

Second Preparatory Committee
of the
2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development

Statement by Stephan CONTIUS
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United Nations
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Mr. Chair,

Germany associates itself with the statement delivered by Hungary on behalf of the EU and its member states.

We understand the green economy not as a tool to pursue a new development paradigm that is meant to replace the sustainable development agenda. It is rather an opportunity to equally enhance the main dimensions of sustainable development.

When we talk about green economy we are talking about sustainable consumption and production, low carbon economic development, resource efficiency, biodiversity and water.

And we talk about sustainable growth and new and secure jobs. The green economy incorporates a strong social dimension linked to sustainable and inclusive growth.

Integrating all these agendas is a great challenge, but also opening up opportunities for developing countries. If we accelerate our transition to a green and low carbon economy now, this will pay off for all of us.

As you might know, the EU is calling for the adoption of a UN Green Economy Roadmap in Rio which clarifies and encourages the measures that need to be taken in order to pave the way for a green economy. Such a roadmap should include a timeline, benchmarks, indicators, legal and economic instruments and voluntary targets.

The aim is for the United Nations to make a commitment, together with other important stakeholders such as the World Bank, bilateral donors and the private sector, to give all interested countries tailor-made support to help them on their path to a green and low carbon economy.

The German Government is proposing that this UN Green Economy Roadmap should envisage country-specific advice on national policies for the transition to a green economy for all interested countries up to 2020.

Essential steps of implementation should be achieved by 2030.

The work on the Low Carbon Development Strategies and Plans and on the NAMAs will be an essential component of this effort; the interested countries themselves should specify additional environmental policy areas on which the green economy capacity development should focus primarily.

Such a MDG-like decision of Rio plus 20 would certainly be instrumental in accelerating the transition to a green and low carbon economy.

The green jobs projects of ILO in developing countries are impressive. Green jobs are a highly effective means in combating poverty. We are also applauding the excellent work of UNEP on green economy which is inspiring all of us to move forward on this issue. UNEP's and UNIDO's work on cleaner production is a third example of the relevant activities of the UN system in developing countries.

But unfortunately, the United Nations are not yet adequately equipped to scale up these activities to a comprehensive effort reaching all interested countries as soon as possible. It is obvious that today's multilateral architecture for sustainable development is not able to drive substantial change.

UNEP is doing a great job of conceptualising and raising awareness. But unfortunately, UNEP is too weak and not well enough funded to move the implementation process forward.

Along with the EU, Germany therefore strongly advocates the upgrade of UNEP to a UN specialised agency for the environment, with a revised and strengthened mandate, supported by stable, adequate and predictable financial contributions.

Such a well-resourced and fully equipped agency should be able to provide the professional services that countries need to efficiently implement multilateral environmental agreements. It should enhance coherence and political oversight of global environmental finance and play a role in the necessary efforts to dovetail financial streams for the environment, including the GEF. This will be part of a better realignment of the multilateral policy making and the international funding mechanisms.

In close cooperation with other actors such as the World Bank, UNDP, ILO and UNIDO, the bilateral donors and the private sector, the agency should be capable, through its regional offices, of offering tailor-made advice for all interested countries interested in the transition to a green and low carbon economy.

We believe that such a better funded UN agency concentrating on environmental issues and on the implementation of the agreed goals and targets of sustainable development would be an important partner for developing countries in achieving sustainable growth.

The agency should provide credible, coherent and effective leadership for environmental sustainability under the overall framework of sustainable development, and promote the coherent implementation of the environmental dimensions of sustainable development within the United Nations system.

We understand Nairobi as the headquarters of such a United Nations Environment Organization based on UNEP. The emphasis should be on reinforcing efficiency, building on UN structures which are already decentralized.

There is an urgent need for capacity -development and assistance for efficient policy implementation, as well as other relevant policy advice in many regions of the world .

Whatever reform options we discuss, our common goal should be a much more efficient multilateral architecture of global environmental policy, with a UN environment institution carrying political weight and providing the necessary leadership . This will enable improvements regarding developing countries' ability to cope with the multiple environmental challenges and to engage in the transition to a green and low carbon economy .

The proposed UN Green Economy Roadmap, the upgrade of UNEP to a specialized agency in Nairobi, and a better UN architecture for sustainable development here in New York could be key achievements of the Rio conference and make Rio 2012 a milestone on the road to sustainable development.

Thank you very much.