

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to say a few things regarding the organizational aspects of the upcoming session of the Commission.

Firstly, the provisional annotated agenda for the session has been issued and is contained in document E/CN.5/2011/1 and the proposed organization of work is in Annex I to the same document. The proposed organization of work in a matrix format has been made available in the room.

Secondly, election of the Vice-Chairs – as you may recall, the Commission held the first meeting of its 49th session on 19 February 2010 and elected the Chairperson and four Vice-Chairpersons.

Subsequently, the Vice-Chairpersons elected from the Groups of Asian States, Eastern European States and Western European and other States have resigned. In this connection, Secretariat has received nominations from the respective Regional Groups. Therefore, at the opening of the 49th session, on 9 February, the Commission will elect Vice-Chairpersons from these three regional groups, namely Mr. Blas of the Philippines, Ms. Cifligu of Albania and Ms. Fries-Gaier of Germany to replace the Vice-Chairpersons who have resigned.

Thirdly, I would like to inform delegations that, as is reflected in the Journal, members of the Commission, as well as observers, who wish to participate are requested to inform the Secretary of the Commission the composition of their delegations.

Due to the limited number of seats available for observers (including Members States that are not members of the Commission) in Conference Room 4, only observers who will communicate the composition of their delegations to the Secretariat, by Wednesday, 2 February, will be provided a nameplate on the floor of Conference Room 4. All others will be seated on a first-come, first-served basis.

Fourthly, the list of speakers will be opened on Monday, 24 January. Delegations wishing to inscribe on the list should inform the Secretariat. Information of the contact person is provided in the Journal.

I would like to remind delegations that according to past practice, statements made by individual Member States should not exceed seven minutes, statements made on behalf of a group of States should not exceed ten minutes, and statements made by observers should not exceed 5 minutes. The list of speakers will be established based on this practice.

Delegations are requested to bring 250 copies of statements for general distribution or at least 30 copies for distribution to conference services.

Lastly, I would like to inform delegations that as reflected in the proposed organization of work – the matrix that has been distributed in the room, the deadline for submission of draft proposals to the Secretariat is Tuesday, 15 February, by 1:00 p.m. This deadline has been set to allow the Secretary-General a minimum of 48 hours to prepare the programme budget implications, in line with the provisions of rule 28 of the rules of procedure of the functional Commissions of the Council. In most cases, more than 48 hours may be required for this review.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.