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Session 3: Achieving sustainable development in the context of globalization

Statement by the Representative of the European Commission

Many blame globalisation for the problems currently facing the world: While it offers enormous opportunities for development, there are concerns that not all countries benefit from it. There are fears of negative environmental and social implications, as well as of loss of cultural identity.

Globalisation is a powerful force for positive change but its potential to promote sustainable development for all remains to be realised.

The European Union believes that the Implementation Plan agreed upon in Johannesburg, together with the preceding Doha Development Agenda and the Monterrey conference have shaped a global partnership for sustainable development. This partnership includes commitments to increased development assistance and market access for developing countries, good governance and a better environment.

The European Council of 20 and 21 March 2003 reviewed the EU Strategy for Sustainable Development with a view to putting into practice the commitments undertaken in Johannesburg.

This strategy acknowledges the need to ensure coherence between the internal and external policies and commitments, especially in the areas of trade, agriculture and fisheries, in order to contribute to

- making globalisation work for sustainable development,
- changing unsustainable consumption and production patterns,
- poverty eradication and achieving Millenium Development Goals,
- a sustainable management of natural resources.

At the EU internal level the priorities include issues such as

- energy efficiency, implementing fully the polluter pays principle,
- reducing emissions from the transport sector by a shift from road to rail,
- fully implementing all relevant EU legislation on renewable energy in order to accelerate progress towards meeting the Kyoto targets.

At the external level the priorities include among other things

- ensuring a result-oriented follow-up to the new goals agreed in Johannesburg on water, the protection of marine environment, depleted fish stocks, chemicals and natural resources including forests and biodiversity,
- urging other countries to ratify the Kyoto Protocol, so as to permit its timely entry into force,
- strengthening sustainable development governance as well as environmental governance at all levels and reinforcing the coherence between them - this could lead to the upgrading of UNEP into a specialised UN Agency with a broadly-based mandate in environmental matters,
- contributing to the development of regional sustainable development strategies, building for example on experience gained in the context of the EUROMED process,
- developing an EU action plan on forest law enforcement, governance and trade.