

**Commission on Sustainable Development**  
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**General comments on the Chairperson´s draft negotiating document  
on behalf of the European Union  
by**

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Madam Chairperson, distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Czech Republic, on behalf of the European Union and its twenty-seven Member States, would like to make the following general comments on the **Chairperson's draft negotiating document**:

We welcome the Chairperson's aim to make this CSD cycle a substantial success with practical, concrete outcomes. The clear message should confirm that **sustainable agriculture and rural development** should be at the centre of long-term development and poverty eradication policies, which should be carefully designed and based on principles of sustainability. These policies should also take into account mitigation and adaptation measures to climate change, the importance of water-saving measures, the crucial role of soil and land management and the strong links among all of these, in order to ensure long-term food security and sustainable development. The EU hopes that CSD will strengthen this message and channel it sufficiently to all relevant international bodies and ensure a follow-up to its policy decisions.

We should also aim for basic internationally harmonized standards for **sustainable agricultural production**. Sustainable production of bioenergy should be ensured, and the EU stresses the need for international sustainability criteria for bioenergy. The EU has been a frontrunner in this field and recognises the ongoing work by *inter alia* the Global Bioenergy Partnership. Among the points, which should be further elaborated, is the Global Partnership for Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition as well as the Comprehensive Framework for Action of the UN High Level Task Force on the food crisis. In our view, the relevance of the FAO Voluntary Guidelines supporting the progressive realisation of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security also should be reflected.

Concerning **drought and desertification**, we think that the current text reflects the most relevant issues raised during the IPM and constitutes a good basis for negotiation. However, we would like to make some remarks to add elements we consider useful. Regarding **drought**, it is important to highlight IWRM at the basin level, especially in the transboundary context, as a key management tool, which includes water scarcity prevention and drought mitigation measures *inter alia* through Drought Management Plans.

The Chair's Negotiating Text tackles the majority of the key points related to **desertification**: enhancement of capacity building, technology transfer and financing, strengthening of the institutional framework for policy implementation and practical measures to combat land degradation and desertification. Still, some paragraphs could be improved to make the text more action-oriented, such as support for the UNCCD 10-year strategic plan and elaboration of related indicators. The close interlinkages between climate change and desertification and the importance of sustainable land management and biodiversity preservation as means to combat desertification should be highlighted.

On the **Africa** section we congratulate you for having succeeded in synthesizing the important concerns raised during the IPM. The text gives the food security issue in Africa the importance it deserves and gives balanced attention to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of Africa's sustainable development.

Nevertheless, we would like to emphasize several issues that could be better reflected in the text, such as strengthening sustainable public agricultural policies in African countries with a specific focus on smallholder farms, their contribution to food security and their access to market, supporting the efforts of African countries on sustainable consumption and production (SCP) issues, underlining the key role of African economic regional organisations within the context of the multiple global crises and, in particular, in response to food insecurity. We

believe that CSD-17 should make strong recommendations regarding mainstreaming all environmental challenges in national development strategies and development cooperation activities and regarding the challenge of improved purchasing power for the African populations vulnerable to the multiple ongoing crises. In this vein, CSD-17 should stress the implementation of the Accra Agenda for Action to achieve more effective partnerships enabling developing countries to realise their development goals, building upon country ownership, inclusiveness, results-based management and mutual accountability. We would like to recommend not duplicating debates that are being dealt with in other international fora, such as the debt issue and the Doha Development Agenda within the context of the WTO in Geneva.

Concerning **interlinkages and cross-cutting issues**, we welcome the stress placed on the need for synergies and sustainable development strategies which address the social, economic and environmental pillars in an integrated manner. More than ever in these years of deep crisis, they should promote policy coherence, engagement of the private sector and civil society, ownership and participation. In this regard, the promotion of SCP should include support for the preparatory process aiming to define a Ten-Year Framework of Programmes in accordance with the JPoI and for deliberations at CSD-18/19. We should encourage the development of this framework and take action, including through the Marrakesh process, to accelerate the shift towards SCP to promote social and economic development within the carrying capacity of ecosystems.

We also would like to reflect in the text as a priority the need for all countries to preserve biodiversity and ecosystems (land, water, forests etc.) that provide the **ecosystem services**, which are vital for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Climate change should be addressed more systematically in the context of sustainable development, like water and many other themes, which represent strong interlinkages among all themes of the cluster of this cycle. Another interlinking issue is job creation, for which we highlight the need for taking into account our ILO commitments for decent employment, as an efficient way to achieve both sustainable production and poverty eradication. We see education, and particularly education for sustainable development, as an important tool for achieving sustainability in the cluster themes; without education the needed re-orientation risks being unsuccessful.

On **means of implementation** we support instituting a process for the review of implementation of decisions taken at CSD-17 – and have ideas on how this may be achieved – however this should be done using existing resources and not necessitate any new institutions or additional meetings.

Madam Chairperson, a more detailed EU position on the wording of CSD policy decisions will be presented and explained during the negotiations in the upcoming days. We look forward to constructive negotiations and hope to have a balanced and action-oriented document of policy decisions at the end of CSD-17.

Thank you for your attention.