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U.N. CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FIRST PREPARATORY
COMMITTEE MEETING (PREPCOM1)

BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY MAJOR GROUP STATEMENT

International cooperative efforts to “green” economies should do so in the broader context of sustainable development, and should incentivize companies of all sizes and sectors to ramp up their contribution to sustainable development. The right enabling frameworks at economic, environmental and social levels are indispensable to support what the private sector does best – innovating and investing, to create prosperity. Many companies have brought the concept of sustainable development into their operations through cleaner production and eco-efficiency, among others, but clearly more needs to be done, more is possible in globalized markets, and we hope Rio+20 can be a catalyst for this.

A solely environmental focus in this context runs the risk of too narrowly defining “green” economies, jobs and so on, when a multi-dimensional and multi-sectoral approach that looks to “green” all sectors is needed. Efforts to green economies should strengthen the entire economy, rather than choosing a small handful of technological “winners and losers.”

Greening and growing economies cannot get far without harnessing globalized markets through trade and other commercial transactions, and we continue to emphasize the crucial need for trade that reduces and removes tariffs on greener technologies, and avoids unilateral measures and non-tariff barriers.

Rio+20 should encourage stakeholders and governments to work together to promote a better understanding of the role of economic growth in greening economies and moving towards sustainable development. Such green growth is critical to raising living standards for growing populations and solving environmental and social challenges, notably poverty eradication and the other MDGs.

Greening economic development depends on practical steps: the creation of jobs, substantial increase in investments such as in the area of energy as the Russian delegate mentioned, and bringing value for investors, communities and customers. Efforts to advance the green economy should work within market systems, with an appropriate balance between public and private sector roles. We need flexibility in this to ensure that local conditions and priorities are reflected – every green economy will be unique. There is no one-size fits all solution to the myriad contexts and realities that will emerge.

Governments, workers, academia and enterprises alike will have to meet the skills demands of evolving labor markets and recognize the need to train the professionals (engineers, technicians and managers) that will be needed to carry out the green economy.

With public and private sector resource limitations in the economic downturn, it is critical to set priorities, and determine how resources can be leveraged and most cost effectively deployed. Trade-offs are almost always inherent in sustainable development, and life-cycle thinking, sound economics and scientific understanding have fundamental roles in framing practical visions for green economies.