



Speaking Points on Assessment of progress in the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits on sustainable development and addressing new and emerging challenges

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- Congratulate the Co-Chairs for their election
- Thanks the UNECE secretariat for the organization and preparation of the meeting
- Sustainable development is a fundamental concept for Switzerland. In fact, in the Swiss Federal Constitution sustainable development is even listed as one of the principal national objectives.
- It goes without saying, that sustainable development can only be achieved through joint efforts by the international community in cooperation with all relevant stakeholders.
- With the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21 we agreed at the first Rio conference on a set of principles and a comprehensive program for advancing towards a sustainable future. Yet nearly twenty years later, we must acknowledge we have still a very long way ahead of us.
- The principal objective of the UNCED, which is to renew the commitment at the highest political level, is therefore very pertinent. The vision of a sustainable development needs to be centre stage again and the UNCED is a good opportunity for doing so.
- We are convinced that the two main conference themes will permit us to bring sustainable development back on the political agenda of our leaders and we are fully committed to a substantive outcome that provides an added value for the international community.
- Our region can certainly offer positive experiences and best practices. Progress has been made in particular through the multilateral environmental agreements that were established and continuously developed under the auspices of the UNECE.
- These instruments can also in the future play an important role for the transformation towards a greener economy. In fact, they can not only allow

countries from the ECE region to greening their economies but also countries from other UN regions. I would like to mention three in particular:

- The **Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes** fosters resource efficiency through equitable and reasonable use of water resources by integrating water in development and sectoral policies, in particular the food-energy nexus. Its Protocol on Water and Health is a powerful tool to ensure universal equitable access to safe water supply and adequate sanitation.
 - The **Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents** amongst others fosters safe production technologies and safety techniques.
 - Emission targets from the **Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution and its protocols** promote low-emission technologies and technological innovation.
- There are other ECE conventions that provide input to the second topic of the Rio+20 conference, improving governance for sustainable development:
 - One example is the **Aarhus Convention** which is putting Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration into practice and is paving the way for its universal application.
 - Another important element for improving governance is transparency which can be further increased through the **Espoo Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context**. Its Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment makes planning and policy-making more transparent amongst others by strengthening public participation in the governmental work.
 - In conclusion, Mr. Co-Chair, the challenges we are facing continue to be tremendous, yet there is no doubt that our region has some relevant experience to share with the world.
 - Switzerland is looking forward to discussing the concrete proposals contained in the submissions turned in by 1st November in order to prepare and send a strong message to the 2nd Intersessional that is just ten days ahead of us.