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STATEMENT OF THE MR. PETR MAREŠ
VICE-PRIME MINISTER OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC,
AT THE HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT OF THE 12TH SESSION
OF THE COMMISSION OF SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT

NEW YORK, 28 APRIL 2004

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Czech Republic fully associates itself with the statement presented here earlier by the distinguished representative of Ireland. Our country fully shares and supports the EU approach towards the sustainable development and the emphasis, which is placed on the three issues on the CSD agenda this year – water, sanitation and human settlements. Let me just add few comments from our own experience.

During the last 15 years the Czech Republic underwent the transitional changes. I would like to stress in this regard that the environmental agenda was affected essentially. And for example, in the area of housing, the successful realization of the Healthy Cities Project and the progress already achieved in implementing the local Agenda's 21 are worth mentioning.

Extensive and comprehensive restructuralization was also executed in the water management policy. In the water quality, between the years 1992 and 2002, the recorded discharged pollution point sources fell approximately by 75% in the major pollutants. A long-term improvement in water quality has been accomplished mainly by:

- the implementation of “polluter-pays principle”;
- abolishing of subsidies on the prices of water and sewer services from the state budget;
- the transformation of ownership of infrastructure property (water supply and sewerage systems) from the state to the municipalities or private companies;
- further development and reconstruction of decisive waste water treatment plants, both municipal and industrial.

In our country, similar accomplishments have been reached in almost all areas of the Millennium Development Goals.

Excellencies, dear colleagues,

I would like to ensure you that the Czech Republic is very well aware of its share of responsibility in world sustainable development, both in regional and global scope.

It is important to highlight the growing development assistance provided by the Czech Republic. Our country acquired know-how in water supply and sanitation management and development/rehabilitation of water management infrastructure. Therefore we may offer this knowledge in the water management worldwide, as we are currently executing in about twenty concrete projects in the developing countries.

Concluding my brief remarks, I would like to shortly comment the challenges before us towards the CSD-13.

The Czech Republic fully supports the integrated approach to the three topics discussed during this session, as well as to all cross-cutting issues and inter-linkages. Promoting education for sustainable development is considered the one of the main prerequisites for the implementation of the internationally agreed common goals.

Thank you for your attention.