

NGO Statement - Opening Plenary, 17 May 2009

We welcome the pledge of Under-Secretary General Mr. Sha Zukang for an open and transparent preparatory process. We strongly believe in the centrality of the United Nations in work on sustainable development related to the three pillars of environmental, economic and social sustainability.

The objective of the 2012 Conference is <sup>3</sup>to secure renewed political commitment for sustainable development, assessing the progress to date and the remaining gaps in the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits on sustainable development and addressing new and emerging challenges<sup>2</sup>. It is clear that there has been a failure of implementation. The various financial crises point to systemic flaws that remain unresolved. New and emerging issues such as bilateral trade and economic partnership agreements threaten sustainable development in developing countries. There is a need to make the linkages, among others, with the work on the MDGs review and of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the follow-up to the Conference of the World Financial and Economic Crisis and its Impact on Development of June 2009.

On the theme of <sup>3</sup>green economy<sup>2</sup> we support dialogue and discussion on the concept to reach better understanding but have concerns that putting this in the international agenda as a centre piece will raise problems when there is the unfinished agenda of implementation of the existing UN sustainable development commitments. As Mr. Achim Steiner (UNEP) himself said, there are also risks associated with "green economy" such as those related to trade and conditionalities.

We therefore urge that the preparatory process focus on the implementations gaps and renewing political commitment for sustainable development.