Mr. President,

Thank you very much for giving me the floor and for convening today’s meeting.

Mr. Secretary General, at the very outset, I want to express our deep appreciation for your very strong commitment to sustainable development. You have repeatedly outlined this as one of your top priorities.

I am also very encouraged by your coming here, meeting the members and bringing the Report of your High Level Panel on Global Sustainability into the intergovernmental processes. Indeed, this is very helpful when you call for countries to embrace it.

Mr. President,

The Report begins with a quotation from the Father of the Indian Nation, Mahatma Gandhi - “Earth provides enough to satisfy everyman’s need, but not for every man’s greed”. In our modern context and usage this is a reference to the need for sustainable production and consumption and, of course, lifestyles. Perhaps, that is the reason why some members in the Panel found it necessary to say that not all members agreed with all aspects of the report.

Be that as it may, we are very honoured and proud that our Minister of Rural Development participated in the Panel and its deliberations in an active manner. We also deeply commend you, Mr. Secretary General, for setting up the Panel and the two co-chairs: President Tarja Halonen of Finland and President Zuma of South Africa.

Mr. President,

The report emphasizes people’s involvement and empowerment. To me this goes to the heart of the over-riding priority of developing countries which is poverty eradication. Please note, I come from a country where we are very proud that with economic growth over the last several years, we have been able to pull millions out of poverty. The guiding principle for our government is inclusive growth and we are very happy that people-centric approach also leads to the hallowed principle of equity.
And this needs to remain the underpinning and the most important element to guide us as we develop paradigms for sustainable development.

Mr. Secretary General, I also commend you on having taken forward the issue of Sustainable Energy for All. My delegation was very proud to have been in the forefront of piloting this resolution in the G-77 and later on in the General Assembly. The goal of this effort really needs to be universal access to modern energy for all. We need, of course, to recognize the importance of renewables and other forms of modern energy, but equally, remember that fossil fuels are here and are here to stay for at least quite some time to come.

In the areas of environment, it is absolutely critical for us as we go forward with our newer, greener efforts to clearly recognize historical responsibilities and the principle of common but differentiated responsibility.

Mr. Secretary General, we live in an age of collaboration and cooperation and here I really would like to once again commend you on what you said in your brief statement, your emphasis on science. We fully agree that science, technological development and research for better development of science are really going to be the way forward. For us the critical thing is not only collaborations in science, but our willingness as a global community to share the fruits of science and make them available to all those across the world who need it, in a manner that they can afford, in a manner that they can easily access.

Mr. Secretary General, I want to thank you once again for your initiative which I sincerely hope will get carried into the inter-governmental domain so that it is truly embraced by all as you had rightly called for in your statement.

Thank you very much.