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Dear Mr Banuri,



Further to the letter of 6 March 2009 from the Secretariat of the United Nations (DESA-09/0314), the Czech Republic on behalf of the European Union (EU) would like to convey the views of the EU on the possibility of convening a high-level event on sustainable development in 2012.

Sustainable development is a fundamental priority of the European Union and as such we appreciate the proposal from Brazil, endorsed by the Group G-77/China, which launched a discussion on a high-level event on sustainable development.

The EU believes that the importance of a holistic sustainable development approach is even higher nowadays, in the period of multiple crises. In this context, sustainable development approach offers an overarching social, environmental and economic framework to seek consensus on possible ways to deal with worrying trends that have evolved considerably in the past decades.

The proposal from Brazil certainly merits consideration. However, when considering the possibility of convening a high-level event on sustainable development, particular attention must be paid to its outcomes, added value and timing. It is critical that it is not seen to duplicate existing processes.

Regard must be had to timelines in a range of processes, including the multi-year work programme of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) set at its 11th session, which is to be completed with an overall appraisal in 2016/2017, the target of achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 and the ongoing discussion on the international environmental governance reform. The outcomes of the 2009 COPs of UNCCD and UNFCCC and the 2010 COP of UNCBD will also be highly relevant. It is critical to find ways to ensure that future implementation cycles of CSD, within its existing policy mandate, are duly taken into consideration and thoroughly articulated with the Rio+20 initiative and that the work of CSD continues to achieve progressive, clear and action-oriented outcomes.

The focus of such an event could be on key issues of the environment and development agenda, which have a multiple effect on a large number of other issues. Issues to be addressed should contribute to boost the green economy concept in order to mainstream innovative technologies and sustainable ways of consumption and production. Delivering policy coherence at international and national levels across policy sectors will also be essential. It is necessary to address these issues while promoting the integration of the three components of sustainable development – economic development, social development and environmental protection – as interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars. The

event should speed up the achievement of the overarching objectives of, and essential requirements for, sustainable development: Poverty eradication, changing unsustainable patterns of production and consumption and protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development.

The EU recognizes that CSD has a unique role within the UN system as the only high-level, global and interactive meeting place for Governments and non-governmental actors from various sectors to address global sustainable development issues and their coherence.

The event should highlight the importance of actual implementation of the different sustainable development strategies, policies and actions. In this regard, it should seek to find ways for strengthening CSD's role to review the progress in the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and reinforcing its position, including its analytical and information base, in the context of the UN reform. It also should link such institutional arrangements with the overall efforts for reinforcing international environmental governance.

The outcome of the event should be a concise document. Extensive negotiation of a long document as it was the case in 1992 and 2002 with the Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation should be avoided.

The EU is open to constructively discuss, with the wider UN membership, the UN Secretariat and all other relevant stakeholders, the possibility of convening a high-level event on sustainable development. The EU looks forward to the further elaboration of Brazil proposal, including a clear articulation of its content, objectives, process and deliverables, which could serve as a base for the debate on this issue during the 64th session of the UN General Assembly.

Yours sincerely



Mr Tariq Banuri
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