

Statement by Jonathan Margolis, State Department Special Representative for Sustainable Development, at the Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development, February 28, 2005

Mr. Chairman, this Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting (IPM) marks an important juncture as we turn our focus to delivering results that improve lives and advance sustainable development. The innovative work program your Bureau has developed in concert with the Secretariat can enable us to identify policy options and practical solutions. It also positions us to bring forward the voluntary commitments needed to overcome obstacles to implementation and to advance mechanisms that deliver results.

Mr. Chairman, it is clear that we have turned the corner and embraced the era of implementation. Coming out of Johannesburg just over two years ago, we knew we had to figure out what implementation looks like. Now we are beginning to see its contours with the emergence of what Secretary General Annan and others have called “global policy networks,” which bring together governments, international organizations, civil society, and other relevant stakeholders in pursuit of common goals.

Such networks are already forming around the agenda set by this Commission. We are gratified to see how the reforms this body instituted two years ago have galvanized greater focus and coordination among governments, various UN agencies through UN-Water, the World Bank and regional development banks such as the African Development Bank, as well as other relevant stakeholders and processes. Looking ahead, events such as World Bank Water Week, Stockholm Water Week, and the World Water Forum may become events around which we organize much of our implementation work.

Even as the institutional frameworks and policy networks come together, our measure of success is ultimately whether we deliver concrete results country-by-country. Mr. Chairman, the theme you have chosen for CSD 13, “Turning Political Commitments into Action,” is, therefore, perfectly fitting. This means we need to develop mechanisms that better enable multiple donors and non-government actors to expand their reach in partnering with developing countries to support their efforts to deliver results and advance common goals. For example, the Global Water Partnership, through which various donors, developing countries, international organizations, and others are working together to develop integrated water resources management (IWRM) plans, as called for in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. Work in this area is particularly important. Emphasizing local actors and decentralizing authority ensures broad-based participatory decision-making, transparency, and accountability – the hallmarks of good governance in general and good water governance in particular.

Mr. Chairman, your call for delegations and other stakeholders to bring voluntary commitments to CSD 13 is right on target. For the United States, in addition to our ongoing efforts to expand access to clean water and sanitation through the \$970 million Water for the Poor initiative, we are partnering with others to bring to CSD 13 novel approaches that advance implementation. In addition to the GWP effort on IWRM plans, our priorities are to bring forward mechanisms that deliver results in the areas of water and health, transboundary water, and financing. We hope others will likewise bring commitments forward in the areas that are most important to them. If we all do so, then we will be well on our way to delivering results that improve lives and advance sustainable development.

For this to work, the Secretariat and this Commission have vital roles to play, particularly in fostering greater connectivity and coherence among implementation actors and policy networks. The Secretariat is uniquely positioned to gather and manage new knowledge and information about who is doing what, what is working and what is not, in sustainable development. UN DESA's Partnerships Database is an excellent first step. The planned web-based collection of voluntary commitments is another important step. Such a transparent mechanism provides us with the needed information to measure our progress.

Mr. Chairman, the Commission's new ways of doing business enabled us to clearly identify through CSD 12 *what* needs to be done to overcome the obstacles to implementation. This IPM offers an opportunity to build on this by focusing on the "*how-to*." That is, the next five days should help us identify the most promising tools and practical methods that policymakers and other relevant stakeholders might draw from to expedite implementation. By producing clear, concise, and non-prescriptive policy options, underpinned by illustrative case studies, the IPM can be a bridge between CSDs 12 and 13.

Mr. Chairman, we trust that, with your leadership, this IPM will boost implementation and ensure that CSD 13 successfully moves us from commitments into action. Thank you.