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STATEMENT

**BY MR. VLADIMIR A. AVERCHENKO
HEAD OF THE FEDERAL AGENCY ON CONSTRUCTION, HOUSING AND
PUBLIC UTILITIES, HEAD OF THE DELEGATION OF THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION AT THE 13TH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION
ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

New York, April 21, 2005

Dear Mr. Chairman,

Dear colleagues,

Russia attaches great importance to the Commission on Sustainable Development and, in particular, its activities on the implementation of the outcomes of the WSSD on water, sanitation and human settlements.

We support the approach taken in the thematic reports of the Secretary-General to the CSD-13 that emphasizes the importance of integrated multi-sectoral and balanced solutions for comprehensive implementation of the WSSD outcomes on water, sanitation and human settlement. There is a need to enhance joint efforts of governments, public and private organizations, as well as other stakeholders to advance implementation within the framework of national programmes of action. In this respect, we would like to underscore that relevant activities should take into account economic and social factors in keeping with the specificities and priorities at national, sub-regional and regional levels.

The Russian Federation is committed to the implementation of the WSSD outcomes, in particular those related to water and sanitation. The National Programme "Development of the water resources complex of Russia (Water of Russia-XXI)" is a vivid example of our commitment. Turning political commitments of the WSSD into practical actions is high on our national agenda, as demonstrated by the adoption of new legislative acts, increased budgetary allocations for implementation of relevant federal programmes and a more active role of the private sector in providing basic services of water supply and sanitation.

Major improvements will have to be made to water supply and sanitation: development of advanced models of management and a modern methodology for the establishment of joint public-private management companies, promotion of innovative forms of financing for water and sanitation projects, fostering international cooperation and strengthening partnerships, inter alia, the CIS component of the European Union's "Water Initiative" of which the Russian Federation is a participant.

In this regard it would be important to step up collaborative efforts of states within the framework of the International Decade for Action "Water for Life", 2005-2015 that is called upon to take a wide range of practical measures on water and sanitation.

Sustainable development of human settlements is a priority among the core policy issues of the Russian Federation at all levels. In keeping with the collaborative efforts at the international level Russia continues to contribute to the implementation of the JPOI goals on human settlements. 2004 was a milestone in the process of fundamental legislative reform in housing and urban development. These reform have created a solid foundation for the launching this year of national programmes specifically designed to upgrade the public utilities infrastructure and promote the market of affordable housing.

Russia fully realizes the urgency of the human settlements problems and in this context we would like to highlight the important role played by UN-Habitat in fostering international cooperation and promoting the goals of sustainable development of urban and rural settlements. Russia also attaches great importance to the implementation of the recommendations of the Habitat II Conference in Istanbul contained in its main policy document - "Habitat Agenda".

According to the available data and estimates, we expect further acceleration of urbanization in Russia that will exacerbate the trend towards increased consumption of natural resources for urban development. That's why sustainable and secure development of urban settlements, including adequate and safe housing, is now becoming a core strategic issue. In this connection, we strongly support the principle of sustainable human settlements development contained in the "Habitat Agenda" and proclaimed in the "Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium" adopted by the 25th Special Session of the UN General Assembly in 2001. Affordability and quality of housing, along with high standards of public utilities, now represent a key factor of human resources development in our country.

The transition to a market economy led to the development of new national housing policy guidelines. In keeping with the principles of sustainable development, this policy promotes an integrated approach to housing that take into account interlinkages among infrastructural components of human settlements, waste management, land use and transportation systems. Strategic plans of socio-economic development and long-term federal programmes provide an overall framework for policy implementation. Necessary steps are also being taken to ensure that these strategic programmes address specific national circumstances and target both different sectors of the economy and segments of the population.

We share the view that governments should be the driving force in the mobilization of financial resources and development of credit systems. There is a need to facilitate the demand in housing and relevant services by enhancing the effectiveness of financial institutions that play catalytic role in the promotion of the market of affordable housing.

We believe that the outcomes of this session will provide renewed impetus to long-term implementation activities that address priority issues of adequate housing for the most disadvantaged segments of the population and will constitute a major contribution to the attainment of the ultimate goal of sustainable development of human settlements.

Thank you.