



**PERMANENT MISSION OF
THE KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

235 East 45th Street, 16th floor
New York, NY 10017

tel. (212) 519-9500
fax (212) 370-1954
www.pvnewyork.org

Statement by

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
"Africa"**

The 16th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development

New York, 9 May 2008

Please check against delivery

Mr Chairman,

Yesterday I elaborated on three Netherlands development cooperation priorities as regards Africa. The fourth priority for intensified Netherlands development cooperation with Africa focuses on the protection of the natural resource basis and regional integration.

The Netherlands attaches great importance to *regional cooperation* for trade purposes but also for environmental protection as a contribution to conflict prevention. Experience shows that regional cooperation such as cross-border river basin management, eco-regional development, park management and sustainable and lawful exploitation of forests and minerals can prevent conflicts over these specific resources. Furthermore, regional cooperation can also form the basis for improved communication, trust and effective economic cooperation between the involved countries (and communities). Also in post-conflict situation are initiatives for cooperation of vital importance. As examples I would like to mention: The Nile Basin Initiative which resulted in broad political and multi sectoral cooperation between the states on the banks of the Nile. The Netherlands is also involved in the management of cross-border river basins of the Upper-Niger and Senegal.

Protection of the natural resource basis in post conflict areas will contribute to stability, social inclusion and economic development. One of the initiatives which is supported by the Netherlands is the promotion of ecotourism. The Virunga project entails cooperation between the park authorities of the DRC (Democratic Republic Congo), Uganda and Rwanda and supports the population around the parks, contributes to decreased violence and insecurity and to the conservation of this unique ecosystem, that provides the region with water and sustenance. This project has the potential to finance itself from revenues from eco-tourism in a few years.

Access to sustainable energy is a prerequisite for sustainable development. The Netherlands attaches great importance to the use and production of environmentally friendly sources of energy, and committed therefore an additional €500 million. This will be used for the application of sustainability criteria for biomass production in two pilot countries, the enhancement of regional energy services in the Great Lakes Region by strengthening accountable regional institutions, facilitating energy production from waterpower and from methane gas from the Kivu lake and lastly by providing 10 million people with access to sustainable energy in the next four years.

You will find more information on these initiatives in the cases attached to the copy of my statement.

Thank you Mr. Chairman

