



VENEZUELA

**Permanent Mission of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela
to the United Nations, New York**

**Statement by the President of the Hydrologic Company of Venezuela
(HIDROVEN), Cristóbal Francisco Ortiz, on the occasion of the High – Level
Segment at the XII Period of the
UN Comission on Sustainable Development,
New York, 29 April 2004**

**Meeting: Basic needs in water, sanitation, and human settlements, with
particular focus on water.**

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Mr. President
Distinguished Ministers
Ladies and Gentlemen

Water, an irreplaceable resource for life is constantly present in all our daily life and social entities, hence its management is really a complex task to undertake, in particular the aspect referred to the provision of efficient services of safe drinking water and sanitation.

In Venezuela, the action of the Bolivarian Government through its different official bodies has been focused in an ethic and politic imperative which has led to a continuous search for social justice. Under these premises, we have so far accomplished significant success both in management and investments for the improvement of our standards of quality, coverage and the efficiency in services of safe drinking water and sanitation. We have put special emphasis in marginal sectors living in urban and rural areas.

As it was stated yesterday, on the remarks by Dr. Ana Elisa Osorio, our Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Venezuela has already accomplished the Millennium Development Goal related to safe drinking water, with an average of 88% of coverage, and we will be committed to attain the same goal in sanitation before 2010. By this time Venezuela will account coverage of 99% in safe drinking water and sanitation in urban areas, and 90% in rural and remote areas; likewise, waste water treatment will reach 40%. In order to realize these goals, we have made significant investments in the order of 3,500 million dollars.

With respect to institutional matters, we would like to highlight that during 2001 was enacted the Organic Law for Services of Fresh Drinking Water and Sanitation. This Law defined the legal framework regarding the improvement in quality services, promotion of full access of the whole population to services, and a special contribution to the sustainable development of hydrologic resources, and at the same time, made possible an important support to the national economic growth. Furthermore, this Law stipulates the decentralization of services to local and regional governments, however, it does not represent that the National Government should stay aside from its primary responsibility and commitment in the development of the services, which is materialized by the

establishment of the Financial Aid Fund, a special fund which acts under three basic modalities:

- Loans for infrastructure,
- Donations for infrastructure (Subsidies of supply)
- Contributions to direct subsidies (Subsidies of demand)

In this context, this Fund gives a great contribution to the sustainability of the system of cross subsidies, which allows that the poorest segments of the population have access to services and simultaneously the borrower entities remain financially steady.

This legal framework also promotes a full and active participation of the communities in the processes of planning and management of services of fresh drinking water and sanitation, and alike in overseeing and controlling the provision of services. Additionally, by means of the Program of Community Involvement, the Government of Venezuela provides technical assistance to organized communities and bestows them with responsibilities in the process of providing services and for the creation of cooperatives to the same end.

At this present time, we are implementing a sexennial plan (2001 -2007) which is part of the National Plan of Economic and Social Development, which is in close connection with the goals and objectives of the Millennium Declaration, and addresses the eradication of poverty of the communities, with emphasis in rural and indigenous population.

We would also like to take this opportunity to affirm that we consider that this new format adopted by the CSD creates the necessity to design mechanisms of cooperation which involve the protagonism and total participation of the population that has not been benefited or included in the process of management of services, which is nothing else than the empowerment of the poorest.

The experience we have developed in Venezuela allows us to state that grass root communities are capable to manage appropriately services of safe drinking water and sanitation.

Mr. President,

Finally, I would like to reiterate that sustainable development will not be possible in our planet while the model of consumer behavior, that still prevails, imposes superfluous necessities to human beings.

Thank you