



**Statement**

**On behalf of the Arab Group**

**by**

**Dr. Toufic Jaber**

**During the opening of the work of the  
Commission on Sustainable Development  
Eighteenth Session**

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**Mr. President,**

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Arab Group. The Group associated itself with the statement delivered by the esteemed Permanent Representative of Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Allow me first to congratulate you and the members of the Committee's Bureau on your election. I look forward to cooperating with you during your administration of the Committee's work in this session and to wish you continuous progress. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for submitting the reports on the Thematic Clusters which will be addressed during this session.

**Mr. President,**

The Eighteenth Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development is being held at a time when the world is witnessing a range of important and sensitive developments, topped by the global financial and economic crisis, fluctuations in food prices, exacerbated negative effects of climate change and, the serious impacts of these crises on the economic and social situations in developing countries, especially the least developed countries, African countries, and small island states.

The Arab Group reaffirms the importance of the Commission's work on sustainable development, as well as the continuation of ensuring the balance between economic and social development and protecting the environment as interdependent and mutually supporting pillars for sustainable development.

Moreover, the Arab Group reiterates the need for implementing the intergovernmental commitments contained in the current agenda, Agenda 21, and the Johannesburg Plan for the Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development along with the commitments and goals internationally agreed upon based on the Rio Principles, especially the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

**Mr. President,**

The themes of transport, chemical substances, waste management, mining and the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production which are addressed in this session, are of great importance to the Arab Group countries. The Arab countries have made significant progress in the implementation of the commitments, goals and targets agreed upon in the Agenda of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation on the outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development addressed in the Thematic Cluster of the current session of the Commission.

The cooperation between the League of Arab States, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), and the Regional Office for West Asia of the United Nations Programme on Environment led to the preparation of the implementation report at the regional level for the Arab region about each of the five areas of the Thematic Cluster, which has been distributed as a document of this current session. Two regional meetings have been organized for the experts, namely: "The Second Roundtable on Sustainable Consumption and Production," held on 27-29 September 2009, and the "Expert Group Meeting on Transport for Sustainable Development in the Arab Region and its Relation with Climate Change Issues," held from 29 September to 1 October 2009). The outcomes of the reports and the recommendations of the two meetings were discussed during the Arab Regional Implementation Meeting held in the framework of the Joint Committee Meeting on Environment and Development in the Arab world, held on 4 October 2009.

**Mr. President,**

Despite the achievements of the Arab countries in the areas of the Thematic Cluster for the current session of the Commission, we believe that significant challenges still exist and present an obstacle to the development of several countries, especially those that lack such resources and sources of necessary funding, and which are impacted by the conditions and bureaucratic systems that are often imposed by the donors from developed countries and international financial institutions.

**Mr. President,**

There are parts of the Arab region which are still suffering from considerable constraints to foster development, as is the case in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, the occupied Syrian Golan, and the occupied territories in Southern Lebanon. The policies and practices of the occupying power in the above-mentioned territories led to a serious deterioration in the sectors of transport, chemicals, waste management, mining, and the implementation of sustainable consumption and production programmes. They have also created adverse economic and social consequences for the population, undermined the opportunities for development, and increased poverty, unemployment rates and food insecurity. Therefore, the Commission on Sustainable Development should give special consideration to these issues and should demand the foreign occupier to stop its illegal practices, including settlement, which impede the economic and social development of the people living under foreign occupation. This practice is incompatible with the dignity and human worth.

**Mr. President,**

In closing, I would like to point out that the Arab Group will actively participate in the work of the Commission's current session and will identify the progress made, the challenges and priority areas for action in each of the area of the Thematic Clusters during the meetings of the Ad Hoc Committee when these areas.

**Thank you, Mr. President**