

**Statement of the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran on the
thematic discussion on water and sanitation at CSD12
Conference Room1- 21 April 2004**

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Mr. Chairman,

We fully support the statement made by the Chairman of the G77&China at the beginning of our deliberations in CSD this week. For Iran with an arid and semi-arid climate, prone to natural disasters and with a young population, water implies the life. Being fully aware of the strategic importance of water for the country, the Government in implementing the three Five–Years Development Plans, consistently invested in the water sector with the objectives of; controlling and harvesting the ground-water, enhancing the quality of water, and increasing the access of the people to safe water. To achieve these objectives, more than 80 large dams have been constructed with the capacity of 33 billions m³ of the ground water which previously wasted and caused severe damage to the cities and farm lands. On water quality, National Strategy to Control the Quality of Drinking Water is implemented since long time ago. At present, 700 bacteriological and water quality control laboratories administered by the Ministry of

Health and the Ministry of Energy have the important task of monitoring the quality of water. As a result of these extensive investments, more than 96% of urban areas have access to safe drinking water. Despite all of these efforts and the gigantic investment of Government in the water sector, the pace of the demand for the provision of basic needs in the area of water and sanitation, has exceeded the limited financial and technological capacity of the country. The critical estimation by the Government shows that the total capacity of water resources to be secured for the next 25 years is only about 12 to 15 billion m³ which does not commensurate, at all, with the growing needs of the country. Furthermore, these investments and efforts have been targeting mainly the quantity and quality of water rather than the water efficiency and its integrated management. Even though there have been efforts in these fields, there are still serious challenges particularly in the field of water efficiency and IWRM. 94% of the total water resources of the country is currently used in the agricultural sector whose rate of water efficiency is about 40%. To enhance water efficiency in the agriculture and other sectors, huge and enormous investment, technology and time is required. There is also a clear need to improve consumption patterns through various means including training and awareness programs for the people. In addition, increased demands for water supply and sanitation, the need for maintenance of the water supply networks, lack of sufficient water purification facilities in remote areas and delivery of water to these areas, lack of the necessary facilities for the environmentally sound treatment and

recycling of wastewater and used water, and continued trend of immigration from rural to urban areas pose major challenges to our country as it is the case for many other countries. Moreover, over exploitation and constant use of the existing water resources (both ground and under-ground sources) in the absence of its sufficient recharge, degradation and contamination of the limited water resources by various sources of pollution; effluents, industrial and residential swages and wastes, air pollution and natural disasters in particular earth-quake, floods and droughts have severely and critically affected the water resources. To address these challenges, the Government has also taken practical measures to utilize all domestic resources in particular private sector. Participation of local communities, in particular women due to their important role in ensuring the sustainability of water resources and protection of environment, as a long tradition in Iran, has been further pursued. Against this background, the expectation is from the IFI's, UN funds, programs and agencies as well as the GEF and our partners in the developed countries to further fulfill their promises in regard to technology transfer and financing the capacity building plans and projects of developing countries in the above-mentioned areas. The task ahead of us is huge and in particular requires a joint and cooperative work among more than 24 UN entities involved in water issues. The existing interagency collaborative mechanism within HLPC, is a proper framework at the secretariat side for joint and cooperative work within the UN. What is needed is the strong cooperation among UN bodies rather than competition. This Cooperation should be done with full respect to the mandate and comparative advantage of different UN

entities and with the objective of full realization of their potentials to contribute to the process of implementation. To be successful in our collective efforts to meet the targets contained in JPOI and MD including in the areas of water sanitation and human settlement, it is fundamental to maintain the integrity of the JPOI, adhere to the program of work adopted at CSD11 as well as to respect the role of the CSD as the high- level commission responsible for monitoring the implementation of A-21 and JPOL

Thank you Mr. Chairman.