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Statement by

FILE
CSD-16

H.E. Mr. Ton Boon von Ochssée

Ambassador for Sustainable Development

of

the Kingdom of the Netherlands

on the occasion of the debate about the thematic cluster for the
implementation cycle 2008/2009 regarding
“Review of CSD-13 - Water and Sanitation”

The 16th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development

New York, 12 May 2008

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Mr. Chairman,

Water and sanitation are at the forefront of sustainable development and therefore central to the achievement of other objectives related to the thematic issues of the current CSD cycle. Water is relevant to all the MDG's, but especially to MDG7.

The Netherlands fully aligns itself with the earlier EU intervention regarding the review of water and sanitation decisions of CSD 13. We consider the start-up of a process of monitoring these decisions a valuable step to facilitate the achievement of water and sanitation objectives. In addition to this the planning process and implementation at the national development planning level is of major importance.

The Netherlands is situated largely below sea level and faces therefore major challenges in relation to water issues. We have gained a lot of experience and knowledge in addressing these challenges over the years and we are very interested in sharing this with other countries. In this regard the Netherlands Government also actively contributes to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and JPOI commitments through the Interministerial Partners for Water Program and the Netherlands Cooperation Programme on Water and Climate. The latter focuses on knowledge transfer and capacity building in the field of water and coastal zone management issues in developing countries, while at the same time addressing the issue of adaptation to climate change. A pool of experts is established to assist in water adaptation issues. The Netherlands also provides immediate assistance at times of extreme drought or in the event of floods.

To acknowledge the importance of NGOs and the private sector in the field of water and sanitation, the Netherlands Government decided to draft joint multi stakeholder agreements on how to enhance our international activities with respect to these topics. This resulted in the Wash (water, sanitation and hygiene) initiatives of June 2007. The main goal is to speed up the achievement of MDG7 by actively focusing on and exploiting the strengths of the different stakeholders in water management and by combining water and delta technology. In this process, a more integrated approach to the multiple uses of water management as well as the integration of local knowledge and expertise of water managers, often women, is essential. Finally, education for youth, gender sensitive education and measures on sanitation and hygiene should be implemented.

In concluding, I would like to highlight the importance of ensuring good governance in the water sector, as this is crucial for achieving lasting improvements in water resources management at the national and international level. For example through regional integrated river basin approach, effective water governance structures and trans boundary agreements. In this respect we would like to call upon the delegations present today to ratify the 1997 UN Watercourses Convention.

Thank you Mr Chairman.