



29 October 2011

**Common statement by the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB)  
on the Outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development**

1. We, members of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board, recognize the historic opportunity provided by the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development to reset the world on a sustainable development path.
2. We affirm that sustainable development is a top priority for our organizations, and reaffirm the continuing validity of the principles in the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and of Agenda 21, including the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. We recommit to a renewed system-wide effort, in partnership with the full range of governmental, civil society and private sector stakeholders, to support the realization of these principles.
3. Despite substantial improvement in many key areas of development and environment, the world has not made the progress towards sustainable development aspired to in the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, and in subsequent related world conferences.
4. Over the past twenty years, the world has witnessed strong economic growth and significant progress toward attaining a number of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It is of grave concern, however, that these positive trends have been accompanied by increasing disparities and inequalities, persistent gender inequality, social inequity, a growing deterioration of the environment, and recurrent economic, financial, energy and food crises.
5. At the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (or Rio+20), renewed commitment and urgent action are therefore needed to lay a firm foundation for a longer-term process of redressing imbalances, agreeing on priorities, and reforming institutional arrangements at all levels, to bring about coherence and the integration of policies across the economic, environmental and social pillars, with human beings and their wellbeing at the centre. The Conference must also address the means of implementing outcomes, through the provision of resources, including for technological transformation and capacity building.
6. Charting the way forward to eradicate poverty and promote sustainable development must start with the recognition that the world has changed in fundamental ways. Climate change is significantly altering the physical and human geography of the planet. There are major differences in population growth, age, sex structures, spatial distribution and patterns of movement; resource consumption has increased, and production patterns are more unsustainable. But there has also been wide-ranging technological progress, from renewable energy and energy efficiency, to innovative measures for adapting to climate change impacts, and new and efficient means for social networking, dialogue and participatory engagement, providing opportunities that were not available twenty years ago.

7. Against these changing parameters, Rio+20 must acknowledge that economic, social and environmental objectives are not independent variables, but are mutually supportive, with progress in each area facilitating advancement in the others. Our objectives should be to enhance equity, revitalize the global economy, and protect the planet and its ecosystems that support us so that all people, women, men and children, can live in dignity.
8. The sustainability of future growth and development will rely critically on innovation, improved economic, energy and natural resource efficiency, an open and supportive multilateral trading system, better fiscal policies providing incentives for sustainability, comprehensive wealth accounting and valuation of ecosystem services, equitable access and inclusive political processes and the capacity to create sufficient decent work. Growth must lead to strengthened resilience – of households, ecosystems, and economies, and improved water, food and nutrition security.
9. Economic growth must be of high quality and inclusive. It should occur hand in hand with relevant efforts to accelerate progress in global health, gender equality and women’s empowerment, the realization of human rights, greater equity, improved access to and quality of social protection and the rule of law, and the fair distribution of the benefits of development. Policies must avoid trade protectionism and negative impacts especially on the poor and vulnerable groups such as refugees and internally displaced persons. These objectives are all key elements of the green economy approach, and we pledge the support of our organizations to Member States as they engage in this critical and transformational transition.
10. The shift to sustainable development presents challenges, but also offers opportunity for substantial investments, both public and private, in productive infrastructure, technological transformation, science, education and human capital development. The UN system stands ready to assist Member States as they formulate and implement the enabling policy and regulatory frameworks that are essential for such investment to take place, and to continue to strengthen its work at the country level.
11. In the current fragmented system, institutional reform is unquestionably needed at national, regional and international levels, to integrate the dimensions of sustainable development, improve effectiveness in implementation, urgently scale-up activities, and bring about further coordination and coherence of policy.
12. The UN system is determined to do its part on institutional reform, by improving system-wide coordination mechanisms, and by reviewing and improving policies and programmes, including through joint programming. But this may not be sufficient, and Rio+20 should consider continued efforts on broader reforms within the UN system, for example, the strengthening of institutions, mandates and regulatory frameworks, or making structural changes.
13. At a more specific level, from a range of priority issues, a number have emerged that warrant particular attention in the context of sustainable development at Rio+20. Among these are: energy, water, oceans, green jobs, sustainable cities, sustainable agriculture and food security, disaster risk reduction, and investing in health, education, youth, gender equality and women’s empowerment.

14. These issues require a coordinated approach by the UN system, stakeholders from government, civil society and the private sector, to find joint innovative and lasting solutions. The organizations of the UN system have been intensifying efforts and cooperation to address the challenges of the water, energy and global food security crises. Rio+20 will provide an appropriate platform to support selected initiatives, such as the Sustainable Energy for All initiative, which illustrate a collective renewed commitment to sustainable development.
15. At Rio+20, we must build upon and scale up the achievements, best practices and lessons of the MDGs, and lay strong foundations for the post-2015 development agenda. We must chart a course for measurable progress towards sustainable development goals, using milestones that integrate the economic, environmental and social dimensions and a new generation of metrics to measure our achievements. The UN system stands ready to support the world's nations and peoples to make sustainable development a reality.

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