

12th Special Session of the UNEP Governing Council/GMEF

Nairobi, 20-22 February 2012

Closing statement on behalf of the EU and its Member States

(Wednesday 22 February 2012, 15:00-18:00)

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First of all, and as we already expressed this morning at the Ministerial meeting, I would like to convey to the Government and to the people of Kenya, on behalf of the EU and its Member States, our deep sympathy for the loss of the Kenyan Minister of Environment John Michuki.

The EU and its Member States would like to thank UNEP for organising this Governing Council and the GMEF here in Nairobi. The level of attendance and the quality of the discussions show that already for 40 years, UNEP is a true point of reference for environment policy making.

We welcome the progress made in the last days on sustainable consumption and production, sound management of chemicals and waste, international environmental governance and other important areas. This fits into our general support for greater cooperation and synergies between governance structures.

This was a special session true to its name. Not only because we are celebrating 40 years of UNEP but also because this is the last major gathering of environment ministers before Rio+20. We would particularly

like to take this opportunity to congratulate UNEP with the excellent work on the 5th Global Environment Outlook.

From this Governing Council and the GMEF, the EU and its Member States would like to take a number of strong message forward to Rio+20.

Since the launch of the Green Economy Initiative by UNEP a few years ago, we have witnessed a broad acceptance amongst policy makers of many nations of inclusive green economy as a tool to achieve environmental and social objectives while creating a positive and inspiring new model of growth.

Rio+20 will now offer us an opportunity to translate this political momentum into practical policies and actions to accelerate the transition of our economies onto a greener, more inclusive and sustainable path.

The EU and its Member States have called for a green economy roadmap consisting of specific goals, objectives, actions at international level and timelines, while respecting the principle of national ownership. We firmly believe these are needed. However we have now no more than four months to go to the closing day of Rio+20.

It is time to be clear and concrete on elements we should reach agreement on in Rio.

First, in the context of green economy, we need to make sure that any decisions agreed in Rio+20 be backed by roadmaps, or by frameworks for action in order to promote and further develop actions in specific sectors, as well as by tools to measure progress. Institutions need to be mobilised to implement such actions.

Second, we need to strengthen international environmental governance (IEG) as a part of the broader institutional framework for sustainable development (IFSD). These processes must progress hand in hand. There is a strong support for strengthening UNEP and for transforming it into a UN specialised agency for the environment. Alongside, we need to reinforce sustainable development structures to become more efficient and more representative.

Third, our efforts need to focus on the management of our natural resources - on oceans, land, energy, water, food and materials in a more sustainable and efficient manner.

Fourth, we recognise a multitude of calls for a much stronger role for civil society organisations and for the public at large as active and knowledgeable actors in setting relevant policies. We need to decide on the actions that make this a reality.

Fifth, we need to improve on how we measure progress in our economy beyond GDP. In Rio we should agree on actions on sustainability accounting and reporting.

Finally, institutions at national and local levels need to be reinforced considerably. This could take the form of platforms, partnerships, investment facilities and other concrete instruments to support this.

The EU and its Member States stand ready to take these and other ideas forward in the negotiations of the Rio+20 outcome document.

These three days in Nairobi have shown that we share the conviction and the ideas to make Rio+20 live up to its expectations.

Thank you.