

Mr Chair, I want to thank the many delegations like Argentina, Canada and others, from yesterday's session for highlighting the pivotal role that Local Governments indeed **have to** play when it comes to effective IWRM and service delivery at local level. And indeed this was confirmed very eloquently this morning by most of the panelists, especially also by Mr Daniel Zimmer from the World Water Forum.

One of the main challenges for the international water and sanitation agenda is governance. The role of local governments is integral to achieving good governance, and we should welcome moves in many countries towards the decentralization of the provision of water and sanitation services to local governments who are better able to reflect local needs. This said, the trend towards decentralization is too often not married with concomitant financial support and capacity building at a local level – local staff training and the channeling of finance through local governments is often lacking.

Capital budgets for system rehabilitation are critical – national governments must avoid the temptation to 'solve the water problem' by handing over deteriorating infrastructure and systems to un-prepared and under-funded local authorities.

Monitoring and data collection is also a key concern for local government. In order for statistics on water and sanitation coverage rates, to reflect a diversity of experience across different areas, it is vital that capacity is built for local governments to adequately collect and meaningfully interpret data. The establishment of a universally accepted set of indicators on water and sanitation provision would help significantly to produce a more holistic picture of access.

At CSD we should recognize that IWRM is very much a local government issue, and that without capacity building at this level the important targets on IWRM will not be achieved. And in this light, we welcome the Africa-EU Statement on Sanitation which specifically refers to the role of local governments. Along with decentralization, **training and support must be provided**, and this should be a responsibility that national government and the international community should not shy away from. The LoGo Water Project, pioneered by ICLEI Africa in the SADC region represents an innovative local model for building capacity and knowledge around IWRM at a local level, through encouraging the transfer of valuable knowledge and practical skills on IWRM to local governments in the region. We hope to see this initiative grow in beyond the SADC region - the urgency and need have certainly been clearly determined – also because it has proven to effectively address the many trans-boundary challenges we face in this field, by the very nature of the resource we are working with.

Before I conclude, allow me to also strongly align with and indicate our support for the Women Group's statement, which so eloquently stated the pivotal role that women need to play in the decision making and management processes related to water.

In summary: there have been some positive developments towards achieving international targets on water sanitation and IWRM, but harnessing the potential of local authorities requires good governance at a local level, improved financing mechanisms, better capacity for monitoring and data collection, and improved development and transfer of knowledge on IWRM, but above all the recognition and support from the national governments and the international community to their local government partners.

I thank you.