

Statement by Mrs. Meera Mehrishi, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forests, 'Discussion on the compilation document: comments and guidance for the zero draft outcome document' on 15 December 2011, 2nd Inter-sessional Meeting of RIO+20

Thank you, Chair for giving me the floor. Time is short and I will be direct. India associates itself with the statement made by Argentina on behalf of G-77.

2. RIO+ 20 provides us with a valuable opportunity to bring sustainable development agenda back to the centre stage of global development matrix, guided by the Rio principles, in particular the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities. There can be no rewiring of the Rio-principles or their dilution.

3. Unmet commitments, inadequate means of implementation and clear lack of political will on the part of developed countries to put in place an enabling global environment that gives a level playing field to developing countries have been the key obstacles to Sustainable Development. These must be comprehensively addressed in Rio+20.

4. Poverty eradication is and will continue to be the foremost global development challenge. Sustainable development and green economy must ensure that the overriding priority of developing countries to eradicate poverty is provided all the policy space and international support that it requires.

5. It is critical that issues of core development concern such as food security and sustainable agriculture; universal access to modern energy services; access to clean drinking water; natural resource and land degradation; challenges of urbanization; public health; human resource development and employment generation are addressed in all their manifestations.

6. Rio+20 outcome should include strong defining actions on each of these development challenges. Moreover, unsustainable patterns of consumption in developed countries need to be rationalized so as to reduce their ecological footprints. This cannot be a forgotten and relegated to the back burner.

7. The outcome document should recognize that national circumstances and priorities would define the nature of policies and strategies adopted by each country to green its economy. No one size fits all.

8. The evolution of GE should be facilitated through a menu of policy options and a toolbox of instruments with ample flexibility and policy space for countries to allow them to make their own choices.

9. It needs to be ensured that green economy paradigms do not adversely impact the livelihoods of vulnerable sections of society, like the small and marginal farmers and those employed in SMEs. GE should not be used as a pretext for green protectionism, including tariff and non-tariff barriers on exports of developing countries or aid conditionalities. It should also not exacerbate technological dependence of developing countries on developed countries.

10. Win-win strategies need to be identified and formulated where greening activities are synergistic with economic growth for poverty eradication.

11. Means of implementation are critical. New, additional and predictable financial support; transfer and sharing of technology, capacity building and a development oriented international environment on trade, Intellectual Property Rights, debt relief, financial mechanisms and global governance in general are critical for developing countries to pursue sustainable development.

12. A target based prescriptive approach on sustainable development should be carefully thought-out. Such an approach could undermine the relentless and ongoing efforts being made by developing countries on poverty eradication, MDGs and other internationally agreed development goals. In any case these issues need to be the subject of detailed negotiations among member-states with a balanced approach in which developed countries need to walk the talk on action and support.

13. Let me now delve on some key issues related to IFSD.

14. On institution building, India supports strengthening of UNEP through scaled up financial resources, enhanced mandate and universal membership.

15. CSD either needs to be reformed comprehensively or we need to be willing to look at creating a new body such as a Sustainable Development Council based on equitable geographical representation reporting directly to the General Assembly.

16. There is clearly a need for greater representation of developing countries, accountability and transparency in the Bretton Woods Institutions in order to increase their effectiveness and responsiveness to UN-led processes and outcomes. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) has to be strengthened. The quantum of financial contributions to GEF Trust Fund should substantially increase from the present level.

17. Before I close, let me reiterate that equity, poverty eradication and balance between the three pillars remain the benchmark of our approach to GESDPE and IFSD.

Thank you Mr. Chairperson.

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