OPENING REMARKS

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to welcome you all to the first cycle of Workshops convened by the Presidency of the 67th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. These Workshops are intended to advance our discussions on the development, transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies in developing countries, as mandated by the world’s leaders at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held in Rio de Janeiro last June, specifically in paragraph 273 of the Rio+20 outcome document *The Future We Want*.

That paragraph asks the relevant UN agencies to “identify options for a facilitation mechanism that promotes the development, transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies by, inter alia, assessing the technology needs of developing countries, options to address those needs and capacity building”.

Since Rio+20, the Second Committee of the UN General Assembly (on economic and social affairs) has already had an opportunity to discuss options for a technology facilitation mechanism in this area, on the basis of a Report submitted by the Secretary-General. Those discussions, held last November, clearly showed the need to continue the debate in a more interactive format and to seek the ideas and knowledge of experts and other stakeholders, in order to update our understanding of the technology needs of developing countries’ and widen our imagination on options available or conceivable to address them. With this in mind, the GA decided to hold the series of four workshops we are embarking on today.

These workshops, as stipulated in the resolution, are supported by the UN system and will enable the involvement of other relevant stakeholders. Major Groups representatives will thus have the opportunity to make interventions from the floor.

These first two workshops – today and tomorrow – aim primarily to gather evidence and views from experts from academic, practitioner or other stakeholder communities, to inform discussions among Member States of technology needs of developing countries and options to address them.

The next two workshops, to be held on 30 and 31 May, will focus on international technological capacity building initiatives, looking at successful examples as well as shortcomings, and options – including that of a technology facilitation mechanism – for enhancing the development, transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies to developing countries, including with a focus on addressing the needs identified in these first two workshops.
In particular, Workshop 3 will provide an opportunity for international organisations to present and discuss their activities, achievements and needs in the area of technological capacity building and technology development and transfer more broadly.

Today, workshop 1 will address science and technology needs and options for poverty eradication and sustainable development, focusing first on the case of agriculture and then moving on to energy and, in particular, renewable technologies in the afternoon.

Tomorrow, in Workshop 2, we will discuss and share views on successful models for clean and environmentally sound innovation and technology diffusion in developing countries, and forms of international cooperation to foster environmentally sound innovation and technology diffusion.

The sum total of our deliberations in these workshops, plus the written inputs we receive from Member States and other stakeholders (which the Secretariat will be soliciting in coming days), should provide an excellent basis to have a discussion, in Workshop 4, on the way forward. I expect that discussion to revolve around two major questions. Firstly, what gaps and deficiencies exist in the present international institutional architecture to support science and technology for sustainable development? And, may I add that institutional landscape of international scientific and technological cooperation is far from being empty. A glance at Figure 3 in the Secretary-General’s report from last September, which is quoted in the Concept Note, provides a summary picture of that landscape.

The second question is what would be feasible and effective options for addressing identified gaps and weaknesses, including the option of a technology facilitation mechanism.

Last, but not least, as a reminder of our full roadmap, the discussions and recommendations arising from these Workshops and from your written submissions are meant to underpin a report by the Secretary-General on the way forward in this area, to be presented at the 69th Session of the General Assembly starting next September.

But, let us begin and let us listen to the thinkers and practitioners of clean and environmentally sound technology development to present their evidence and views today and tomorrow.

Ladies and gentlemen,
Dear fellow Member States representatives,

I would strongly encourage all of you to engage in an interactive discussion with these experts, take advantage of their knowledge to answer your questions, challenge them and challenge our own presuppositions. Let a genuine dialogue begin, one informed by the best available knowledge and practice so that relevant technology could be shared by the global community for the good of mankind and the greater creation.

I look forward to an enriching debate.
Thank you.