

STATEMENT BY

**HON. MARIA MUTAGAMBA,
MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF
UGANDA**

TO

THE REVIEW OF CSD-13 WATER AND SANITATION

DURING THE

**16TH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
(CSD-16)**

Mr. Chairman

1. My delegation wishes to express its appreciation to the Commission for the excellent organization of CSD 16. We also thank the panelists for their comprehensive presentations yesterday. We fully associate ourselves with the statement of G77 and China, as presented by the Representative of Antigua and Barbuda to the UN.
2. Uganda views access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene education as basic human rights, which underpin improvements in health and livelihoods, and form the first essential step in overcoming poverty. Poverty has many dimensions, but lack of access to a reliable water supply for household as well as for productive purposes and lack of access to basic sanitation, is one central feature of poverty that must be reduced drastically if the Millennium Development Goals are to be met.
3. Communities have multiple needs for water: domestic demand; crop, livestock and fish production; small businesses like brick making, etc. Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) approach as a planning tool is slowly being

embraced in my country. While the focus has been directed at big water users, dramatic impacts have been realized in local settings when the needs of local farmers to gain access to and use water for their personal and productive benefits have been considered.

4. Rural domestic water supply schemes tend to be expensive and require external funding in many countries since they do not generate income. Their sustainability is therefore often problematic for poor communities without sufficient income to pay even minimal maintenance costs. Low-cost technologies such as rainwater harvesting, soil and water conservation, and low-cost water abstraction technologies (e.g., treadle pumps, solar power pumps, and bucket and drip systems) can make a difference for millions of farmers.

Mr. Chairman,

5. My delegation would like to share with the Commission the highlights of our progress and challenges. Since 2000, we undertook reforms at sub-sector level (Rural Water Supply and Sanitation, Urban Water and Sewerage Services, Water for Production and Water Resources Management) and we are currently

updating and consolidating them into a single and integrated Water Sector Strategic Investment Plan.

6. Through Sector wide approach to planning (SWAP), key stakeholders in government (Water, Health, Education, Gender and Community Development, Local Government, and Finance), Development Partners, NGOs and Private Sector representatives are jointly planning and evaluating progress through the Water Sector Working Group. We produce joint annual National Water Sector Performance Reports and undertake Annual Joint Water and Sanitation Sector Reviews.

7. At implementation level, we have decentralized rural water and sanitation to Local Governments; commercialized operations and management of urban water and sewerage services through performance contracts with the national water utility in 22 large towns and water operators in 78 small towns. In terms of service delivery, we have achieved 61% access in rural water supply; 74% and 40% in urban water supply in large and small towns respectively. This is against national targets of 77% for rural water and sanitation and 100% for urban water and sanitation by 2015.

8. In the area of Water Resources Management, we are in the process of decentralizing to four (4) management water zones; we are currently undertaking pilot studies for IWRM in two water catchments; water resources assessment and mapping at national level to guide planning and water resource allocation and development.

Mr. Chairman,

9. Our biggest challenge remains the limited public budgetary resource envelope (currently at 2.6 – 2.8% of national expenditure). We therefore need support from the international community and to share experience in exploring ways to educate our people in improving water and sanitation services at household and community level; attracting the private sector to invest in water and sanitation service delivery; and developing collaborative arrangements with NGOs and civil society as additional financing channels for public investment (national budget and ODA) in water supply and sanitation.

10. Under sanitation, the national latrine coverage stands at 59%; in primary schools, the pupil: stance ratio stands at 69:1. Sample surveys indicate an average of 60% of sanitation facilities had hand washing facilities. The coverage for sewerage services stands at 7%. The high investment costs for sewerage remains a limiting factor and poses a challenge due to its competition for limited resources with water supply.

11. My delegation would like to call upon the Commission to facilitate sharing of knowledge and experience, especially among developing countries, so that we do not have to re-invent what has been tested and avoid duplication and/or waste of scarce resources.

I thank you.