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Ministerial policy dialogue: African perspective on the
implementation of the outcomes of the United Nations
Conference on Sustainable Development

United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development outcomes and their implications for Africa

I.   Introduction

1.   In its resolution 64/236, the General Assembly called for the holding of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) to secure renewed political commitment for sustainable development, to assess the progress of and the remaining gaps in the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits on sustainable development and to address new and emerging challenges. The Conference had two main themes: a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, and the institutional framework for sustainable development. Countries and regions had almost two years to prepare for the Conference, with the support of the United Nations system. The preparatory process for the Conference was carried out at the national, subregional, regional and global levels, with varying levels of preparatory events held at the local level.

2.   Africa carried out an extensive preparatory process at the national, subregional and regional levels. Preparations at the national level were aimed at engaging multi-stakeholders in dialogues addressing the two themes of the Conference. More than 20 countries were supported through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat of the United Nations in preparing their national reports for the Conference. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) partnered with more than 10 countries to organize national multi-stakeholder green economy workshops, addressing green economy issues in specific national contexts. At the subregional level, all five subregions of the continent were actively engaged in a process facilitated through the regional economic communities. The subregional reports produced through this process reviewed the progress in the implementation of sustainable development commitments and provided a basis for the preparation of the regional review report.

3.   The foundation for the regional preparatory process was laid by the decision of the seventeenth African Union Summit, held in Malabo in July 2011, which called for the active participation of African negotiators and experts to ensure that African interests regarding green economy issues within the context of poverty eradication and sustainable development and the institutional framework for sustainable development were clearly defined and taken into consideration. To ensure that Africa spoke with one voice, the summit designated the President of the Congo, Mr. Denis Sassou Nguesso, as the African spokesperson for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

4.   The fourth special session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN), held in Bamako in September 2011, provided the foundation for responding to this call by defining the key elements that would constitute the African common position for the Conference. The

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seventh session of the Committee on Food Security and Sustainable Development of the Economic Commission for Africa, held in October 2011, further developed the outcome of the special session of AMCEN, which became the African consensus statement for the Conference.

5.   The eighteenth African Union Summit, held in Addis Ababa in January 2012, endorsed the Africa consensus statement and urged African negotiators and ministers to continue to speak with one voice during the negotiations leading up to the Conference. It further requested that the African Union Commission, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the African Development Bank, UNEP, UNDP and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research organize a training programme to build the capacity of African negotiators for the Conference process. This training, held in March 2012, provided a useful platform to ensure a better understanding of the African position by the African diplomatic missions in New York and to enable the active and coordinated engagement of Africa in the negotiations regarding the outcomes of the Conference.

6.   In addition to its direct engagement during the informal sessions and the preparatory meetings, the Congo, with the support of other African countries and development partners, made a significant effort to mobilize support for an African common position and to build common understanding and partnerships around the core issues, including the upgrading of UNEP to a specialized agency. Consequently, several key issues that were highlighted in the Africa consensus statement are captured in the final outcome document of the Conference, entitled "The future we want". Overall, while Africa may have desired to see more ambitious and forward-looking outcomes, the final outcome document that was approved by the Conference reaffirmed the continued political commitment for promoting sustainable development and laid down the basis for some important processes that will help the international community to make progress in implementation.

7.   The present working document aims to highlight some of the key outcomes of the Conference that are of particular relevance to African countries and to assist African countries in developing a coherent strategy of engagement in the main follow-up activities. To this end, section II focuses on highlighting the key relevant outcomes of the Conference, with particular focus on a green economy for poverty eradication and sustainable development, an institutional framework for sustainable development, including international environmental governance, and emerging issues. This is followed by a section on specific follow-up processes that are of importance to Africa, highlighting the follow-up actions that could be taken at the national and regional levels. The last section presents the suggested key regional flagship programmes that could support African countries in the implementation of the principal substantive outcomes of the Conference.

II.   Analysis of the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

8.   The present section provides a synoptic analysis of the key outcomes that are of significant relevance to Africa by highlighting their potential benefits and implications for the continent.

2.1   Key issues for Africa with regard to an institutional framework for sustainable development and international environmental governance

9.   This section examines the institutional framework for sustainable development section of the outcome document, in the context of the Africa consensus statement. The two key outcomes for follow-up on an institutional framework for sustainable development and international environmental governance are: the establishment of a universal intergovernmental high-level political forum for sustainable development to replace the Commission on Sustainable Development and the decision to invite the General Assembly to adopt, at its sixty-seventh session, a resolution to provide for the "strengthening and upgrading" of UNEP.

2.1.1   Outcome on the institutional framework for sustainable development in the context of the Africa consensus statement

We decide to establish a universal intergovernmental high-level political forum, building on the strengths, experiences, resources and inclusive participation modalities of the Commission on Sustainable Development, and subsequently replacing the Commission. ("The future we want", para. 84.)

10.   Paragraph 15 of the outcome document reaffirms the principles of the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, including the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. Furthermore, it states that "we underscore the importance of a strengthened institutional framework for sustainable development which responds coherently and effectively to current and future challenges

and efficiently bridges gaps in the implementation of the sustainable development agenda" (para. 75). The document also recognizes that an improved and more effective institutional framework for sustainable development should "take into account national priorities…of developing countries" (para. 76).

11.   The outcome document resolves to strengthen the institutional framework for sustainable development, which would include promoting coherence and the balanced integration of the three pillars of sustainable development, the science policy interface, the "full and effective participation of all countries in decision-making processes", the review and stocktaking of progress in implementation of all sustainable development commitments, including those related to the means of implementation, and enhancing the participation and "effective engagement" of civil society. It also calls for capacity-building, especially for developing countries, including in conducting their own monitoring and assessments.

12.   Moreover, the outcome document states that the institutional framework for sustainable development should be strengthened through periodic high-level dialogues in the General Assembly (see paras. 80 and 81 on the General Assembly) and the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council and by ensuring the coordinated follow-up of the outcomes of all major United Nations conferences and summits (see paras. 82 and 83 on the Economic and Social Council). Paragraph 84 also emphasizes "building on…inclusive participation modalities of the Commission on Sustainable Development". This refers to the principle of non-regression on agreed practices and principles as raised by the major groups and stakeholders during the Conference process. This provides an opportunity for civil society to move beyond the traditional nine major groups and stakeholders model and develop more representative regional coverage for Africa, and attract additional stakeholders (as mentioned in para. 43). This will be an opportunity for African civil society organizations to have a greater say in global and international processes.

13.   On the specific functions of an institutional framework for sustainable development, several of the priorities articulated by African ministers are also stated in the outcome document (see table 1). The consensus statement contained some issues specific to Africa that are not directly addressed in the section on an institutional framework for sustainable development. Nevertheless, most of these issues are covered elsewhere in the outcome document. In this regard, commitment to the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which is highlighted in the Africa consensus statement as the basis for the continent's work on an institutional framework for sustainable development, is acknowledged in section II.A of the outcome document, entitled "Reaffirming the Rio Principles and past action plans" (para. 16). The "special challenges facing the most vulnerable countries and in particular African countries…" (para. 32) is recognized, and it is also acknowledged that "more attention should be given to Africa and the implementation of previously agreed commitments related to its development needs that were made at major United Nations summits and conferences" (para. 35).

14.   The Conference also recognized that progress in reducing poverty has been uneven, especially in the least developed countries and in Africa, and recommitted to the full implementation of the internationally agreed commitments related to Africa's development needs, especially those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration, NEPAD, the Monterrey Consensus, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, the 2005 World Summit outcome document and the 2008 political declaration on Africa's development needs (para. 35). Furthermore, the specific section on Africa in the outcome document (paras. 183 and 184) invites all of Africa's development partners "to support African countries in strengthening human capacities and democratic institutions…with a view to furthering Africa's development at all levels, including through facilitating the transfer of technology needed by African countries as mutually agreed".

15.   The Conference concluded that the Committee on Sustainable Development no longer meets current needs or challenges and therefore decided to raise the profile of the sustainable development agenda by establishing a "universal intergovernmental high-level political forum, building on the strengths, experiences, resources and inclusive participation modalities of the Commission on Sustainable Development, and subsequently replacing the Commission" (para. 84). The proposed high-level forum "could", among other things, follow up and review progress in the implementation of sustainable development commitments made at previous United Nations summits and conferences and strengthen the science-policy interface, including in the form of a global sustainable development report (see table 1).

16.   To implement the strengthening of the institutional framework for sustainable development, the Conference decided to launch an intergovernmental open, transparent and inclusive negotiation process under the General Assembly to define the format and organizational aspects of the high-level

forum and the aims of the first session, to be held in September 2013, which coincides with the start of the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly. The outcome document also invites the Secretary-General to present a report on the needs of future generations. Following the adoption of the outcome document in Rio de Janeiro, the Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, announced the appointment of a special representative for future generations. This issue is not addressed in the Africa consensus statement, but could be considered alongside the issues related to participation and access to information.

2.1.2 The environmental pillar

…we invite the General Assembly, at its sixty-seventh session, to adopt a resolution strengthening and upgrading UNEP in the following manner… ("The future we want", para. 88)

17. The Africa consensus statement acknowledges "the need to strengthen international environmental governance within the context of the institutional framework for sustainable development, in order to promote a balanced integration of the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development" (para. 38). The introductory paragraph (para. 87) to the section on the environmental pillar in the outcome document reiterates support for strengthening international environmental governance, but emphasizes that international environmental governance is not only important in its own right, but should be considered in the context of sustainable development governance and the overall institutional framework for sustainable development. This was, from the very beginning, an important prerequisite for Africa in setting the context within which international environmental governance would be discussed during the Conference.

18. Another issue that was central to the negotiations was that international environmental governance should not become stronger or more important than the other aspects of sustainable development, but rather be better balanced with the other two pillars. In addition, the outcome document also requests that strengthened international environmental governance should also promote better coordination within the United Nations system, and more specifically that the engagement of UNEP in key United Nations coordination bodies should be strengthened. Improved coordination is therefore an overarching objective of strengthened international environmental governance, an objective that is also articulated in the Africa consensus statement.

19. Throughout the Conference negotiating process, Africa and the European Union were proposing transforming UNEP into a specialized agency, but the proposal failed to achieve sufficient support from other political groups. As such, the Conference stopped short of the African Union decision to consider transforming UNEP into an "international specialized institution" but committed itself to strengthening and upgrading the role of UNEP, based on its existing mandates.

20. However, the decision taken by the Conference to "adopt a resolution strengthening and upgrading UNEP" (para. 88) includes several of the same characteristics ascribed to specialized agencies, as outlined in the African Union decision, including: universal membership; secure, stable, additional and predictable financing; strengthened regional presence and improved implementation at the national level; the authority to lead a process of United Nations system-wide strategic planning for the environment; promoting the science-policy interface; and providing direct capacity and technology support.

21. In addition, the outcome document includes decisions to progressively consolidate the headquarter functions of UNEP in Nairobi (para. 88 (g)), and to ensure the active participation of all relevant stakeholders and explore new mechanisms to promote transparency and the effective engagement of civil society (para. 88 (h)). Table 2 compares the key characteristics of a specialized institution for the environment, as articulated in the Africa consensus statement and the outcome document, and highlights some potential implications.

2.1.3 Other issues regarding the institutional framework for sustainable development

22. With regard to the African statement on coordination within the United Nations system and between the United Nations system and international financial institutions, the outcome document reaffirms the importance of broadening and strengthening the participation of developing countries in international economic decision-making and norm-setting and in referencing recent decisions on the reform of the Bretton Woods institutions. It requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council on the progress made in mainstreaming the three dimensions of sustainable development throughout the United Nations system. It also awaits the outcome document of the independent evaluation of the "Delivering as one" initiative and calls on the United Nations system to take into account sustainable development practices in the management of facilities and operations.

23.   The outcome document invites all relevant stakeholders, including regional organizations, to support developing countries upon request to achieve sustainable development (para. 68). It also underscores the need to support regional institutions and emphasizes that "regional and subregional organizations, including the United Nations regional commissions and their subregional offices, have a significant role to play in promoting a balanced integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development in their respective regions" (para. 100).

24.   African ministers also agreed that all institutional frameworks for sustainable development should be linked to the science-policy interface for environmental sustainability. The outcome document recognizes the importance of integrated social, economic, and environmental data and information, in addition to effective analysis, assessment and implementation of decision-making processes. It encourages action at the various levels to promote access to information, public participation and access to justice in environmental matters. It also calls on countries to strengthen national, subnational and/or local institutions or relevant multi-stakeholder bodies and processes.

25.   During the Conference negotiations, the Group of 77 and China stressed the need to focus on establishing a resource mobilization framework for sustainable development and also proposed developing an international mechanism for technology transfer under the General Assembly to promote, implement and monitor concrete actions for technology transfer. The call for "new and additional" sources of financing was not quite addressed in the outcome document, but there are references to seeking funds from a "variety of sources" and from "new partnerships". As a compromise, it was agreed that a discussion would be initiated at the United Nations to look at options for a sustainable development financing strategy. The United Nations was asked to prepare a report on a technology-facilitating mechanism for the General Assembly to discuss.

26.   Regarding the mechanism for technology transfer, delegates were reluctant to launch a process without understating its aim and relationship with other ongoing United Nations processes. However, delegates requested relevant United Nations agencies to identify options for a facilitation mechanism that promotes the development, transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies. Commitments were made to enhance financial support from all sources for sustainable development for all countries and to fulfil official development assistance obligations. Furthermore, the outcome document outlines the main achievements of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and requests support for further simplification of procedures and assistance to Africa in accessing GEF resources. With regard to the means of implementing an institutional framework for sustainable development, it was agreed that the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly would also decide on establishing a working group to develop global sustainable development goals, to be agreed by the General Assembly.

2.2   A green economy in the context of poverty reduction and sustainable development

…we recognize the transition to a green economy could offer new opportunities for advancing the achievement of Africa's sustainable development objectives through economic growth, employment creation, and the reduction of poverty and inequalities, in accordance with the principles and recommendations of the 1992 Rio Summit and the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development. (Africa consensus statement, para. 22.)

…we consider green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication as one of the important tools available for achieving sustainable development and that it could provide options for policymaking but should not be a rigid set of rules." ("The future we want", para. 56.)

2.2.1   Analysis of the outcome decisions on a green economy

27.   The 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development resulted in an outcome document that touched on several dimensions of the sustainable development debate and recognized green economy as one of the important tools available for achieving sustainable development. The Conference put green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication on the global development policy agenda. At the Conference, world leaders viewed the transition to green economy as a common undertaking. It was further agreed that the transition to green economy should respect national sovereignty and be consistent with all previous international agreements, including common but differentiated responsibilities and assist in the attainment of international development goals, such as the Millennium Development Goals. In this respect, the following was agreed on:

(a)   "We affirm that there are different approaches, visions, models and tools available to each country, in accordance with its national circumstances and priorities, to achieve sustainable development in its three dimensions which is our overarching goal. In this regard, we consider green

economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication as one of the important tools available for achieving sustainable development and that it could provide options for policymaking but should not be a rigid set of rules. We emphasize that it should contribute to eradicating poverty as well as sustained economic growth, enhancing social inclusion, improving human welfare and creating opportunities for employment and decent work for all, while maintaining the healthy functioning of the Earth's ecosystems." ("The future we want", para. 56);

(b)   "We affirm that policies for green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication should be guided by and in accordance with all the Rio Principles, Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and contribute towards achieving relevant internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals." (para. 57);

(c)   "We view the implementation of green economy policies by countries that seek to apply them for the transition towards sustainable development as a common undertaking, and we recognize that each country can choose an appropriate approach in accordance with national sustainable development plans, strategies and priorities." (para. 59).

28.   Secondly, the outcome document captures the national and regional aspirations of African countries, including poverty eradication, sustainable development, inclusive economic growth, national sovereignty over natural resources and sustainable consumption and production. Similarly, the outcome document also provides international guidelines for the transition to a green economy in terms of technology transfer, official development assistance and trade and transboundary resource management. In this context, the following outcomes were agreed on:

"We affirm that green economy policies in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication should: (a) be consistent with international law; (b) respect each country's national sovereignty over its natural resources taking into account its national circumstances, objectives, responsibilities, priorities and policy space with regard to the three dimensions of sustainable development; (c) be supported by an enabling environment and well-functioning institutions at all levels with a leading role for governments and with the participation of all relevant stakeholders, including civil society; (d) promote sustained and inclusive economic growth, foster innovation and provide opportunities, benefits and empowerment for all and respect of all human rights; (e) take into account the needs of developing countries, particularly those in special situations; (f) strengthen international cooperation, including the provision of financial resources, capacity-building and technology transfer to developing countries; (g) effectively avoid unwarranted conditionalities on official development assistance (ODA) and finance; (h) not constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination or a disguised restriction on international trade, avoid unilateral actions to deal with environmental challenges outside the jurisdiction of the importing country, and ensure that environmental measures addressing transboundary or global environmental problems as far as possible, are based on an international consensus…" (para. 58).

29.   The Conference also called for a multi-stakeholder and participatory approach green economy transition. It requested Governments to provide the necessary leadership and create the required conditions to attract private investment, including public-private partnerships. In this context, the following outcomes were agreed upon:

(a)   "We acknowledge that involvement of all stakeholders and their partnerships, networking and experience-sharing at all levels could help countries to learn from one another in identifying appropriate sustainable development policies, including green economy policies. …" (para. 64);

(b)   "We underscore the importance of governments taking a leadership role in developing policies and strategies through an inclusive and transparent process. …" (para. 67);

(c)   "We invite relevant stakeholders, including the United Nations regional commissions, United Nations organizations and bodies, other relevant intergovernmental and regional organizations, international financial institutions and major groups involved in sustainable development, according to their respective mandates, to support developing countries upon request to achieve sustainable development..." (para. 68).

30.   The outcomes of the Conference regarding a green economy include views and positions contained in the Africa consensus statement (see para. 22 of the Africa consensus statement and para. 56 of "The future we want"). The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development Regional Preparatory Conference for Africa, held in Addis Ababa in October 2011, adopted the Africa consensus statement, which reiterated the need to define green economy as a tool for achieving

sustainable development, and to assess the opportunities and challenges related to this concept and the means of implementation needed to achieve a smooth transition to a green economy. In this context, they recognized that the transition to a green economy could offer new opportunities for advancing the achievement of Africa's sustainable development objectives through economic growth, employment creation and the reduction of poverty and inequalities, in accordance with the principles and recommendations of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit and the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development. It was emphasized that a transition to a green economy in the region should be underlined by national objectives and social, economic and environmental development imperatives. Similarly, the fourth special session of AMCEN, held in Bamako in September 2011, reached the same decisions on the transition to a green economy in Africa.

31.   The Conference placed responsibilities on all stakeholders. First, African Governments should provide the necessary leadership and mobilize their citizens to promote participatory and inclusive green economy policies that are consistent with national priorities, and create the enabling environment to encourage private sector involvement. Furthermore, statistical agencies should be supported and resourced to collect environmental data to evaluate green economy policies and programmes. The fourteenth session of AMCEN should consider adopting decisions to promote green economy policies that assist the continent, such as a regional programme on green economy in Africa, and should call on development partners and United Nations agencies to provide technical assistance.

2.2.2   Implementation of the outcome decisions on a green economy in Africa

32.   Given that sustained and inclusive improvement of human welfare remains a challenge in Africa, many African countries are unlikely to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Therefore, the decisions and declarations at AMCEN will serve as an important avenue to translate the outcomes of the Conference into implementable programmes that promote sustained and inclusive improvement of human wellbeing on the continent. The following policies outline how this can be achieved:

(a)   National green economy strategies: an increasing number of African countries are developing national green economy and green growth strategies. Notable examples include the national strategy on climate change and low carbon development for Rwanda, the climate-resilient and green economy strategy of Ethiopia, the green economy roadmap of Mozambique and the new growth path of South Africa. African countries need to further consolidate and strengthen this effort at the national level in order to ensure the development of their economies on a sustainable basis;

(b)   Green economy advisory services to African countries: UNEP set up a Green Economy Advisory Services unit to provide policy advice, technical assistance and capacity-building in support of national and regional initiatives on green economy. The UNEP green economy advisory services have supported a dozen African countries through a pilot project that is expected to be scaled up and expanded to support implementation of the outcomes in Africa. Working with Governments and national institutions, UNEP helped to carry green economy assessments to examine the opportunities and challenges related to the transition to a green economy. Such assessments are under way in a number of countries, including Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda, Senegal and South Africa, while being initiated in many other countries. In addition, UNEP, UNDP and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat of the United Nations are implementing a joint programme entitled "Supporting a green economy transition in developing countries and least developed countries: building towards Rio+20 and beyond" in 10 African countries, which is being funded by the Government of the Netherlands;

(c)   In parallel, the International Labour Organization, through its Green Jobs Programme, has been providing technical assistance and policy support to African countries on employment-led development strategies whose prime objective is the creation of green jobs. Such strategies are based on initial national assessments of green job opportunities at sector level. Technical assistance programmes, such as the Youth Entrepreneurship Facility in East Africa, while practically implementing such green job strategies, are aimed at showcasing environmentally sustainable economic and social development;

(d)   An African strategy for green growth: the African Development Bank has taken initial steps towards proposing a green growth strategy for Africa to enable sustainable growth and create prosperity by taking a holistic approach to development. The key points of the strategy are: promoting sustainable infrastructure, managing natural assets efficiently and sustainably and building resilience of livelihoods.

2.3 New and emerging challenges

33. The present section provides a brief analysis of issues raised as "new and emerging challenges" relevant to Africa in the outcome document. It compares issues that were tackled in the Africa consensus statement with those in the outcome document. It must be noted that the outcome document does not have a section dedicated specifically to "new and emerging challenges". Instead the document has a section entitled "Framework for action and follow-up" under which several thematic and cross-sectoral issues are highlighted, thus making provision for challenges that could be labelled as "new and emerging". It must be further noted that many of the issues raised are not "new or emerging" as such, but represent the challenges that need to be addressed to achieve global sustainable development.

2.3.1 Common issues with the Africa consensus statement

34. Almost all of the issues raised in the Africa consensus statement were included in the outcome document, albeit in a more detailed manner and with a global perspective. The context in which these issues were mentioned in the statement is summarized below:

(a) Poverty eradication: this theme highlights the need to address the uneven progress in poverty eradication and increased poverty, in certain African countries in particular. The theme also underlines the need to promote universal access to social services as a means of consolidating and achieving developmental gains;

(b) Food security, nutrition and sustainable agriculture: issues raised with respect to this theme include the need to revitalize the agricultural, fisheries and rural development sectors in an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable manner; the necessity to better address the needs of rural communities, such as access to credit, markets, secure land tenure, affordable technologies, et cetera.; the need to enhance agricultural research and extension services; and the need to address the root causes of excessive food price volatility;

(c) Water and sanitation: the main issues raised here include the need to integrate water into all aspects of sustainable development and the need to put in place measures to ensure the role of ecosystems in maintaining water quantity and quality. This theme also recognized the necessity to adopt measures to address water-related challenges including floods, droughts, scarcity and pollution;

(d) Energy: this theme highlights the need to address the challenges of access to sustainable modern energy services, especially for the poor. It also highlights the need to promote incentives in favour of, and removing disincentives to, energy efficiency and the diversification of the energy mix;

(e) Sustainable consumption and production: the endorsement of the global 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production emphasizes the need for a fundamental change in the way societies consume and produce resources. This section of the outcome document also refers to the need to phase out harmful and inefficient use of natural resources, including the removal of harmful fossil fuel subsidies that encourage wasteful consumption and undermine sustainable development. The 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production was adopted at the Conference, as developed during the eighteenth and nineteenth sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development. The text from the nineteenth session, which designated UNEP as the secretariat of the programmes, was appended, making this a formal decision of the Conference. The decision in paragraph 226 of the outcome document also