

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

STATEMENT BY NGOs MAJOR GROUP TO CLOSING SESSION OF CSD-13, 22 APRIL 2005

NGOs came to CSD hoping for political commitments to be turned into action. Instead we have heard philosophical discussions on issues already concluded at Rio and elsewhere since.

Water is a human right. That should not be in question, least of all at the United Nations founded on a Universal Declaration enshrining the right to life. We should not be content that when we do not share that vision, other people perish. Diseases related to contaminated water kill a child every 15 seconds.

We repeat, **water is a human right**. The responsibility of a State is to respect, protect and fulfil that right, not to ignore it, or sell it. The responsibility includes protecting and managing the ecosystems on which secure water supply depends.

NGOs have been told to hold States accountable. CSD-13 has given us no new tools with which to do that. That is regrettable. **Actions need deadlines**. But the text gives no indication of when:

- the Uganda Water Officer can expect his delayed budget
- the Mozambique community will be offered affordable local water supply technology
- the Ethiopian school will get more than one toilet for its 2,300 girls.

NGOs do not see leadership as getting your own way. It is about facilitating others to achieve their rights whether to life, freedom, water or shelter. We therefore commit to continue our work with the world's poorest communities, especially women. We will monitor:

- Whether June's Monterrey follow-up doubles aid and cancels unpayable debts;
- Whether national governments use the next five months before September's Millennium Summit Review (a) to prioritise water and sanitation in their national plans and budgets and (b) to establish separate budget lines for sanitation
- Whether donors use that time to identify a lead donor for each country and to align themselves behind plans led by that country
- Whether all governments take further action in 2005 on Integrated Water Resource Management
- Whether December's WTO Ministerial meeting finalises agreements to make trade fair.

To conclude, CSD-13 has delivered less than it promised, far less than was needed. It has not taken seriously the situation of the world's poorest people. It has failed to develop a sense of urgency. Political commitments remain words on paper rather than solid prospects of taps, toilets and homes.

Thank you, Chair