



Press Release – May 2010

Sustainable Development Discussions to Focus on the Smart Use of Resources and Green Economic Growth

New York, 3 May 2010—Achieving green growth through better management of materials throughout their life cycle will be central to this year's session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development.

The Commission, which will take place in New York from 3-14 May, starts a new two-year cycle that will review waste management, transport, chemicals, mining, and the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production. It will also discuss sustainable development in Small Island Developing Countries.

The Commission will also serve as the launching pad for discussions on the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) to be held in 2012 (Rio +20), preparations for which will take place immediately following the CSD, from 17-19 May 2010.

The 18th session of the Commission comes amid growing concerns that present consumer-oriented trends around the world are unsustainable, with potentially damaging impacts on ecosystems, climate, food and water supplies, and human health. The Commission will be reviewing ways to assist countries in greening their economies, corporations in developing greener business models, and consumers in adopting more sustainable lifestyles.

“Changing unsustainable consumption patterns is critical to maintaining our planet's ecological balance,” says Sha Zukang, UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs. “If we are going to meet the Millennium Development Goals, address climate change, and ensure every person is given a fair chance for a better future, we need to seriously change the way we consume the Earth's resources.”

With the Earth's present population of 6.75 billion, consumption and production volumes are expected to continue to rise with demographic growth, severely straining ecosystems. Over 60 per cent of the ecosystem services are being degraded or unsustainably used.

But the high rate of resource consumption has not been evenly shared—20 per cent of the population in the highest income countries accounted for 77 per cent of total consumption in 2005 while the poorest 20 percent accounted for only 1.3 per cent.

“Sustainable development requires a transformation of values and principles that directly influence development strategies and lifestyles,” according to Luis Alberto Ferraté Felice, Minister of the Environment and Natural Resources of Guatemala, and the Commission's Chair. The meeting, he added, “will serve as the basis for mobilizing political will for identifying concrete policy actions and measures as well as partnerships to accelerate the implementation.”

Ministers from nearly half of the UN Member States are expected to attend the high-level segment of the Commission from 12-14 May. Representatives from over 1000 major groups are also expected to attend the meeting.

CSD-18 will consider Partnerships during its plenary, as well as host the annual Learning Centre, partnership fairs and side-events. One day - 10 May- will be devoted to the Small Island Developing States Prep-Com for the review of the Mauritius Strategy of Implementation.

In preparation for the CSD-18 meeting, the CSD Secretariat launched a new Thematic Seminar Series that presented scientific and technical information on the issues under review by the Commission. The Seminar Series is designed to add value to the CSD process by informing participants about the latest research, data, case studies and challenges that will underpin the discussions during this Review Session.

More information on the CSD-18 can be found at http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/csd/csd_csd18.shtml.

CSD-18 will be webcast live at www.un.org/webcast

Media representatives without UN credentials who wish to attend CSD meetings should contact: Media Accreditation & Liaison Unit, UN Department of Public Information, fax: 1-212-9634642; tel: 1-212-9632318; www.un.org/media/accreditation

For further information or interviews please contact:

Dan Shepard, Development Section, UN Department of Public Information. Tel: 1-212-9639495; email: mediainfo@un.org

Danielle Loff, Development Section, UN-DPI. Tel: 1-212-9633926; email: mediainfo@un.org

Printed by the United Nations Department of Public Information | 3 May 2010 | 100% recycled paper