

**UNEP Regional Consultation Meeting for Europe
in preparation for the 14th Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum
(GMGSF) and the 27th session of the Governing Council / Global Ministerial
Environment Forum (GC27/GMEF)**

Opening remark by Mr. Wondwosen ASNAKE KIBRET

From the very outset, on behalf of UNEP's Acting Director and Regional Representative for Europe, Mr. Jan Dusik, I would like to extend our deepest appreciation and thanks for the excellent support we have received from the Office of the President, the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources and our local partner International Dialogue for Environmental Action (IDEA) to bring us all together.

Having said that I would take this opportunity to welcome all of you to the 2012 UNEP European Regional Consultation Meeting with Major Groups and Stakeholders (MGS) in preparations for the 14th Session of the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum (GMGSF-14) and the 27th session of the Governing Council / Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC27/GMEF) that will take place next February 2013 in Nairobi, Kenya.

This is the first time we are organizing our European Regional Consultation Meeting outside of our Geneva and very happy to have it here in Baku and see so many of you.

Our last consultation was entirely devoted to the preparations for the Rio+20 conference and we had the platform to analyse opportunities and strategic options to contribute to the Rio+20 process and extensively discussed and deliberated on ways and means to establish a new international cooperation order based on a more appropriate governance framework for sustainable development, and to promote a transition to a green economy.

That consultation has led to and resulted in increased input from MGS into the Rio+20 preparatory processes, and better inclusion of MGS perspectives into the work of UNEP towards Rio+20 and during the Conference itself.

This time, the day long session will provide you with an opportunity to participate in and contribute to the discussion on the Rio+20 outcomes and what it means to your current and future work, to our work, and explore how each and everyone of us play a role in its implementation.

I encourage all of you to take an active role in the wide ranging discussion we anticipate in relation to the Rio+20 Outcome Document, and the potential role and mechanisms for engagement and participation of civil society in future governance of sustainable development, advancement of Principle 10, your involvement in the Post-2015 development agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In addition to that we will also share with you some of UNEP's work in the European region and the regional challenges and opportunities. We have a diverse group of presenter and we hope the different sessions will offer opportunities to exchange diverse viewpoints, perspectives and experiences, and also develop future partnerships for joint activities.

For those who are participating for the first time, the Regional consultation process is one of the main entry point and platform for the participation and engagement of a growing network of major groups and stakeholders to establish and develop a range of partnerships for the implementation of UNEP Programme of Work (POW) at the global, regional and national levels in dealing with a range of environmental governance issues.

UNEP attaches great importance to its partnership with MGS, and continues to seek and bring the skills, knowledge, expertise, and diverse perspectives of MGS in addressing the global challenges and promoting environmental priorities and meeting obligations.

In that context, by the end of this meeting you will be able to put forward a set of recommendations to UNEP both in the context of the RIO+20 outcomes and other regional challenges to be addressed by the UNEP.

I would like to keep my remark at this time, but look forward to exchange and share our plans and expectations during the discussion sessions.

Once again, a big thanks to our host, and wish all of you a every success meeting.

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