

United States response to the possibility of a high-level event on sustainable development

The United States appreciates the opportunity to express its views on the possibility of convening a high-level event on sustainable development. The United States is dedicated to the pursuit of sustainable development and we strongly believe that international cooperation is essential to this important endeavor.

The outcomes of previous events, including the World Summit on Environment and Development in Rio and the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, have offered vital contributions to our global efforts towards sustainable development. Indeed, the Commission on Sustainable Development, the UN Forum on Forests, the various multilateral environment agreements and the work of UNEP continue to contribute actively to the global sustainable development agenda.

Our understanding of the still-current decision in ECOSOC Resolution 2003/61, which was agreed at CSD-11 in 2003, is that the international community already anticipates an overall appraisal of the outcomes of the previous World Summits on Sustainable Development in 2017 at the end of the CSD's multi-year program of work. This review is important to a thorough discussion of all the aspects of sustainable development as elaborated in The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, Agenda 21 and the Program of Further Implementation of Agenda 21. This review will complete our work and allow us to assess the way forward. In keeping with this, we believe we have effectively already agreed to convene a high-level event on sustainable development in 2017, i.e. a "Rio+25" meeting.

In the language of UNGA resolution A/RES/63/212, the General Assembly acknowledged the proposal to convene a world summit on sustainable development in 2012 and then invited member state opinions on the possibility of a high-level event on sustainable development. During discussion on this resolution, some countries shared their desire to host a "Rio+20" summit in 2012. On this particular subject, we continue to have questions, including: what would a 2012 high-level event aim to accomplish; how will it add value to the ongoing work in sustainable development; how would the proposed high-level event fit in with the multi-year CSD program of work and how would it avoid disrupting the conclusion of the CSD process? In considering our position on the possibility of a 2012 meeting, we need more information to understand the purpose of the proposed high-level event, to what end our efforts would be engaged and how the preparatory process might proceed.

One of our primary concerns is the timing of the two proposed high-level events or summits, one of which, 2017, has already been agreed by governments. If a Rio+20 event were held in 2012, would we still go ahead with a 2017 Rio+25 event? If the purpose of the two high-level events is

the same, member states should consider postponing any summit until 2017 at which time we would have an opportunity to review and assess the entire history of sustainable development agreements and achievements in order to inform our next steps and embark on new sustainable development goals. Many member governments, including the United States, do not have the resources to prepare for and staff two major summits on sustainable development within five years.

We thank you for the opportunity to express our views on this subject and we look forward to additional fruitful discussion on this and other sustainable development priorities, but most especially on implementation of agreements already made and our efforts to improve the lives of people and protect the environment.