



EUROPEAN UNION
DELEGATION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
Head of Delegation

New York, 23 January 2012
DELUSANYC/2011/D/00015

Excellencies,

In response to the request contained in your letter dated 10 January 2012 and presenting the zero draft for the outcome document of the UNCSD conference / Rio+20, please find attached some written comments of the European Union and its Member States on section I and II of the zero draft.

The European Union and its Member States reserve their right to propose additional comments and textual amendments to those sections in view of the upcoming negotiations.

Please accept, Excellencies, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Thomas Mayr-Harting
Ambassador

Annex:

- Written comments of the EU and its Member States on section I and II of the zero-draft.

H.E. Mr. Kim Sook
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea
to the United Nations

H.E. Mr. John Ashe
Permanent Representative of Antigua and Barbuda
to the United Nations

Written comments of the European Union and its Member States¹
on section I and II of the zero draft
- January 23, 2012 -

The EU and its Member States¹ support a forward-looking and focused political document capable of giving renewed impetus to sustainable development. With a view to improving the Co-Chair zero draft of 10 January 2012 this document outlines our initial reflexion on Part I and II of the zero draft (paras 1 – 24). Overall, we believe that the current draft lacks a shared vision for change.

Part I. Preamble/Stage Setting (paras. 1-5):

This part does not properly set the stage for future actions and commitments. It should be stronger in terms of highlighting commitments from Heads of State and Government (para 1 and 5). It should be mentioned that national and local action needs to be complemented by international actions to achieve the objective of sustainable development.

Part II. Renewing Political Commitment (paras. 6-24):

In para 6 additional references to the importance of ensuring respect for democracy, human rights, gender equality, the rule of law, transparency, accountability and good governance is essential as well as the importance of addressing population issues. Further, in the following paras the Rio-conventions reference to the Paris, Accra and Busan Declarations on aid effectiveness as well as to the ICPD programme of action and the Beijing declaration and Platform for Action should be made.

The assessment of the progress since 1992 is too negative and need to be rebalanced (paras. 10, 11, 13) by shortening the long para 11 on setbacks or/and by amending para 10 on progress with more examples such as progress in the health sector and in the environmental field, such as through the establishment of the Montreal Protocol, and numerous examples at regional, national and local levels. It should be acknowledged that results are mixes – significant progress has been made, yet a lot still needs to be done.

The document needs to reaffirm the Rio Principles. They must be dealt with in a coherent manner and throughout the text one should be cautious about singling out any of them in particular.

¹ The Acceding country Croatia aligns itself with these comments. Croatia continues to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

In para 11 on challenges, the special challenge of megacities, especially in relation to air pollution, waste generation and water, should also be included, and the challenges of urbanisation to ensure sustainable urban development need to be addressed.

Special challenges, para 15, must also encompass fragile and conflict-affected countries, as the basic conditions for progress are often not present there.

In the section “B. Assessing the progress...”, the nexus between peace, development and environment need to be highlighted - this nexus is all the more true today. Violent conflicts (questions related to environment and security) remain a major impediment to sustainable development.

Guarded by the right to freedom of association and assembly, the participation and influence of the nine major groups is essential. None of the groups should be overlooked. In addition to the ones that are specifically mentioned in the para’s 17-21, reference needs to be made also to Farmers, NGOs, scientific and technological community, and workers and trade unions' role should be clearly noted and acknowledge as they contribute significantly to sustainable development. In addition to the mentioning of Major Groups, the important role of parliaments should be included. The participation of civil society is not only a question of access to information – it is also a question of being properly involved in decision making processes (para. 18). As for the involvement of the private sector, its key role in assisting countries to move towards a green economy as well as global partnerships should be mentioned (para. 19). Furthermore, the role of small and medium enterprises should be acknowledged. Both civil society and private sector can play an important role in public-private partnerships and in innovative financing.

Para. 21 on indigenous peoples, and children and youth seems to address rather diverse major groups. The part on children and youth should not just reflect ‘the views of children and youth’ but also their *needs* and ensuring the active involvement of these groups.

The reference to the involvement of women as drivers of positive change should be added in Section C, as any serious shift towards sustainable development requires gender equality and the full political and economic empowerment of women. A stronger reference to the ICPD agenda should be added in parts I and/or II.

Also, in this part on framework for action, there should be an overall commitment to continuously promote national regulatory and administrative frameworks, which send the right signals to the private sector to invest in and manage their businesses in a way that promote sustainable development.

Para 16 needs to be redrafted and its relevance needs to be reviewed and further discussed.

Para 24 on the “call for a global policy framework requiring all listed and large private companies... within the reporting cycle.” should be further clarified.

It should be considered to welcome the registry/compendium of commitments (para 128) as a separate para (no.24bis) in section D, even though further discussion on how to make this registry a meaningful tool is still needed.

The Framework for Action is currently rather void. It should be used for two purposes:

- to devise concrete actions for global multi-stakeholder involvement and approach;
- introduce Sections III, IV and V by saying in a conclusive paragraph that Sections III, IV and V contain actions/initiatives necessary to respond to the challenges and needs expressed in Section I and II.