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برنامج الأمم المتحدة للبيئة

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PRESS RELEASE

UN Agencies 'Deliver as One' To Realize a Green Economy

New York: 25 June 2009: At least 21 UN agencies today backed the call for a world-wide transition to a low carbon, resource efficient Green Economy able to deliver multiple economic, social and environmental opportunities in the 21st century.

Such a transition is needed to catalyze a sustainable global economic recovery while generating decent jobs, enhancing food security, and reducing dependence on finite fossil fuels.

A Green Economy can also address multiple persistent and looming crises from overcoming poverty and combating climate change to reversing the degradation of multi-trillion dollar ecosystems and their services, experts argue.

In a statement, issued at the General Assembly Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and its Impact on Development held in New York during 24-26 June, the agencies noted that the current financial and economic crisis required a collective response from the global community which would lay a solid foundation for shared growth and sustainable development. Leading economies should ensure that developing countries should have the fiscal resources to launch their own stimulus programmes and have increased access to international markets for a rapid resumption of trade.

Over the past six months a wide variety of agencies in the United Nations System including the Bretton Woods Institutions and Secretariats of Multilateral Environmental Agreements have been involved in the design and implementation of a Green Economy Initiative.

"I am very pleased to present this statement on behalf of sister agencies in the UN System," said Achim Steiner, UN Under-Secretary-General and UNEP Executive Director. "Delivering a transition to a low carbon, resource efficient Green Economy cannot occur without the creativity, vision, actions and support of a broad cross section of society—this rapid harmonization of perspectives from so many agencies reflects their determination to be agents of change towards a sustainable 21st century. The statement is also a strong signal from the international system backing the UN Secretary General in his repeated calls for a deal to be sealed in Copenhagen," Mr. Steiner added.

"This statement, the result of hard and cooperative work by the staff of all the cooperating agencies in a short span of time, seeks to reflect and harmonize the perspectives of all agencies on the urgent global and national responses to the current crisis with a particular focus on a resolute, yet fair and just transition towards a Green Economy," said Mr. Steiner. "This collective effort has been included as one of the several UN-wide Joint Crisis Initiatives proposed by the Chief Executives Board of the UN System."

The statement says that: "Investing stimulus funds in such sectors as energy efficient technologies, renewable energy, public transport, sustainable agriculture, environmentally friendly tourism, and the sustainable management of natural resources including ecosystems and biodiversity, reflects the conviction that a green economy can create dynamic new industries, quality jobs, and income growth while mitigating and adapting to climate change and arresting biodiversity decline." These, it says, "can potentially contribute to economic recovery, decent job creation, and reduced threats of food, water, energy, ecosystem and climate crises, which have disproportionate impacts on the poor."

Specifically the statement calls for donor countries to make good their commitments on financial support, including those made at G8 and G20 meetings, the development of carbon pricing, the phasing-out of perverse subsidies and the avoidance of protectionism. It notes that these must be accompanied by measures to protect and improve access by the poor to food and energy security. It calls for revived trade and new trade policies which support both development and the transfer of technologies, accompanied by training and capacity building.

“The solidarity of the international community is being tested,” the report concludes. “Let this economic recovery be the turning point for an ambitious and effective international response to the multiple crises facing humanity. The most representative test case is when governments meet to seal the deal on climate change in Copenhagen in December 2009. Let Copenhagen be the turning point for ushering in a global green economy.”

Note to editors: The UN agencies and MEAs that have already backed the statement include:

The Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal (BASEL CONVENTION)
Convention on Biological Diversity(CBD)
The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
International Labour Organization (ILO)
International Maritime Organization (IMO)
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)
United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)
Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT)
United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)
World Bank Group
World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)
World Meteorological Organization (WMO)
World Trade Organization (WTO)
United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)

For more information please contact:

Jay Dowle
Communications Officer
UNEP Green Economy Initiative
jay.dowle@unep.ch
Office: +41 (0) 22 917 8691
Cell: 076 586 3628 (Geneva)
Skype: jay.dowle
www.unep.org/greeneconomy/