processes running on the same subject matter. At the CSD itself, we need perhaps to find a different way to approach the regional debriefings within the organisation of work avoiding parallel sessions, so to achieve better mutual integration of the outcomes of all regional fora.

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