

Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting
for the Seventeenth Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development
23 – 27 February 2009

Closing statement
on behalf of the European Union
by

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Madam Chairperson, distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. I would like to thank the CSD Chairperson and the Bureau for their efforts in producing this draft negotiating text. We have come together to this policy session to expedite the implementation of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation commitments in order to advance sustainable development in the crucial themes of CSD-17, building upon the rich discussion of the review year.

General comments:

The European Union wishes to state that the topics of the CSD-17 should be addressed in a holistic and integrated way with a full understanding that the CSD-17 negotiations should not compete and overlap with other ongoing processes, e.g. in the climate change agenda. However, CSD clearly should complement these processes from a sustainable development perspective. The EU believes it is important to identify clearly the implementation actors to ensure delivery on different commitments made.

Factual comments:

We would like to make a few comments of a factual nature, both pointing out shortcomings and omissions in the Chairperson's text. These are of course very preliminary remarks that we intend to complement with more detailed comments in the run-up to the negotiating session in May.

The EU will continue to play a leading role as the World's largest donor and will make all necessary efforts to eradicate poverty in the context of sustainable development, in order to ensure that by 2015 all the Millennium Development Goals will be achieved worldwide. The EU strongly reaffirms its commitment to achieve a collective ODA target of point 0.56 % GNI by 2010 and 0.7% GNI by 2015. These commitments should see annual EU ODA double to over EURO 66 billion in 2010. At least half of this increase will be allocated to Africa.

With regard to trade elimination subsidies, the EU has already significantly decreased its trade distorting support, including the use of export subsidies. We intend to continue using every channel and every opportunity to strengthen the multilateral trading system and to work towards a final, balanced deal in the Doha Round.

On the issue of biofuels, the EU view is that biofuels production and use should be based on sustainability criteria, reflecting inter alia greenhouse gas savings based on a life-cycle approach, biodiversity and land with high carbon stock.

Throughout the whole text, integrated water resource management, including water demand management, should be underscored in line with CSD13 decisions.

Amongst the points which should be in our view further elaborated, we would like to mention at this stage the precautionary principle, organic farming, the Global Partnership for Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition, and the role of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and of the international treaties on biodiversity and plant genetic resources related matters.

From the long-term perspective we should not forget environmental aspects of sustainable agriculture, especially biodiversity protection, including marine biodiversity. Sustainable land management should be recognized as a high national priority in order to ensure the full commitment of the Governments through their national financial mechanisms and through their national strategies for cooperation with the international donor community.

The EU would like to stress the need for an economic growth in Africa that enables to create employments and to generate incomes for vulnerable African populations. The EU would like to put stress on the fact that the private capital flows, mentioned in the text, should be in line with sustainable development principles and support African countries development. We would also like to underline the need for public agricultural policies in Africa.

The promotion of sustainable consumption and production (SCP) is a much broader issue than climate change, dealing with decoupling of economic growth from the unsustainable use of resources worldwide. The SCP should include support to the preparatory process aiming to define a Ten-Year Framework of Programmes to promote SCP with a particular reference to the African region, notably in the sector of agriculture and food. Another interlinking issue is job creation that we have addressed in our opening statement, where the EU stressed the need for taking into account our ILO commitments for decent jobs and wants this being reflected in the text.

As we said, Madam Chairperson, these are just preliminary comments, we would be grateful if you could clarify the status of the Chairperson's draft negotiating text and of the next steps between now and May.

The CSD-17 with its focus on agriculture and related topics offers unique opportunities to agree on efficient means of implementation that could enhance their important roles in preventing from the multiple crises. CSD should clearly confirm that already adopted commitments towards Africa continent will be kept and further developed on mutually beneficial basis.

The EU is leaving New York and the IPM with positive feelings. We understood from the IPM discussions and contacts with our negotiating partners, that the UN CSD members are wishing to achieve a consensus on the optimal ways out from the current global crisis at the CSD session in May. We are sure that the action-oriented, strong decisions should be adopted, thus demonstrating strengthened commitments by the international community.

We thank you, Madam Chairperson, for your able leadership that is an inspiration for all delegations to be efficient, constructive and devoted to a successful end of May negotiations.