

## Statement by Finland

Madam Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen

I would like to associate myself with the statement of Slovenia on behalf of the EU.

- Madam Chair, I have four issues which I would like to take up at this session. I will also touch upon the issues raised in the secretariat's questions on education as well as sustainable consumption and production.

But firstly I would like to inform that in October 2007 the Government of Finland approved a new programme for development policy "Towards a Sustainable and Just World Community". According to the new Programme eradication of poverty and ecologically sustainable development are the most important objectives of Finland's development cooperation in line with the Millennium Development Goals. Thus the Policy links the three dimensions of sustainability and Climate change is an integral part of our agenda. HIV/AIDS is there as a cross-cutting issue.

Secondly, the new programme emphasizes sustainable growth as a pre-requisite for poverty reduction. In most developing countries and in Sub-Saharan Africa particularly, agriculture has a prominent role to play as a promoter of sustainable growth and poverty reduction. As the World Development Report 2008 states, for the poorest people, GDP growth originating in agriculture is about four times more effective in raising incomes than GDP growth originating in other sectors.

- Thirdly, sustainable consumption and production (SCP) is and has been a priority issue for Finland in implementing and following up the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. Sustainable patterns of production and consumption must be promoted in all countries.

This is very important, because the balance of many ecosystems has dramatically changed, due to our rapid exploitation of natural resources. Many future scenarios are alarming. By 2030, about eight billion people will live on this planet, with perhaps three billion of them enjoying standards of living comparable to those we enjoy in Europe today. This would mean a four-fold increase in the total consumption of goods and services. Without dramatic increases in eco-efficiency, such growth could be the ruin of many vital ecosystems. I think that life-cycle approach, in this context, is crucial in reaching results.

Finally, I want to stress the importance of education for sustainable development. One older gentleman stated three years ago in New York when the decade for sustainable development was launched "We will lose this game if we don't reach the masses". I think that he was right. In Finland we have been trying to address this challenge by for example integrating sustainable development as part of the school curriculum and all teaching.

Thank you!