

Business and Industry Opening statement
12th Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development
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Mr. Chairman,

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this global review of progress toward the Millennium Development Goals in water, sanitation and human settlements.

In this short statement I will like to highlight three main points:

1 There is a strong business case for combating poverty and improving the world's water and sanitation situation

Why?

- Business cannot succeed in societies that fail, and political and economic instability are its worst enemies
- Water and sanitation play a vital role in economic development, and are a prerequisite for stable health and employment. Business needs healthy communities as a source of effective employees.
- Water is a necessary ingredient to any business

To put it simply: **No water – no business** .

2 There can be no solution without a strong contribution from business

Some of the key challenges are related to lack of resources, technology, infrastructure and organization. That's where business can play its role: to generate profits through continuous improvement of technological solutions at lower cost, to optimize infrastructure and systems, to provide professional management and to organize human activities to reach tangibles results.

3 Any business contribution needs political support and framework conditions

Obviously, business cannot act alone. The goal will only be reached by joining forces with other stakeholders: Governments in particular have a responsibility to provide the necessary framework conditions to encourage companies to take effective action. To attract investment, national and local governments need to implement policies for effective cost recovery that are appropriate for the local social, economic and environmental context. With other words: Make sure that the price of water is economically realistic.

The water and sanitation challenge is global, but the solutions are by nature local. It becomes imperative that local decision makers and local business environments are given the appropriate tools to act.

We are facing huge challenges, and the only way to achieve results fast enough, is to make sure that all stakeholders are joining forces and actively supporting each other in finding practical solutions.