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Statement by
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Slovenian EU Presidency

on behalf of the European Union
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Session 2

Mr. Chair,
Ladies and gentlemen,
Distinguished delegates!

I have the honour to present this intervention on behalf of the European Union.

The Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Serbia, as well as the Republic of Moldova and Georgia align themselves with this statement.*

Climate Change, Biodiversity and Desertification

1. Climate change and environmental degradation will disproportionately affect the poor, particularly so in Africa. To practically address climate change, the EU uses several complementary approaches.
2. Acknowledging the significance of its relationship with developing countries for climate change for years, in 2004 the EU adopted the Action Plan on Climate Change and Development with the objective of assisting partner countries in meeting the challenges posed by climate change, in particular by supporting them in the implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto Protocol. Furthermore, the EU is mainstreaming climate change and environmental issues into the EU development cooperation programmes.
3. In addition, it has launched the "Global Climate Change Alliance" (GCCA), focusing on adaptation in LDCs. It provides an additional platform for dialogue and exchange in support of the international negotiations on a post-2012 climate agreement.
4. The EU-Africa Partnership on Climate Change provides for dialogue, cooperation and concrete climate change actions. It is closely linked to the GCCA. It will also involve cooperation to address land degradation, increasing aridity and natural disaster preparedness, as well as the security aspect of climate change. The Partnership will take into account African initiatives such as the African Climate Information for Development in Africa (ClimDev Africa) Programme.
5. Another EU initiative, the Global Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Fund (GEEREF) is to mobilise private investments in energy efficiency and renewable energy projects in developing countries and economies in transition. The GEEREF will support regional funds for sub-Saharan Africa, including the Caribbean and Pacific Island States.

* Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

6. Natural ecosystems provide many essential services such as clean water, air and food. Large portions of Africa's economy are heavily dependent on biodiversity including agriculture based on native species, fishing industries, game and livestock ranching industries and ecotourism. Enhancing the capacity of Africa's ecosystems to adapt to climate change is therefore crucial.

Mr. Chair!

7. The EU aims to achieve ambitious results at the up-coming 9th Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP9) of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Significant progress is needed in many areas, notably in fostering the establishment of networks of protected areas, in conservation and sustainable management of forests, as well as in furthering the elaboration and negotiation of an international regime on Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS). Initiatives, inter alia, the Dutch-German ABS Capacity Development Initiative for Africa therefore deserve great support.
8. One important instrument in the context of conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources is the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, which in addition to its *sui generis* ABS system, has adopted a Funding Strategy at its last Governing Body. These issues, in addition to many others under negotiation, have a crucial importance to sustainable use of natural resources all over the world, including in Africa.
9. The EU strongly supports the UN activities to combat climate change, desertification and drought. The EU believes that the 8th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and adopted 10 Year Strategic Plan reinforced the role of the Convention. Implementing the UNCCD in affected countries will not only contribute to mitigate or to adapt to climate change (Nairobi Framework Programme) but will also contribute to the overarching goal of attaining the MDGs, namely by reducing land degradation, water scarcity and loss of biodiversity.

Infrastructure Development

10. Mr. Chair, we agree with those who outline that infrastructure, if itself designed and constructed sustainably, is crucial to sustainable development, economic growth and poverty reduction in Africa. With the aim to develop an effective network of transport, energy, water and information and communication technologies infrastructure in Africa, the EU uses two complementary approaches.
11. The EU has been providing long-term support to infrastructure development in Africa, including through the ACP-EU Water and Energy Facility, the Infrastructure Trust Fund (ITF), as well as bilaterally. Together with Africa, it has launched the Infrastructure and Water Affairs and Sanitation Partnerships. The operations comprise investment in physical infrastructure, developing and strengthening institutions and aid for the operation of infrastructure and the development of services. Within the context of energy infrastructure, it has also launched a joint Partnership on Energy which aims at strengthening cooperation and solidarity in the sustainable management of our resources, continuation of the promotion of access to energy, energy security and safety, and regional cooperation.
12. Furthermore, as the MDGs identify Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) as key enablers for poverty reduction and growth, within the context of the Africa-EU Joint Strategy. The EU and Africa are working to strengthen the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit on Information Society and of AU/NEPAD programmes. The aim is to complement investments made in physical infrastructures, through support to key capacity-building initiatives identified in the African Regional Action Plan for Knowledge Economy (ARAPKE) and through establishing and strengthening appropriate regulatory frameworks for private sector investments.
13. Moreover, the EU reiterates its support to other initiatives conducive to bridging the digital divide, including those undertaken by the UN Commission on Science and Technology for Development, UNCTAD and UNESCO. These initiatives contribute to enhance digital opportunities and assist developing countries to establish R&D initiatives and promote access, development and diffusion of ICTs and know-how.

Thank you for your attention.