



**Intervention by the Mr.Sudhir Mital, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forests, on Agenda item 2: Policy options and possible actions to expedite Implementation: (a) Water; (b) sanitation; (c) human settlements: Interlinkages and cross-cutting issues in the Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting for CSD-13 on March 3, 2005**

Mr. Chairman,

The questions raised by you are very important for taking forward the policy options in the three thematic areas of water, sanitation and human settlement. However, on account of time constraint it shall suffice to say that we fully recognise that mainstreaming gender and the poor in decision-making and creating an enabling environment for communities and local authorities in strategies and programme are fundamental to poverty alleviation and attainment of Millennium Development Goals. I am sure all countries in their own way, depending on their resources, policies and priorities, would be attempting to do so. However, in our view, what is even more important at this juncture, if we are really committed to achieve sustainable development as defined by WSSD and the JPOI, is to be clear about the objectives, the constraints and the commitments in forms of ODA, technology transfer and capacity building and follow-up on these.

The World Summit on Sustainable Development held at Johannesburg re-affirmed that addressing poverty was central to the efforts of developing countries in achieving sustainable development. The themes of the first implementation cycle i.e. water, sanitation and human settlements, are particularly relevant in the context of addressing poverty. Poverty alleviation, we think, should be the overarching theme of our discussions.

Mr. Chairman,

We must also be aware that all the three issues are extremely important by themselves and need to be dealt with separately and in a balanced manner for us to do justice to them. There is no doubt that providing housing is linked to clear drinking water and sanitation. Interlinkages exist between all the three sectors as all these three are closely related. Meeting the targets in the thematic areas of water, sanitation and settlement pose massive challenge for developing countries and all the three areas separately require massive flow of funds and transfer of technology on preferential terms as well as support for capacity building. There has to

be a review of whether the commitments with respect to international cooperation are being met or not.

Partnerships we feel have not really moved ahead. The Report of the Secretary General on Partnerships makes clear, their contribution has, at best, been marginal. We have all along held the view that partnerships cannot supplement the efforts of the Government in meeting their targets. Governments, particularly developed countries, have to come forward to meet their obligations on ODA, debt restructuring, technology transfer and capacity building. Partnerships can only supplement such efforts.

Action has been initiated by most countries on achieving the target of integrated water resource management and water efficiency plans by the target date of 2005 as reflected in the JPOI. There can be several approaches to IWRM one of which could be the eco-systems approach on which there is as yet no intergovernmental consensus. It is for each country to decide on its approach to IWRM depending upon national circumstance. Certain approaches can be scientifically defended. Some others cannot. We need to ensure that the latter are eschewed, in order that the concept is not invoked to address un-related objectives.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, we wish to reiterate that the CSD is the only high-level Commission within the UN system for sustainable development, with the role of reviewing and promoting the implementation of Agenda 21 and JPOI. We have collectively agreed to a structured multi-year programme of work of the Commission to serve this objective. In this context, we recognize that the UN agencies and programmes also have an important role to play in the implementation of Agenda 21 and JPOI. However, it is important that their programmes are in accordance with the priorities set by the intergovernmental process. The overall oversight should continue to remain with the Commission. The task before us is to focus our attention on implementation in accordance with the agreed framework and programme. Major responsibility, in this regard, lies with the developed partners countries not only for making available the means of implementation, but also for taking action on unsustainable patterns of productions and consumption.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

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