

Business Action for Water (BAW)

Working for sustainable solutions

13th SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, 11-22 APRIL 2005

MINISTERIAL SESSION: “Turning Political Commitments Into Action”

BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY MAJOR GROUP STATEMENT

Dr. Steve Lennon, Chair, ICC Environment/Energy Commission

Thank You Mr. Chairman. My name is Steve Lennon, speaking on behalf of business and industry groups represented here at CSD13.

- Business and industry has emphasized the importance of implementation of agreed sustainable development commitments and objectives, particularly those in Agenda 21, the JPOI, MDGs and Monterrey Consensus. We also note that the 2002 International Covenant relating to Economic, Social and Cultural Rights includes the right to access to water, which is consistent with these other commitments.
- Business and industry regards this CSD meeting, which is the Policy session of the 1st 2- year cycle since Johannesburg, as an important test. It is critical to the people who are the focus of these commitments that this CSD will rise to the challenge of identifying new policy directions, motivating action in priority areas, deploying limited resources and animating all sectors of society to enact the JPOI and MDGs. It is essential that the CSD focuses and adds real value to such action on international, national and local levels.
- It is critical that we embrace the full vision of these international sustainable development commitments, covering economic and social development, environmental, health and social priorities.
- Business and industry, as users of water resources and services, as providers of water related technology, equipment and services, and as a driving force for economic development, have a considerable skills and resources to bring to this task. Through case studies, examples, initiatives, and side bar meetings at this and other sessions, business has demonstrated our engagement and results. We have offered these successful approaches to be replicated and scaled up wherever they could render results.
- We continue to believe that to achieve progress, these global commitments need to be converted to local targets at national levels, and carried forward in project implementation. Thus, they will become tangible and progress toward meeting them will be measurable. We urge governments to accelerate progress towards water targets in major regions of the world, and toward sanitation targets everywhere.
- Business looks to governments to provide the necessary enabling frameworks, as business can only operate effectively in a strong and stable legal, regulatory and economic context. Eliminating bribery and corruption, in favor of rule of law and democratic processes, is of fundamental importance, as is bringing the “informal sector” into these regulatory and legal frameworks.
- We hope that, while supporting a rights-based approach, that follow-up from CSD13 will stress the priority need of the poorest populations to have access to potable water, sanitation and other water services. Business does not support privatization of water resources. Public versus private delivery of services is not the issue. The provision of water and sanitation services is recognised as a public service,

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International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) www.iccwbo.org

World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) www.wbcsd.org

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whether operated by the public or private entities. Governments, donors and civil society should ensure that they support solutions that are both efficient and acceptable to the local community.

- Conditions and mechanisms should be put in place and strengthened that will encourage the development and implementation of low cost debt financing for water and sanitation projects that will attract funds nationally and internationally.
- Bearing in mind that agriculture is the greatest user of water resources, mechanisms should be put in place to provide access to appropriate management strategies and technologies to increase water use efficiency.
- The implementation of human settlements policies has to be coordinated with policies in the fields of business, industrialization and employment, since well balanced human communities must provide housing, employment opportunities, infrastructure and services for the population.
- Innovative management models and clearly defined partnerships should be encouraged. Governments, business and other stakeholders should work in partnership to leverage business resources to create jobs, build capacity and skills and to share technologies and co-operate to accelerate their dissemination. Business is prepared to work with others to improve community water and sanitation facilities. Where stable conditions exist, business will continue to innovate to create adaptable, affordable and effective solutions, working with employees, communities, customers and other stakeholders.
- Business and industry appreciates the opportunity to take part in these discussions. It is committed to continue dialogue and action that will contribute to continued progress and international cooperation towards sustainable development. We encourage CSD and delegations to return to greater and more meaningful involvement for major groups with substantive practical and technical input in future sessions.
- Thank you for Your Attention.