

**United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20)
First Inter-Sessional Meeting
10-11 January 2011**

**Statement by Ambassador Amjad Hussain B. Sial, Deputy Permanent Representative of Pakistan
to the United Nations, New York**

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

Pakistan associates itself with the statement made by the distinguished Ambassador of Yemen on Behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

2. We congratulate the two chairs for their able stewardship of the preparatory process thus far.
3. We would also like to express our deep appreciation for the diligent work being undertaken by the Ambassador Sha Zukang, Under Secretary-General DESA and his team in supporting the preparatory process.
4. Pakistan would also like to welcome the appointment of Mr. Brice Lalonde of France and Ms. Elizebeth Thompson of Barbados as the Executive Coordinators. We are confident that they will meaningfully contribute to making the preparatory process for the Conference successful.

Co-Chairs,

5. At the first Prep Com last year, we agreed to have six days of additional preparatory time for informal Inter-Sessional meetings focusing on the substance of the Conference.
6. Through this first Inter-Sessional we seek to collectively reflect and better understand the two themes, which are the focus of our deliberations in the Conference i.e. green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication and institutional framework for sustainable development.
7. While seeking greater clarity on the themes, we also see this as an opportunity to obtain further clarity on the linkages between the themes and the objectives of the Conference. The objectives of the Conference are: One, secure renewed political commitment for sustainable development; Two, assess the progress to date and the remaining gaps in the implementation of sustainable development commitments; Three, address new and emerging challenges.

Mr. Chairman,

8. A total of 14 days of preparatory time – increased grudgingly at the first Prep Com after the initial agreement to have only 8 – in our view is completely inadequate to effectively undertake comprehensive and fruitful discussions on the objectives and themes of the Conference. This period unfortunately looks even more inadequate, when compared with the 34 days and 75 days preparatory process agreed for Johannesburg and the Earth Summits respectively.
9. Even the financial contributions made so far to support the preparatory process are way short of what is required. It is true that funding is not the only guarantor for the success of a Conference. But as we all know, it does have serious implications for securing effective and meaningful participation of the developing countries in the process, particularly the participation of experts from the capitals.

10. Already, the lack of participation of developing countries is manifested by the limited responses received from them to the questionnaire circulated by the Secretariat. Only 22 developing countries have responded to the questionnaire. These responses are the basis of the draft synthesis report being substantively considered at this Inter-Sessional.

11. Even the participation from developing country capitals is also quite limited at this Inter-Sessional. Any discussion without full participation and contributions by developing countries would not produce a comprehensive, balanced and universally owned outcome.

Co-Chairs,

12. The substantive aspects of our work hinges on national level preparations that will feed into the global process. There is no doubt that efforts by the developing countries to contribute effectively are undermined by significant capacity constraints. This gap must be bridged through mobilization of adequate financial and technical resources.

13. My delegation would, therefore, avail this opportunity to underscore the importance of providing adequate financial and technical support to assist developing country participation and contributions to the preparatory process. In this regard, we welcome the initiative by DESA to assist developing countries in collaboration with UNDP and other UN system agencies to effectively contribute to the preparatory process including the responses to the Questionnaire.

14. We would also like to underscore the importance of the contributions and assistance that the International Financial Institutions as well as the Multilateral Development Banks could provide in supporting our efforts to arrive at a realistic, viable and effective outcome.

Co-Chairs,

15. Our experience nationally has shown that a pathway to sustainable development cannot be charted in advance. Rather, the pathway must be navigated through a process of learning and adaptation. The main challenge in our view is to set on to a development path that measures progress not as a statistic but by the quality of life of people, especially the vulnerable and dispossessed. We, in Pakistan, like most other developing countries, are facing immense challenges in forging a strategy that can promote such balanced and all round growth.

16. To be more specific, in economic terms, the challenge of sustainable development is to utilize the true potential and achieve well being of each and every citizen of the country and promote viable economic growth through sustainable production, consumption and trade. In social terms, the challenge is the creation of a just society. In environmental terms, the challenge is to protect biodiversity by managing ecosystem, conserving natural resource base and safeguarding life support system for preserving inter-generational equity as well as to prepare for climate change, and its adverse impacts on the people and the country.

Co-Chairs,

17. We have no problem in embracing the concept of green economy, if it gets for us what the existing framework has failed to deliver. For a common man on the street, terminology is not important and just an issue of semantics. For many the key question is whether the much promised trickle down from pure growth-manship model would actually happen in a green growth scenario.

18. How we can create a win-win strategy, where economy and environment interact to become a business opportunity and a social enabler. How best can sustainability concerns be addressed in the context of promoting trade and investment without letting them turn into protectionism. They would like to know whether green economy approach can promote policy integration in such a way that social, economic and environmental dimensions of development could work in-tandem. How Green Economy could facilitate the establishment of an institutional framework that would support such integration.

19. Lastly, but most importantly, is green economy a continuation and reaffirmation of the principles we agreed to at Rio.

Co-Chairs,

20. Increasing poverty, growing divide between the rich and poor and the rapidly deteriorating global environment are good indicators of how and where we have failed to implement our sustainable development commitments.

21. We see the UNCSD and its preparatory process as an important opportunity to deeply and honestly reflect on where we have failed and why. An objective assessment of the implementation gaps, in our view, would give us a sense of where we failed and how to move forward without making the same mistakes again in dealing with not only the old but the new and emerging challenges.

22. The sustainable development agenda, we believe is caught in a self-defeating process where both – the environmental community and the economic community are of the view that progress in their respective pillar would boast the implementation of the other. If there is one challenge, which this Conference must overcome, to be successful, is to bridge this divide. Of course, it is no small task.

23. Integrated policy approaches and institutional solutions could make this happen both at the national as well as international levels. For my delegation, it is important that we deal with the objectives and themes of the conference as part of the same whole. They are closely linked and deeply interdependent.

24. For us frankly, our failure to implement the sustainable development commitments is essentially an institutional failure both at international as well as at the national levels. We need to set it right with an open mind and creative approaches.

25. We want an outcome from this conference that helps us to achieve these objectives. This would obviously involve rethinking the governance framework for sustainable development both at the international as well as national levels. We see a lot of potential in ECOSOC to act as the anchor for sustainable development governance at the international level.

Co-Chairs,

26. In the important work that we have begun today, Pakistan looks forward to engaging with all our partners to work towards seeing such an outcome and make this Conference truly historic and successful.

I thank you Co-Chairs.

