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Statement by

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on behalf of the European Union

General Debate

Geneva, 13 July 2009

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**EU Statement
General Debate for the Coordination Segment
ECOSOC 2009**

'Follow-up to the 2008 Ministerial Declaration on implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to sustainable development'

Mr. President,
Ministers,
Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured to speak today on behalf of the European Union.

The Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia¹, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia align themselves with this declaration.

Mr President,

The EU wishes to thank the Secretary General for his report on the theme of the coordination segment. We also welcome his recommendations.

The EU is in favour of a key role for the UN in the efforts to help developing countries tackle a variety of more and more interlinked global, social, economic, financial and environmental challenges and foster sustainable development in all its dimensions.

When adopting the Ministerial Declaration last year, the international community reaffirmed the pledge to implement internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to sustainable development.

In the light of the economic and financial crisis, we face multiple challenges in our efforts to achieve these goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. The EU is concerned about the negative impacts on sustained economic growth and sustainable development, particularly in developing countries. The economic and social progress achieved in many countries during recent decades is being threatened and millions of people are falling back into poverty and hunger.

The conference on the financial crisis addressed some of these issues and successfully adopted an outcome document. The discussions and concerns are prevalent in other parts of the UN-system as well. Funds and programs are working to mitigate the effects of the crisis on the most vulnerable, and the Secretary General has appointed a task-force to develop a vulnerability alert system. We encourage the system to go on with its work in this regard.

¹ * Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

Focusing on the poorest and the most vulnerable, while ensuring social development and environmental protection, is of utmost importance to the EU. We must ensure that development gains are not reversed due to the crisis and that future efforts are not undermined, while keeping in mind that sustainable development is an overriding objective. The financial crisis must be addressed in an integrated manner that incorporates the objectives of economic growth, social development and environmental protection. The EU will continue to play its part to promote global financial stability and sustainable world recovery.

Mr President,

Climate change is one of the most pressing challenges of our time. It can no longer be seen exclusively as an environmental challenge, and can only be effectively tackled at the global level, through a cross-sectorial approach aimed at enhancing synergies. Climate change has to be considered in terms of global issue: social and economic development model, low carbon growth, security.

There are close links between combating climate change and the eradication of poverty. Climate change is seriously undermining efforts to achieve sustainable development and reduce poverty and is becoming a major threat to achieving the MDGs, by reverting progress made in the last decade.

The fight against climate change is a great opportunity to achieve the transformation of our societies and economies toward a low carbon model.

The EU strongly supports the central role of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) as the forum where an ambitious, fair, global and comprehensive post-2012 climate agreement will be negotiated in Copenhagen by the end of 2009. The EU has demonstrated its commitment to such a deal, through the submission of several constructive proposals on each of the Bali Action Plan pillars.

Significant domestic and external sources of finance, both private and public, will be required for financing mitigation and adaptation policies and actions, particularly in the poorest and most vulnerable developing countries. The EU will take on its fair share of financing, to support such policies and actions including through capacity building and technology support.

The EU would like to emphasize the importance of properly addressing development issues in the ongoing negotiating process, and of ensuring a Development presence at the appropriate level in the remaining stages of this process and in Copenhagen.

Mr President,

The Commission on Sustainable Development, at its 17th Session recognized the crucial role of agriculture, land management and rural development in addressing the sustainable development needs of a growing population, and stated that drought and desertification continue to threaten the livelihoods of millions of people. A number of recommendations to promote sustainable development were issued aimed at local, regional, national and global level. Sustainable agriculture and food security are cornerstones to meet the food needs of the world population. In this context, the EU considers that Africa and its agriculture require priority attention of the international community.

Toxic chemicals pose a serious threat to people's health and ecosystems. The poor are most vulnerable, whether in agriculture, industry or their own homes. Hence, EU considers the UNEP Governing Council decision to work on a legally binding instrument on mercury an important step forward. Progress was also made by the second International Conference on Chemicals Management. The Strategic Approach to International Chemical Management, SAICM, shows that broad coordination within the UN system can lead to successful results.

The EU supports the Secretary General's initiative on developing a comprehensive UN system approach to climate change that addresses the interconnected issues of economic, growth, climate change, food and agriculture and energy, and welcomes the High-level Committee on Programmes of the CEB establishment of the working group on climate change.

Mr President,

The Economic and Social Council should play a central role in the follow-up and implementation of the outcomes of the major UN conferences and summits in the economic, social, environmental and related fields and of the achievements of the MDGs.

I thank you for your attention.
