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UN meeting on sustainable development making vital progress, chairman says



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Participants at the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development have made important progress on key issues such as mining, transport and waste management and a successful outcome is within reach, the commission's chairman said today.

László Borbély, Romania's Minister for Environment and Forests, told journalists that a draft outcome document should be ready in time for the commission's high-level segment, which starts on Wednesday.

"There are many competing ideas that countries still have to iron out," he said. "I think most important, however, is that there is a good negotiating atmosphere that can help us reach a successful outcome."

Government ministers from about 50 countries are expected to attend the high-level segment, which is designed to give impetus to preparations for the Fourth UN Conference on Sustainable Development, or Rio+20, which will be held in the Brazilian city in June 2012.

Mr. Borbély said five main issues were still under consideration by delegates to the commission, which began on 2 May and is expected to wrap up this Friday – mining, sustainable consumption and development, transport, chemical use, and waste management.

“Of genuine concern to all countries are the measures that each country must undertake, and the resources that will be available to developing countries to realistically implement progressive solutions based on the commission’s decisions.”

Sha Zukang, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, stressed that the commission is trying to find “concrete ways” to use the world’s existing resources more efficiently.

“We want to produce and consume more, but with fewer resources,” he said. “The goal is to make our limited natural resources go farther and support more people... particularly the more than one billion poor of the world.”

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