

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

**CLOSING REMARKS
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ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

**ECE REGIONAL PREPARATORY MEETING
CLOSING SESSION**

Geneva, 2 December 2011

Distinguished Co-Chairs

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen

During these two days, we have heard a lively and dynamic exchange of views.

The Co-Chairs have presented their substantive summaries.

I wish to share some of my impressions.

There is great diversity in membership in this region.

Your varied perspectives have offered us an opportunity to hear a broad spectrum of ideas on how to address the objective and themes of Rio+20.

I appreciate the candid manner in which different views and positions have been expressed. Without such candour, there will be no basis for serious negotiations.

In this regard, I also wish to appeal to all participants to remain open and receptive to other views and to accommodate each other.

As we get closer to the Conference, I am confident that in the spirit of collaboration, we will gradually move from difference of views towards common ground and consensus. As mandated by the General Assembly, the objective of the Conference is to renew political commitment, assessing progress and gaps in implementation and addressing new and emerging challenges. The Conference is focusing on the two themes – a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication and the institutional framework for sustainable development.

I also want to thank the various speakers and panellists. From your insightful interventions and presentations, a shared message has emerged – that is: Rio+20 must focus on implementation, integration and coherence. Let us “do it”, moving ahead on the three fronts.

I note with appreciation that many speakers also addressed the priority issues identified during the preparatory process, including those cross-cutting and means of implementation issues highlighted in recent submissions to the compilation document.

[GREEN ECONOMY]

The Co-Chairs summaries have encapsulated key points of the discussions on green economy. I wish to add a couple of points which I think are worth reiterating.

First, each country faces unique challenges on the path to a green economy. Any roadmap should be flexible enough to accommodate this fact.

A country-specific, science-based approach is therefore needed. We have heard repeated emphasis on “no one-size-fits-all” in the transition to a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication.

Second, a green economy, which also encompasses a blue economy for coastal states, can be an effective pathway to sustainable development.

Third, a green economy is a multi-stakeholder economy. While governments take the lead in creating an enabling framework, business and civil society should be empowered to contribute and play major roles.

Fourth, in moving towards a green economy, we need technological transformation, coupled with trade and finance and capacity building for developing countries and transition economies.

[INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK]

On the institutional framework for sustainable development:

Continued strong interest has been expressed in strengthening the current governance structure.

While there remains a divergence of views on the options to strengthen UNEP, I note with appreciation that no one challenges that UNEP should be strengthened. I also note the emphasis that has been placed on the need for the institutional frameworks for sustainable development at all levels - both horizontally and vertically -to be more coherent, integrated and more effective at guiding and facilitating implementation.

[OTHER PRIORITIES]

On other priorities, we have heard many voices of support for sustainable development goals (SDGs), monitoring and assessments, targets and indicators. We look forward to Member States agreeing on these SDGs in priority areas as identified by Member States and stakeholders during the preparatory process and through their submissions.

I am sure that we will be moving toward common ground on these and other issues in the months ahead.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

[CLOSING]

Failure at Rio+20 is not an option.

Humanity is at a crossroads. We can take a business-as-usual path, leaving the future generations with a planet in peril ... an economy in crisis ... and a society torn apart by conflicts and inequality.

Or we can choose the pathway to sustainable development, which means taking tough decisions today.

It is up to you, me and everyone in the room to make the right decision. Your decision – our decisions - count.

We must use Rio+20 to guide us towards a new way of living... towards a sustainable way of production and consumption....toward a sustainable world.

At Rio+20, we must recommit ourselves to working together – together, developed and developing countries, big countries, small states, including small island developing states, land-locked and mountain states. We must do our best to create the future we want.

Participation and ownership by all stakeholders – including business and industry... the scientific and technological communities... other major groups and civil society at large – is vital to the success of Rio+20. The Government of Brazil is working with the Secretariat on specific

arrangements for ensuring broad engagement and participation of all nine Major Groups in Thematic Events, parallel events and side events.

In closing, I would like to thank all the participants for your active engagement during the last two days.

I also wish to congratulate ECE for successfully organizing this important regional preparatory meeting for Rio+20.

You have already made a critical contribution.

I look forward to seeing you again on our journey to Rio.

Be there next June and make a difference.

Thank you.
