



## Government ministers meet to decide policies needed to reach goals and targets on water, sanitation and human settlements

**Key issues include financing, utility management, service charges, water efficiency, tenure security and low-cost housing development.**

(New York, 11 April 2005) – More than 75 Ministers with a broad range of portfolios including finance, trade, development, planning, environment, water, housing and health, will meet at the United Nations over the next two weeks to decide on policies and practical measures to accelerate progress towards achieving the internationally agreed goals and targets related to water, sanitation and human settlements.

These targets include halving by 2015 the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation, developing by 2005 integrated water resources management and water efficiency plans, and significantly improving the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020.

The Commission on Sustainable Development's 13th session (CSD-13), to be held from 11 to 22 April 2005, will be its first policy-setting session since the World Summit on Sustainable Development was held in Johannesburg in 2002.

The meeting follows the CSD's Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting (IPM) held from 28 February-4 March 2005 and the release in January of the Millennium Project Task Force reports which included recommendations to governments for action to meet the Millennium Development Goals. The CSD-13 provides the first opportunity for governments to decide what they believe are the most appropriate and effective options in the three thematic areas.

"This year's CSD aims to turn political commitments into action. The policy options that Governments are expected to agree on at CSD-13 will underpin our common endeavours in the coming years to meet the Millennium Development Goals and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation targets and commitments on water, sanitation and human settlements," stated H.E. Dr. John W. Ashe (Antigua and Barbuda), Chairman of CSD-13.

CSD-13 will build on last year's session which reviewed progress and identified obstacles and constraints in achieving the international development goals and targets related to water, sanitation and human settlements contained in Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

"These three issues encapsulate the silent humanitarian crisis in the world today, where roughly four thousand children die each day of diarrheal diseases caused by poor sanitation and contaminated drinking water, and where the living conditions in crowded slums are exacerbating public health issues such as communicable diseases," stated Mr. José Antonio Ocampo, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs.



Reports issued by the Secretary-General in advance of the meeting, together with the Chair's text from the CSD-13 Preparatory Meeting last month (all available at [www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/csd13/docs.htm](http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/csd13/docs.htm)), set out the key policy options and practical measures that will be the focus for deliberations. These include:

### **Extending Water and Sanitation Services to those Unserved**

- Strengthening management and financing of public water and sanitation utilities
- Ensuring service access by the poor through targeted subsidies
- Tariff reform to improve cost recovery for operation and maintenance
- Increasing donors' financing for water and sanitation as part of overall increase in official development assistance (ODA) commitments towards the 0.7 per cent of GNI target
- Enhancing hygiene education and awareness raising, combining that with gender-segregated sanitation facilities in schools
- Enhancing the role of women in planning and managing water and sanitation systems
- Raising investments in waste-water treatment
- Defining the role of the private sector, notably small-scale providers

### **Improving Efficiency of Water Allocation and Use**

- Developing integrated water resources management and water efficiency plans
- Improving water efficiency in agriculture
- Not "wasting" wastewater, but considering it as a resource
- Technology transfer for efficient water use, recycling and re-use

### **Improving Housing, Services and Employment for the Urban Poor**

- Improving security of tenure in slums and informal settlements
- Providing decent and affordable housing
- Developing credit facilities suitable to the needs of the urban poor
- Creating jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities in urban settlements, in particular for poor women and unemployed youth
- Realizing women's rights of full and equal access to land, housing and property.

### Highlights of CSD-13 will include:

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| <b>11 April</b>        | Opening of the CSD-13 including an opening address by Chairman John W. Ashe (Antigua and Barbuda).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>14 April</b>        | Distribution of Chair's draft elements for negotiation.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>18 April</b>        | A panel of finance and development ministers, moderated by the Minister of Finance, South Africa and the Minister of International Development, Norway, will discuss the economic benefits of implementing sound policies on water, sanitation, and human settlements. Representatives of the World Bank and UNCTAD will lead off the discussion.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>19 April 1:15pm</b> | <b>Press conference by Chairman Ashe at the conclusion of negotiations on draft policy decisions.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>20 April</b>        | <p>Opening of the High-level Segment (20 to 22 April) featuring several keynote addresses, including by His Royal Highness Prince Willem-Alexander, the Prince of Orange, UN Deputy Secretary-General, Louise Fréchette, Stockholm Water Prize winner Sunita Narain, Director, Centre for Science and Environment, India and Mikhail Gorbachev, Chairman, Green Cross International.</p> <p>A discussion on the Millennium Development Goals related to water, sanitation and human settlements led by Robert Orr, UN Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Strategic Planning.</p> <p>A panel on the impact of natural disasters: prevention and response will be led by Michel Jarraud, Secretary-General of the World Meteorological Organization and Salvano Briceño, Director of the Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction.</p> |

### Major Group Priorities

About 1000 people representing some 150 major groups' organizations have registered to attend the CSD-13. A wide array of stakeholders, called "major groups", have an opportunity to present their priorities (Document E/CN.17/2005/5). Examples of priorities expressed this year include:

**Women's groups** indicated that "the liberalization of water markets is pushing large sectors of the population further into poverty, forcing the use of unsafe sources of drinking water."

**Youth organizations** emphasized "basic sanitation services should be available in every school", while affirming that basic sanitation is a "precondition for education."

**Indigenous peoples** stressed that "issues with regard to human settlements, in both urban and rural areas, deserve equal attention."

**Local authorities** advocated that “improving access to financing for (water-related) targeted service provision requires increased financial autonomy of sub-national and local authorities.”

**Workers and trade unions** called for recognizing “access to water, sanitation and habitation as fundamental human rights.”

The **business and industry sector** declared that “it is vital that Governments and all major groups recognize the enormous and very diverse contribution that business will make to the development of new and sustainable models for meeting the world’s needs for water, sanitation and human settlement.”

The focus on water at CSD-13 coincides with the launch of the International Decade for Action “Water for Life” ([www.un.org/waterforlifedecade](http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade)), which aims to promote efforts to fulfil international commitments made on water and water-related issues by 2015, placing special emphasis on the involvement and participation of women in these efforts.

The Commission on Sustainable Development is the United Nation’s high-level forum responsible for ensuring follow up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, and monitoring progress towards achieving internationally-agreed development goals.

**For more information on CSD-13, including the full press kit and schedule of the session visit:**  
[www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/csd13/csd13.htm](http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/csd13/csd13.htm)

**CSD-13 will be webcast live at [www.un.org/webcast](http://www.un.org/webcast)**

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**For media queries regarding the CSD, please contact:**

Renata Sivacolundhu

UN Department of Public Information

Tel: +1 212 963 2932

Fax: +1 212 963 1186

Email: [mediainfo@un.org](mailto:mediainfo@un.org)