

STATEMENT

BY

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**AT THE
HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT OF THE 15TH SESSION
OF THE COMMISSION ON
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

“Turning commitments into action, working together in partnership”.

May 9, 2007

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies and Distinguished Representatives,
ladies and Gentlemen,

At the Earth Summit, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992 we recognized the importance of sustainable development. But our quest for development has continued to have negative impact on our environment.

The signing of several important multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) in the last 15 years marked the beginning of positive action to save our environment. While these agreements are labelled environmental, they are in fact developmental agreements. As they are, achieving the goals of development in our countries will depend critically on the successful implementation of those agreements. That is why we expect decisive actions on sustainable development to come out of this session of the Commission.

There is already an overwhelming agreement in this assembly on the significant crosscutting role of energy and its impact on industrial development, air/atmospheric pollution and climate change. The continued emphasis on access to clean and affordable energy sources is a genuine response to the practical experiences in both developing and industrialized countries. It means the key to solving the problem of climate change and reducing poverty lies in energy revolution; a green revolution that addresses the interest of women and the poor who are struggling out there daily to make basic ends meet. A focus on policies to double energy consumption by increasing rural and urban access to clean affordable energy and its availability. This, of course, will require mobilizing and enabling local communities, NGOs, small and medium-sized enterprises and financial institutions to respond to the energy needs of the poor with appropriate services and products.

Mr. Chairman,
Uganda like many LDCs has drawn the attention of the International Community to her vulnerability to climate change at various fora. Increased frequency of extreme weather and climate events such as prolonged droughts and high temperatures resulting in excessive evaporation rates have had serious negative impacts on the energy, agriculture, water resources, health and other economic sectors. In the Great Lakes Region of Africa the levels of Lake Victoria and other water bodies for instance have hit a record low. This has adversely affected our hydropower generation. Floods on the other hand have also had negative impacts on the health sector. (outbreak of water borne diseases, including cholera and increased malaria incidences, with children being the most vulnerable). These have led to significant diversion of development resources to meet emergency needs.

In Uganda our economy is still based on the exploitation of natural resources and will remain so for the foreseeable future. For instance over 28 billion cubic meters of wood are destroyed per annum for firewood. The burden of collecting and using this firewood

falls heavily on the women who also suffer the effect of smoke pollution. To substitute this with clean energy we need to generate 22,500 megawatts of electricity to meet the needs of the people. We therefore need the support of policy actions to promote the development of all forms of sustainable energy to meet the demand.

There is now sufficient compelling evidence to show that sustainable energy supply is the basis for meaningful development. Countries with low energy consumption e.g. the LDCs and Sub-Saharan Africa will remain in this status unless their energy supply and consumption is substantially boosted. Fortunately, the Forum for Energy Ministers of Africa (FEMA) has been formed to precisely address this. In March this year (2007) they issued the Maputo Declaration which clearly spells out what actions African Governments must individually, regionally and collectively pursue to step up sustainable energy supply and access. Coordination and harmonization with Development Partners and International agencies to realize requisite investment resources and programs was agreed. It is our hope that CSD15 endorses and lends support to these progressive initiatives adopted by FEMA.

We are ready to join the consensus that is building on the policy issues and we believe that with strong and effective partnership at both the international and local levels, developing countries will be able to leap-frog some environmentally unfriendly stages of development that industrialized countries have gone through and be able to achieve clean and sustainable development.

I thank you for your attention.