



PERMANENT MISSION OF
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235 EAST 45TH STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10017

Statement of His Royal Highness the Prince of Orange

**At the opening session of the
Twelfth Meeting of the Commission on
Sustainable Development
of the
UNITED NATIONS**

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Excellencies, honourable delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honour and a pleasure to have been invited here today by your Chairman, Borge Brende, Norway's Minister of the Environment, and the CSD Bureau, to address you at the opening of the twelfth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

Mr Chairman,

The Millennium Development Goals have been set and we all know that water underlies most of them, directly or indirectly. That is why it is so important for this first CSD review session to focus on water, sanitation and human settlements. Your efforts will be important in achieving not only the Millennium Development Goals that specifically target safe drinking water and the goal on sanitation, which was added at the WSSD in Johannesburg, but also the other Goals.

It is now almost two years since the Johannesburg summit. At this session today, the time has come to identify constraints and obstacles which prevent us from achieving the Millennium Development Goals. This session will set the tone for a steadfast, deliberate approach to implementing the Johannesburg action programme. The success of your work in this forum will be measured next year. At the thirteenth session, a clear and workable agenda will be on the table, in which all parties will be able to identify the blueprint for a better, more equitable global environment. It will be an agreement on a comprehensive set of actions aimed at clearing the list of obstacles.

Your work, which is starting here today, needs to prove to the world that tangible progress can be made. That the CSD agenda, starting off with water, sanitation and human settlements, will show us where we need to focus our action to enable us to roll back unsustainable policies and practices. Our settlements, our health, the food on our tables, our sanitation, our basic human rights, our industrial processes, our energy and our environment all depend on the quality and quantity of water, and our management of water as the single most precious, life-sustaining resource.

Nothing less is at stake in this session than how we choose to shape tomorrow from a today that is already precarious. In twenty short years a future is predicted in which one third of the world's population will live under moderate to severe water stress. Many cities are already short of water. Where will we find enough for drinking and how will we provide adequate sanitation? How can we secure the access to clean water, sanitation and affordable health, whether people live in cities, towns or villages?

How will we grow the food to feed two billion more people, when it takes one ton of water to grow a pound of cereal or 3,000 litres of water for a kilogram of rice? Rising prosperity as well as growing population will drive world cereal demand up by 50% between 1997 and 2020. We already use more than 75% of the water we extract for agriculture. Can we truly imagine expanding this figure, to the peril of our environment and ourselves?

In the past several years I have had the opportunity to draw the world's attention to water as a national, regional and global concern. In the course of my work with the Global Water Partnership I have become convinced that integrated water resource management planning is the key to ensuring that all stakeholders are involved. Such planning will ensure an effective, balanced path towards sustainable development for all. I believe that integrated planning applied to the sustainable use of water will serve as a model for the other sectors on which you will focus in the coming years. For example, to anticipate the impact of energy use and climate change.

Mr Chairman,

The reports of the Secretary-General on freshwater management and sanitation clearly indicate what tasks lay ahead of us. More than 80% of people with no access to safe drinking water live in rural areas and two billion people will need to gain access to sanitation facilities between now and 2015 if the international sanitation target is to be reached. Enormous challenges await us here.

Many countries in Asia are on track to meet the target of halving the number of people without access to safe drinking water by 2015. In other regions however, entire

populations are struggling. To meet the target, 1.6 billion people should be provided with access to drinking water by 2015 and investments in the drinking water sector should be doubled. Contaminated water sources, inadequate operation and maintenance of pumps and distribution systems, leakage of water from pipes are just a few of the problems that need to be overcome first.

These investments in hardware need to be supported by public-private partnerships, since they will attract more investment. And they need to be accompanied by programmes to raise awareness of and improve hygiene and sanitation, particularly in schools. Women need to be involved in the entire planning and decision-making process, since they are usually directly responsible for securing domestic water supplies and for family hygiene.

In developing countries most fresh water is used for irrigation, while an increasing amount is used for industry. There is great potential, in both agriculture and industry, for more efficient use and less pollution. The Global Water Partnership has published guidelines on the basis of several years' study of this issue. They outline nine main areas in which countries need to make changes as they make the transition to a more integrated approach, and include appropriate laws and regulations, capable institutions, adequate financing and cost recovery mechanisms. Environmental needs should never be left out.

Achieving the Millennium Development Goals is not only a matter of finding money to finance new infrastructure. There is an equally important institutional and human challenge. In fact, provisional figures indicate that managerial and professional capacities in the developing world have to double in Asia and triple in Africa and need to be raised by half in Latin America to achieve the water and sanitation goal. This calls for a quantum leap in capacity building, in the form of greatly increased support to education and training institutes. The efforts of, for instance, the UNESCO-IHE Institute of Water Education and its partners and the Capacity Building Network for Integrated Water Resources Management (CAPNET) need to be stepped up.

Another relevant Millennium Development Goal for this CSD session envisages improving the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020. Many people in developing countries live in dreadful conditions, compounded by a rapid increase in

migration to urban areas. The Goal for water and sanitation must be achieved in human settlements, in cities, towns and villages, where water will be consumed and waste generated. There - in human settlements, and in slums especially - is where barriers are high, but where actions have to be coordinated and managed.

I would like to stress the importance of building partnerships to address the following four key challenges in this process:

First: to increase knowledge exchange; the circle must be broadened to include not just water specialists, but also people involved in developing policies and frameworks in areas such as forestry, energy, finance, health, population and education.

Second: to enhance public and political commitment and improve policy and legislation to increase the effectiveness of water and sanitation governance.

Third: to build capacity to bring the knowledge to those who need it for implementation.

Fourth and one of the biggest challenges: to seek new sources of investment in the water sector.

As a Dutchman, I am only too well aware that the process is essential; it is only half a century since almost two thousand people lost their lives when our water management systems failed and we were flooded once again. I know that the planning and investment processes are never finished. We are now looking at projections for climate change, rising sea level and what this will mean for Dutch populations and farmlands. We must continue to practice Integrated Water Resource Management in our country, and in the wider European Union.

Mr Chairman:

I hope that your work will lead to a process of building partnerships, ensuring success in the struggle for sustainable development. Everything depends on human effort and willingness, and the creativity and innovative thinking of all stakeholders. How can a

solution that works in one part of the world be applied in other regions? Global networks have to be extended to grassroots level. I believe that developing and working in partnerships will be a clear signal of solidarity and will help to bring the forces required together.

Your dedication will ensure the momentum needed to implement the Johannesburg action programme. You are responsible for staying on course. Your determination to move forward and to formulate clear recommendations will prepare the way for the political decision-makers at the High Level Meeting next week, enabling them to find common ground and identify the steps ahead. By taking the lead together, you can bring hope to the world's people that future generations will indeed have quality of life and equal opportunities. No water, no future!

At the Johannesburg Waterdome, President Mandela, Ambassador Salim Ahmed Salim and I called for action to solve the crisis in water resource management. Now the time has come to review existing policies, programmes and activities to ensure the political momentum of the Johannesburg summit is maintained and progress is made in implementing the action programme. I congratulate the Commission on its initiative to bring us together this week to follow up on the targets for water and sanitation and human settlements. In doing so, it is taking us past the point of signed agreements, conventions and protocols. Instead, it is inspiring us to take the actions required to bring about sustainable development and a better life for all, especially the poor.

Let me end by expressing the wish that your discussions are both honest and meaningful.

Thank you.