Vice President of ECOSOC, H.E. Ms. Inga Rhonda King, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the UN

Opening Remarks

High-level Conference on Financing for Development and the Means of Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Breakout session on SDG 12 – Sustainable Consumption and Production –

and SDG 15 - Terrestrial Ecosystems

19 November, 10:00-11:30 a.m.

Exellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

I am honored to open the session on financing for development and the means of implementation for the SDGs 12 – Sustainable Consumption and Production – and 15 – Terrestrial Ecosystems.

Economic growth and development require the production of goods and services that improve quality of life. For sustainable consumption and production, it is essential to minimize natural resource use, toxic materials use, and the generation of waste and pollutants throughout the entire production and consumption process. In paragraph 45 of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, countries committed to "prioritize projects with the greatest potential for promoting […] sustainable patterns of consumption and production […]".

Two measures – material footprint and domestic material consumption can provide a brief overview of how sustainable economic growth is.

The material footprint reflects the amount of primary materials required to meet a country's needs. In 2010, the total material footprint in developed regions was significantly higher than that of developing regions. The material footprint of developing regions increased from 2000 to 2010.

Another measure used to provide an accounting of global material extraction and use is domestic material consumption which measures the amount of natural resources used in economic processes. In developed regions, this indicator has diminished slightly from 2000 to 2010 and it remains significantly higher than the value for developing regions. Domestic material consumption per capita increased in almost all developing regions from 2000 to 2010.

These data show that key problems remain and that they require innovative approaches, in order to achieve the 2030 Agenda on time.

With regard to the Earth's terrestrial ecosystems, progress has been uneven in terms of preservation and sustainable use. The pace of forest loss has slowed and improvements continue to be made in managing forests sustainably and protecting areas important for biodiversity. However, declining trends in land productivity, biodiversity loss and poaching and trafficking of wildlife remain serious concerns.

In particular, the extinction risk for corals is increasing most rapidly among all assessed species groups owing to the growing threat from climate change and local impacts. Wildlife poaching and trafficking continues to thwart conservation efforts. In 2013, elephant ivory, rosewood and rhinoceros horn comprised over 60 per cent of total wildlife and timber product seizures.

In the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, countries committed to "coherent policy, financing, trade and technology frameworks to protect, manage and restore our ecosystems, including […] terrestrial ecosystems" (para 17). The data that I just presented shows that innovative approaches are required to break existing harmful practices and address remaining issues. Science, technology and innovation can play an important role in this regard.

I look forward to listening to the discussions of this session and I hope the session can provide new insights and ideas that can be efficiently implemented.

I am pleased to introduce the moderator of the session, Mr. Shantanu Mukherjee, Chief, Policy Analysis Branch, Division for Sustainable Development, DESA, and I wish you a productive discussion.

Mr. Mukherjee, the floor is yours.