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**STATEMENT  
BY**

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**AT THE  
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COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

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**Check against delivery**

Mr Chairman

My delegation would like to start by expressing confidence in your leadership and that of the Bureau of this 12<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission for Sustainable Development. CSD 12 is a significant meeting. It is the first substantive review of progress with implementation of the targets and actions in the thematic areas of water, sanitation and human settlements since world leaders met in Johannesburg in 2002. It is also the first time that we review progress on the crosscutting issues and targets, such as on poverty, health, gender and means of implementation, as they relate to the thematic areas.

The South African delegation associates itself with the statement made by the delegation of Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77. We also thank the Secretary General for the reports that have been prepared to guide discussions during CSD 12.

Two years ago, world leaders met in Johannesburg for the World Summit on Sustainable Development. The Summit opened the way for the world to take new steps in the foremost challenge of our time -- the eradication of poverty and closing the gap between rich and poor, combined with protection of the environment. Building on Agenda 21 and the Millennium Summit, the WSSD emerged with a number of important outcomes:

- It reinforced the importance of multilateralism and agreed on a high level commitment to a multilateral agenda for global sustainable development
- It adopted an action oriented Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, with 37 very specific targets and timeframes, which incorporate the Millennium Development Goals
- It called for a global commitment to poverty eradication in the context of sustainable development
- It reinforced the linkages between the three pillars of sustainable development
- It gave focus to the regional dimension and highlighted the specific concerns of Africa and the Small Island Developing States
- It resulted in a multitude of voluntary partnerships among the various stakeholders.

Mr Chairman

The Summit shifted the focus of world leaders from policy debates to the real task of "making it happen". CSD 11 adopted a practical and innovative organization of work, aimed at enhancing implementation. The active and coherent participation by United Nations agencies and programs, and the relevant financial and trade institutions in the work of the CSD was emphasized. The involvement of major groups in the activities of the CSD was given

prominence. CSD 11 also reinforced the important role of partnerships in implementation, as complementary to, and not a substitute for our intergovernmental commitments.

Our task at CSD 12 is to review progress with implementation and identify constraints and obstacles in the thematic areas of water, sanitation and human settlements. We also have to assess progress with the crosscutting targets as they relate to the thematic areas. In this session we must answer the question whether this indeed will be "the decade of action" that substantively improves the quality of life of the millions of people living in poverty, people that are without access to water, sanitation and housing.

As agreed in the JPOI, we must also review the progress that we are making in changing unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, with developed countries taking the lead.

Mr Chairman

The WSSD recognized the importance of gender equality in all efforts to achieve sustainable development. World wide, women are directly affected by poverty and involved in the day-to-day efforts of improving the provision of shelter, water and sanitation. For this reason it is important to ensure that women are at the heart of the decision-making processes that affect their lives.

The Secretary General's reports highlight the limited progress on provision of the means of implementation. Johannesburg stressed the importance of trade, finance, technology transfer and capacity building in the implementation of sustainable development. We believe that the Summit introduced a major shift from the donor-recipient paradigm to one that focuses on the obstacles to economic growth in poor countries. It emphasised the need to reform the unfair global economic and trading systems. It called for the international community to fulfil its ODA commitments. More importantly, it acknowledged that by far the biggest obstacle to poverty eradication and sustainable development is lack of market access and an inequitable trading system. During this session we must also identify ways of strengthening mechanisms for implementation in these areas.

Mr Chairman

The WSSD recognised the unique development challenges facing the African continent. It identified a set of actions, which are critical for the achievement of sustainable development in Africa. It reaffirmed NEPAD as the key sustainable development framework for Africa. The African Regional Implementation Meeting that took place in Addis Ababa in December last

year, described the significant progress that has been made in Africa in the thematic areas. However, the meeting also identified severe constraints, including:

- inadequate provision of the means of implementation and difficulties in mobilising resources;
- inadequate capacity for implementation particularly at local level;
- low levels of investment in water, sanitation and human settlements;
- rising levels of urbanisation;
- under preparedness for disasters and vulnerability to global environmental challenges.

It is clear that without significant international support, Africa's ability to achieve the MDGs and JPOI targets will be impeded. African countries have taken high level initiatives to improve implementation in water, sanitation and human settlements in a coherent and co-ordinated manner. These include the creation of the African Ministerial Council on Water and the launch of the Africa Water Facility.

In this context we welcome the recent announcement by the President of the European Commission, that the EU will be making substantial financial contribution to support the water delivery in the ACP countries.

The WSSD highlighted the importance of the regional level in implementation. We must therefore ensure that the role of the regions and sub-regions is not undermined by a lack of resources, or by poor co-ordination.

Mr Chairman

Co-ordination among UN agencies and programmes is critical for the implementation of the MDGs and the JPOI. Without this co-ordination, efforts by governments and civil society to meet the targets can be seriously jeopardized. We must therefore reflect critically on the report of the Secretary General on system-wide interagency co-operation within the United Nations.

We welcome the Secretary General's announcement on the establishment of an Advisory Board on water and sanitation. We hope that it will catalyze global action on water and sanitation as part of international efforts to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development.

Last, but by no means least, we must assess progress made by stakeholders and by partnerships. We must review whether the registered partnerships are indeed delivering and contributing human, financial and technical resources to the global effort in implementing the targets.

Mr Chairman

South Africa is celebrating a Decade of Freedom - it is 10 years since our first democratic election and the end of apartheid. Only 5 days ago, we successfully and peacefully held our third free and fair election. The people of South Africa gave the ANC Government an overwhelming message of support for the work that has been achieved since 1994. Through the housing program since 1994 we have delivered 1,5 million houses, providing secure tenure and access to water and sanitation to some 6 million of the poorest urban citizens. In the rural water program alone, over 9 million people now have access to water. We continue to vigorously pursue the achievements of the MDGs and JPOI targets through these programmes.

Mr Chairman

The South African delegation looks forward to working with you to ensure a successful review session. We hope that our deliberations during this session will set the agenda for a productive policy session in 2005.