



## Ministers call for more aid, debt relief, domestic funds to meet goals on water, sanitation, slums, as UN Commission concludes

(New York, 25 April 2005) – Increased resources, including official development assistance, targeted towards water and sanitation, together with mobilization of more financial and other resources to promote sustainable human settlements development, are among the actions called for by Governments at the conclusion of last week's UN Commission on Sustainable Development.

"Governments have the primary role in promoting improved access to safe drinking water, basic sanitation, sustainable and secure tenure, and adequate shelter, particularly for the poor. More and better targeted financing for the poorest countries is critical if they are to fulfill this responsibility," said Ambassador John Ashe of Antigua and Barbuda, Chairman of the Commission's Thirteenth Session (CSD-13).

Held in New York from 11 to 22 April, CSD-13 was the first policy-setting session of the Commission since the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002. The aim of the meeting was to decide on policies and practical measures to accelerate progress towards achieving the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation targets and commitments on water, sanitation and human settlements.

The targets under discussion at CSD-13 included: 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. These are also included in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan stated in his address to a panel of finance and development cooperation ministers at the Commission that if these targets are to be met, "We need a breakthrough in the Doha round of trade negotiations and an immediate scaling up of resources."

In her address at the opening of the high-level segment, UN Deputy Secretary-General Louise Fréchette stated, "Too many countries, especially in Africa, are still being forced to choose between servicing their debts and making investments in agriculture, health, education and infrastructure."

"Meeting the target of significantly improving the lives of 100 million slum dwellers by 2020 would require an estimated \$5 billion per year. More ambitiously, if we were to provide the many millions of new city dwellers, who are expected over the next few decades, with an alternative to slums, that figure could quadruple," she continued.

A number of studies, including the report of the Millennium Project led by Professor Jeffrey Sachs, have called for donor countries to meet the target of 0.7% of gross national product for official development assistance. In his video presentation to the Commission, Jeffrey Sachs stated, "Without the financial resources, the poorest of the poor are dying." The European Union, in addressing the meeting, informed that seven European Union countries have committed themselves to achieving the 0.7% target by 2015, which would bring the number of countries that would have reached the target to a total of 12.



To accelerate progress in providing access to safe drinking water, the CSD recommends instituting economic incentives to encourage the participation of small-scale water service providers; implementing affordable water tariffs to contribute to the financial sustainability of water services; and targeting subsidies for the poor, including connection costs. The CSD also calls for better water management, including more efficient irrigation and wider use of rain water harvesting technologies, especially in the agricultural sector; implementing irrigation projects with a focus on the poor, particularly in Africa; and training farmers and water users associations in efficient water use.

On sanitation, the CSD calls for establishing an institutional home for sanitation, and giving it priority in national development plans and budgets, targeting investments to areas of greatest need and greatest impact, such as schools, work places and health centers and assessing the health impacts of the lack of sanitation at the community level. The CSD also calls for financial and technical assistance to national and local authorities in deploying effective and environmentally-sound sewerage systems and for wastewater treatment and reuse.

For human settlements, the CSD recommends that governments, with assistance from the international community, design pro-poor policies with a focus on tenure security and access to affordable serviced land in order to improve access of the poor, in particular slum dwellers, to decent and affordable housing and basic services. The CSD also recommends giving particular attention to the equal rights of women to own and inherit land and other property and to access credit markets; incorporating employment and enterprise development policies into national planning and slum prevention and upgrading programmes, and providing education and vocational training to women and youth to improve their access to decent jobs. Governments were also encouraged to promote public-public and public-private partnerships for financing and developing infrastructure and affordable housing.

The more than 100 Government Ministers participating in CSD-13, carrying a broad range of portfolios including trade, development, planning, health, environment, housing, water and sanitation, indicates the significant level of interest and commitment to maintain the momentum of the Johannesburg Summit and deliver on the sustainable development goals. Other important outcomes of the CSD-13 were the Learning Centre, which offered courses for CSD-13 participants on a wide range of topics, the Partnerships Fair and the more than 50 official side events held over the two weeks.

The Commission's decisions will also be a contribution to the UN General Assembly's High-Level Plenary Meeting to be held in September this year, to spur progress on the Millennium Development Goals and seek agreement on ways to revitalize international mechanisms for global security and human rights.

For more information on CSD-13 including the full press kit and all official documents visit:  
<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/csd13/csd13.htm>

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