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Informal consultation process
on the Co-Chairs' Option Paper on IEG

Statement by

Ambassador João Salgueiro

Permanent Representative

Permanent Mission of Portugal to the United Nations

on behalf of the European Union

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M.s Co-Chairs,

I will be speaking on behalf of the European Union.

The Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Montenegro, and the EFTA country Iceland, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this declaration.

I would like to start by conveying our sincere appreciation to you, the two Co-Chairs of the informal consultation process of the plenary, Ambassador Claude Heller from Mexico and Ambassador Peter Maurer from Switzerland, for convening this meeting and to thank you for having prepared the "*Options Paper on IEG*" which was presented last June for our consideration.

The European Union fully supports the ongoing consultations process on the issue of the institutional framework for the environmental activities of the UN in the follow-up to paragraph 169 of the 2005 World Summit Outcome. The EU expects it will allow for a substantive, inclusive and transparent exchange of views on all relevant issues, based on the engagement of all relevant stakeholders and lead to a real upgrade of the current system of International Environmental Governance

The *Options Paper* contains a comprehensive and valuable overview of the key problems and issues concerning the structure, organization and content of environmental policy in the UN system and introduces a range of practical measures in each one of the seven building blocks, or areas considered to be of priority "for renewed intergovernmental attention, intervention and improvement", in a comprehensive approach to incremental reform, while proposing a clear timeline for future developments.

The European Union welcomes the *Options Paper* as a positive and useful contribution to the reform process, recognizing that, notwithstanding the complexity of the issues involved and the variety of ideas and positions expressed by Member States, the Co-Chairs skillfully managed to closely capture, in the *Options Paper*, the comments and positions expressed by delegations in a systematic and consistent way.

The options proposed by the Co-Chairs merit the overall support of the European Union. Some of the measures offered would need additional consideration in order to ensure that they do not lead to increased bureaucratic structures and burdens and to clarify in particular their organizational, legal and financial impact.

The European Union further agrees with both the Co-Chairs' proposals to continue with the informal consultations process and with their objective of starting formal negotiations on a broader transformation of the International Environmental Governance (IEG) System, no later than the beginning of the 63rd session of the GA.

In this regard, the European Union would like to reiterate its willingness to work with the wider Membership of the UN, and all other relevant stakeholders, to strengthen IEG and upgrade UNEP. The European Union looks forward to the continuation of this process of consultations, in the framework of the 62nd session of the GA, and to further exploring possibilities for a more coherent institutional framework of environmental governance.

The European Union firmly believes that an ambitious reform is required in order to achieve real change and feels encouraged to work for the establishment of a UN Organization for the Environment, based on UNEP, with a revised and strengthened mandate, supported by stable, adequate and predictable financial contributions and operating on a equal footing with other UN specialized Agencies.

Finally, the European Union takes this occasion to welcome the recently held "*Ministerial Meeting on Environment and Sustainable Development: Challenges for International Governance*" (Rio de Janeiro, 3 and 4 September) and believes that this meeting has contributed to building confidence between different Parties involved in the discussions. In this context, the European Union considers that informal meetings of this sort can be useful in complementing, without replacing, the substantive discussions and consultations being undertaken at the UN.

Thanks for your attention.