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Statement by

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of

the Kingdom of the Netherlands

**on the occasion of the Ministerial Discussion
“*Turning Commitments into Action, Working together in
Partnership*”**

**High-Level Segment of the 15th session of the Commission on
Sustainable Development**

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Mr Chairman, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen.

I am delighted to have the opportunity today to contribute to a successful conclusion to the current CSD cycle. It is clear that we will have to take decisive action to tackle the enormous challenges of climate change, energy security and lack of access to energy. We will have to get our own house in order and support others to do the same. We will have to live up to the aim of this cycle: to speed up the action together. We cannot backtrack on our commitments to which Heads of State and Government signed up in Johannesburg.

It is clear that a number of issues have become even more urgent since Johannesburg. The need to realise a low-carbon economy has further increased. We have done a lot of talking. Now it is really time to start the walking. We cannot afford to linger or even step backwards.

All countries will have to make an ambitious contribution. That is why the Netherlands Government will launch a programme "Cleaner and Greener". It aims to develop the Netherlands into one of the most energy efficient economies in Europe by 2020. This also includes the ambition to make use of 20% renewable energy. One of the main sources of renewables is the use of biomass for biofuels and bio-energy. I truly hope that as part of the outcome of this CSD we can start an international governmental dialogue on the sustainable production of biomass. We will have to grasp the economic benefits of using biomass for tackling climate change. But at the same time we will have to avoid the downside of, for instance, biodiversity loss and competition with local food production.

To avoid these negative impacts the Netherlands has developed sustainability criteria for biomass production. The Netherlands Minister for Development Cooperation and I want to work with producing countries to test the sustainability criteria that we have developed. In this way we hope to illustrate in practice the potential for sustainable biomass production and its certification.

We will also have to speed up our actions on improving access to energy. I call on all donors to make their contribution to this effort more tangible.

In this respect the Netherlands Government already set aside a budget to provide access to energy for 10 million people by 2015, especially targetting women. On top of this the newly appointed Netherlands Minister for Development Cooperation will make available an additional several hundred million Euros for sustainable energy in developing countries.

In short, I don't see CSD15 as the end of a process. The result of this session must give us renewed vigour in pushing forward the implementation of the Johannesburg agreements. Clear policy direction from this session backed up with national supportive initiatives will be crucial to live up to the expectations that many throughout the world have. Only together we can steer the future of energy use onto a truly sustainable path. It is clear that stepping backwards is not an option. Decisive steps forward are needed. Let us no longer linger.

Thank you, Mr Chairman