

Informal Environment Council in Gent on the 13th of July 2010

Joint Statement of Joke Schauvliege, Flemish Minister for Environment, Nature and Culture, Chair of the Environment Council, and Connie Hedegaard, European Commissioner for Climate Action

Given its great political importance, we decided to dedicate the working lunch of the Informal Council on Sustainable Materials Management to climate change. Sustainable Materials Management not only leads to a green economy by stimulating innovation, job creation and the conservation of natural resources, it could also entail bottom-up measures to reduce greenhouse gas emission on the short term.

On climate change, we had a very fruitful exchange of views where we took stock of the international situation. Global climate change is one of the overarching strategic priorities of the Trio Presidency, and Belgium will build on the work of the Spanish Presidency.

It is important that ministers now provide political guidance for the coming negotiations, in Bonn next month and in China in October.

Having no concrete outcome in Cancun would be unacceptable. It would not only put the UNFCCC and the role of multilateralism at risk, but we would also run the risk of losing public support for the process and for our climate policies in general.

In order to keep the international process on the rails, Cancun must produce a balanced, ambitious and realistic package of substantive decisions that responds to the urgent desire of many countries to step up their action. This needs to build on the progress made in

Copenhagen, reflect the interests and priorities of the different parties and provide a solid basis for reaching a global agreement.

The areas to be addressed by these decisions should include building up developing countries' Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) capacities; technology cooperation; a framework for adaptation to climate change and a global scheme for reducing emissions from tropical deforestation, having in mind the synergies with biodiversity.

The package should address a number of key institutional and architectural issues including a robust agreement on an enhanced MRV system for both industrialised and developing countries that builds on the Copenhagen Accord. The package should also contain a set of decisions that should be implemented immediately or in the near-term to show that the international process is delivering action. Furthermore, it should include a roadmap to South-Africa with a view to a legally binding agreement.

Progress on the substance in Cancun will help the discussion about the form of the future, new global framework. The European Union has signed, pledged and delivered under the Kyoto Protocol. We are open to accepting a second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol provided that other major emitters take on their fair share of a global emissions effort as part of the wider agreement and that weaknesses in the Protocol which currently undermine its environmental integrity are fixed.

At the Environment Council on 14 October, we will assess the progress at the multilateral level and further develop our offer for Cancun, so as to make it a success both for the climate and for multilateralism.