



**PERMANENT MISSION OF TURKEY TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**13<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE COMMISSION  
ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

**STATEMENT BY  
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**New York, April 21, 2005**

Mr. Chairperson,  
Distinguished Delegates,

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the distinguished Representative of Luxemburg on behalf of the European Union. However, given Turkey's geography, climatic conditions and the level of its socio-economic development, I wish to make several additional points.

The World Summit on Sustainable Development was a benchmark event, placing sustainable development, at the forefront of the international agenda. The Summit produced an ambitious Plan of implementation. According to the Plan important responsibility falls upon governments to reduce poverty by providing their citizens with basic services.

Having said this let me dwell upon Turkey's experience with respect to national efforts to meet MDGs in the field of water, sanitation and human settlements. Unemployment and lack of adequate sanitation constitute the main problems facing cities in Turkey. Making adequate shelter available and accessible to meet the needs of an ever-increasing population in urban areas also remains a challenge for Turkey due to limited funds and the multiplicity of needs.

Turkey has not been able to fully attain the targets especially with respect to sanitation due to lack of financial resources which has been a major constraint for all developing countries. However we initiated a housing program with the objective of reducing poverty and improving the living standards of the "urban poor". According to the program slum dwellers will be transferred to clean and sanitary urban areas. To this end, the construction of approximately 100.000 residences in large cities has been started.

Another initiative which Turkey has recently taken is the agricultural rural settlement project. The aim of this project is to reduce immigration to urban areas by proving a sanitary and clean environment in rural areas. Up to 5.500 families will be provided with clean and sanitary residences through this initiative.

Mr. Chairman,

Turkey regards water as the engine of sustainable development. Poverty and hunger cannot be reduced without efficiently utilizing water resources. The provision of safe drinking water and basic sanitation for all in accordance with the agreed targets is a major challenge which requires action at a global level. Another factor which necessitated action is the presence of over 260 trans-boundary rivers on the globe with 40 per cent of the world population residing in their basins.

Investment in these three fields will immensely contribute to economic growth and sustainable development. Protection and efficient management of water resources is another prerequisite for sustainable development.

Water shortages, drought, frequent floods and lack of sufficient energy resources undermine the economic development of many developing countries. African countries are generally trapped in poverty as they are not able to utilize their water potential. Access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation could not be achieved without storing water and that there is an urgent need for building more water infrastructures to store water during the rainy seasons in order to use throughout the year. It is obvious that developing countries have no choice but to build dams, small or large depending on the size of their rivers to this end.

As regards the situation in Turkey, we have recently revised our water policy taken into consideration Turkey's present and future water and energy needs of its fast growing and rapidly urbanizing population, and the on-going EU accession process. Priority has been given to utilize water resources in an efficient manner. We focused on the protection of the quantity and the quality of the available resources but more importantly on providing safe drinking water and water for sanitation for urban and rural settlements.

Another priority of the Turkish Government has been to eliminate regional disparities in terms of socio-economic development. The development of the least developed regions in Turkey is critical to secure the overall prosperity of the Turkish people by creating new jobs for a dynamic young population. An educated and employed population is the key to social development. Access to safe drinking water, sanitation and housing is a key to reach this objective.

Against this backdrop, Turkey has developed one of the world's largest sustainable development projects. The Southeast Anatolia Project (GAP) is based on harnessing the water and land resources of southeast Turkey. GAP stands as an

example of a successful transition from simple water management to a modern and efficient water management. In addition to providing safe drinking water, water for sanitation and irrigation, as well as affordable energy, it will also generate employment opportunities for 3.8 million people.

Another important component of GAP is its social development dimension, particularly in the field of empowerment of women, which has received recognition at international level. A good example is the Multi-Purpose Community Center for Women. The Centre is internationally recognized as a success story and best practice as it has raised the rate of literacy, provided practical information in child care, helped develop skills for income generation and improved nutrition.

Mr. Chairman,

One of the features of Turkey is the trans-boundary nature of most of its major rivers. Geographically, Turkey is both an upstream as well as a downstream country. It has therefore given priority to enhancing cooperation with other riparian States. We view cooperation with other riparian States as an opportunity, in that cooperation over trans-boundary rivers can contribute to enhancing peace and stability at regional level.

Finally, I would like to stress the importance of hydropower as an important renewable, clean and affordable energy resource. It is essential for achieving sustainable development in poor countries in particular. Its production and wider use was encouraged by the Plan of Implementation of the WSSD. The importance of hydropower was also highlighted at the International Conference for Renewable Energies which was held in Bonn on 1-4 June 2004. Given its important role with respect to access to affordable energy, it is the view of my delegation that energy in general but most importantly hydro power should be considered in the context of MDG targets.

My delegation believes that there is an urgent need to mobilize additional financial resources and to encourage public-private partnerships as well as effective support by international and regional financial institutions in order to attain our common goals.

To conclude, Mr. Chairman, let me underline that the 13th Session of the CSD should agree on action oriented outcomes with respect to access to safe drinking water, basic sanitation and human settlement to be submitted to the September High Level Meeting of the General Assembly.