



*PRESS RELEASE*

## **UN Sustainable Development Commission to Decide on Options for Managing Waste and Impacts of Growing Global Consumer Culture**

### ***2-13 May Meeting on Resources a Vital Building Block for Rio+20***

New York, 29 April 2011 — In its last session before the “Rio+20” Conference in 2012, the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development will meet from 2 to 13 May to recommend policy options aimed at promoting the more efficient, equitable and safer use of the Earth’s resources.

The decisions of the Commission could provide vital building blocks for next year’s Rio+20 meeting, which will provide an opportunity for countries to move toward greening their economies while continuing poverty reduction efforts.

At a time when much of the world is facing rising commodity prices and increasingly negative impacts from soaring consumption, the 53-country Commission will consider policies to promote sustainable consumption and production, improve the safety of chemical usage, and enhance waste management, transport and mining practices.

According to a report, “Trends in Sustainable Development,” issued by the UN Division for Sustainable Development, the unsustainable — and inequitable — use of resources is already pushing many of the world’s ecosystems past the “tipping points” from which they cannot recover. Climate change, biodiversity loss, increased land degradation and growing scarcity of fresh water resources are among the most immediate challenges. Under a business-as-usual scenario, with 15 per cent of the population using 50 per cent of global resources, it is estimated that two planets would be required by 2030 to support the world’s population.

Commission Chair László Borbély, Romanian Minister of Environment and Forests, said that the tremendous impacts of recent crises “have highlighted the importance we must place on cooperation, consensus building, communication and the involvement of relevant stakeholders in policy decision-making in international fora.”

“Economic growth,” he said, “is the prerequisite for societal development. Yet it need not be ‘development at all costs’ but one that is well balanced, that takes into consideration the environment and its resources, their capacity to regenerate, or the possibility of replacing them with other resources, reducing pressure on ecosystems.”

Sha Zukang, Under-Secretary-General for the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, said the issues being considered by the Commission were relevant to the concept of a green economy, and that many of the challenges before the Commission related to unsustainable urbanization. “Within the next fifty years, many people living in extreme poverty will reside in mega-cities. This will pose a huge challenge for municipal services such as transportation, water and sanitation and solid waste collection.”





## **Sustainable Development in Action** United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development



**RIO+20**  
United Nations  
Conference on  
Sustainable  
Development

Rio+20 — the UN Conference on Sustainable Development to take place in June 2012 — will mark the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of Agenda 21, the blueprint for sustainable development, agreed to at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio. The Rio+20 Conference, which will also take place in Rio de Janeiro, will review the progress made since the Earth Summit and will give countries an opportunity to determine the future of the Commission, which was established following the 1992 Summit. The decision will be part of a larger discussion on how the global community will manage sustainable development and environmental challenges.

Close to 1,000 representatives from governments, non-governmental organizations and other parts of civil society will attend the two-week meeting of the Commission in New York. They will be joined in the second week by ministers attending the High-Level Segment that begins on 11 May. The ministers will participate in a “multi-stakeholder dialogue” as well as ministerial roundtables on the issues that the Commission is considering.

**More information** on CSD-19 can be found at [www.un.org/esa/dsd](http://www.un.org/esa/dsd).

Portions of CSD-19 will be **webcast** live at [www.un.org/webcast](http://www.un.org/webcast).

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