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**Statement
to the
Commission on Sustainable Development**

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by

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Austria

Mr. Chairman,

It is a great honor for me to address this forum under your able chairmanship. Let me congratulate you and the bureau to the excellent work you did in preparation of this important CSD session. I am confident that under your able guidance and leadership the first review session of the Commission will be an important and successful benchmark for future CSD review sessions.

I fully support what my Irish colleague said on behalf of the EU and the acceding countries. In addition I would like to stress the following points:

To the same extent as Austria is aware of the importance of implementing the Millennium Development Goals and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, we are aware that the current efforts of the international community do not suffice for the achievement of our commonly set targets. We all know what tremendous challenges these goals present.

In view of the challenges one could ask the question if those targets are realistic. But it is not so much a question of our targets being realistic but rather about making them realistic through combined and synergized efforts. We all will have to fulfil our share.

A well functioning and sound drinking water supply, as well as an appropriate waste water treatment, is of vital importance and indispensable for life. A well developed water infrastructure is also essential for the control of certain diseases. Therefore, water management and sound water infrastructure is a crucial basis for human health, but also very important for the protection of the environment.

Austria is lucky to be situated in an area where water is an abundance. Nevertheless, we try to use water in a sustainable and responsible manner. In order to allow for its sustainable use, it is important to follow a holistic approach, combining all aspects of water supply and waste water management.

The Austrian Water policy is traditionally based on a general protection of all water bodies, surface waters and groundwater, irrespectively of their use. This was already laid down in the Austrian Water Act of 1959. The last amendment of the water Act of 2003, takes into account the new European water policy of the Water Framework Directive.

Austria has mainly small and medium sized cities and only a few bigger ones. Water infrastructure is organised by water and waste water associations and the communities. In addition we also have public-private partnerships relating to water and waste water. We put special emphasis in maintaining smooth operation of well functioning plants, since this allows for a more economical approach.

Austria focuses its efforts at home on integrated water resource management while at the same time working with our developing country partners on access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.

Integrated water resource management incorporating an ecosystem approach is the most effective and comprehensive way of solving the challenges. I strongly support

the view, Minister Brende recently expressed in Jeju, that there is the need to place integrated water resource management strategies on the national agenda of all countries and to regard it as a priority expenditure area. This will allow for a more targeted approach towards the achievement of our goals.

Austria has considerable experience in integrated water resource management gained for example in relation to the implementation of the EU Water Framework directive but also in context of the International Commission for the Protection of the River Danube.

Due to the fact that 97 % of the Austrian territory is situated within the Danube River Basin integrated water resource management represents an issue of considerable relevance in Austria.

Through our work in the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River we gained particular experience in integrated water resource management. We would like to offer this expertise to other countries since we think that capacity building is of particular importance to attain our goals.

As we all know integrated water resource management is not the only issue. To implement the 2015 targets on access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation is of key importance for the lives of millions of people. Austria's ODA to water supply and sanitation accounted to 46 million USD between 1999 and 2001. Among OECD countries we devote the highest percentage of our ODA to water and sanitation projects in developing countries. In Monterrey, the EU members have committed themselves to increasing their official development aid to 0.39% of Gross National Income by 2006 with a longer term target of 0.7% of Gross Domestic Product. Austria as a member of the EU is heading towards achieving this goal.

The example of the Austrian activities in Uganda, which we presented yesterday at our side event, is just one of many where financial assistance and capacity building do have a direct impact on the lives of people.

At the end of my speech, let me express one personal concern and apologize if I may be too blunt: Let us not lose focus! Let us not forget that water, especially, is an issue interlinked with and depending on so many other issues. We all know that our environment is not static. Let's face it: with climate change and global warming progressing the way it is, every one of us will be exposed to major transformations: increase of natural disasters, rising of the sea level, vanishing of glaciers, severe security impacts through mass migrations. We will be exposed to more extremes: days of extreme drought followed by days of extreme rainfalls. Each country in the world without exception will be affected and this we can only face through combined and reinforced efforts.

We are now in a situation where we can counteract negative developments through our lessons learned over the decades. We have to show what the international community is really worth for.

Thank you!