



**STATEMENT BY MS. JANIL GREENAWAY, MINISTER COUNSELLOR,
PERMANENT MISSION OF ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA TO THE UN, ON
BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA, REVIEW OF CSD-13 WATER
AND SANITATION DECISIONS, AT THE 16TH SESSION OF THE
COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (New York, 12 May 2008)**

Distinguished Chairman:

1. I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The Group reaffirms its commitment to the vital work of this Commission, including the revision and follow-up of the implementation of its previous decisions.
2. Allow me to thank the Secretary-General for his report (E/CN.17/2008/11) entitled "Review of progress in implementing the decision of the thirteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development on water and sanitation", which contains important findings and shows the critical situation in relation to achieving the MDGs and targets related to water and sanitation.
3. Building on the outcomes of major UN conferences and summits, in particular the Rio Declaration, Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, the CSD-13 identified and agreed to a set of policy options and practical measures in the areas of water and sanitation. The decisions reached in 2005 reflected a firm intergovernmental consensus on the critical role that access to water resources and basic sanitation play in the context of sustainable development and for the overall achievement of the MDGs, including the eradication of poverty.
4. That consensus stands more compelling today than ever, in the face of overwhelming global challenges such as climate change, food insecurity, population growth, rapid urbanization, increased vulnerability to natural disasters, progressive environmental degradation, inadequate reflection of the importance of agriculture within the development agenda, and insufficient flows of ODA, among many other factors.
5. As indicated in the Secretary-General report, developing countries have stepped up in implementing a wide range of concrete policies and measures at the national level, with a view to meeting their specific needs and priorities with regards to access to basic water services, integrated water resources management, access to basic sanitation, hygiene education and waste management.
6. As a result, significant progress has been made towards achieving global international goals, especially those related to access to safe drinking water, including in some of the world's most populated developing countries. However, progress has been uneven among regions and also within countries that present internal asymmetries and disparities. Furthermore, current trends show that even if the MDGs are met, "there will still be some 900 million people lacking access to safe drinking water and 1.3 billion lacking access to improved sanitation in 2015."

Mr. Chairman,

7. In this context, the Group of 77 and China continues to believe that despite their commendable efforts, developing countries cannot meet by themselves the massive investments of financial, technical and technological resources that are required in this field. As stated by the Group at the

outset of the considerations on this thematic cluster by the Commission during its 12th Session, stronger and truly decisive support from the international community is still urgently needed. The priority given to water and sanitation by developing countries in their national development plans and poverty reduction strategies has not been adequately echoed and supported at the international level.

8. Limited financial resources remains as one of the main constraints for making further progress. Increased Official Development Assistance and other forms of financial cooperation are required, as developing country governments face difficulties in finding additional resources for this vital development field that does not yet attract sufficient private sector investment, particularly in Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States, and also in rural and impoverished urban areas. As pointed out in the Secretary-General's report, the water and sanitation sector has not attracted large amounts of financing, in contrast to the international response to issues such as HIV/AIDS and education. Furthermore, it is recognized that leading developed partners have not made water and sanitation a priority in their development agenda.

9. The Group believes that there is much scope for the United Nations Development System to strengthen its work with regards to capacity-building activities to support water and sanitation policies. The Group notes with concern that the strategic orientation of some UN funds, programmes and agencies is progressively overlooking the centrality of basic development needs, such as water and sanitation, in contrast to the focus placed on issues with higher political profile.

Mr. Chairman,

10. Developing countries required more effective support and cooperation in further building local institutional and technical capacities on water and sanitation-related issues, including, inter alia, drinking-water supply and sanitation, integrated water resources management, water management for agriculture, resources assessments, protection of water resources, improvement of water quality, hygiene education, awareness raising, adaptation to the impacts of climate change or adverse climate conditions on water resources, and infrastructure development.

11. The Group also stresses the vital importance of appropriate technologies and research in relation to water and sanitation, and in this regard underscores the need for international conditions that are more conducive to the transfer of knowledge and technology to developing countries on favourable and affordable terms.

12. Additionally, the Group recognizes the important role that partnerships play and could further play in supporting the efforts made by developing countries in formulating and implementing water and sanitation policies. At the same time the Group underscores that partnerships are meant to be a complement to and not a substitute for commitments relating to the provision of ODA and international cooperation established under the multilateral framework.

Mr. Chairman,

13. Let me conclude by reiterating the great value that the Group attaches to this review exercise. The follow-up to the CSD-13 decisions on water and sanitation shall not conclude here. If this intergovernmental body is truly committed to the fulfilment of the internationally agreed actions and goals in this thematic area, it is necessary to further recognize its centrality, multidimensional scope and crosscutting nature in the context of sustainable development and the achievement of the MDGs. Indeed, we would not even adequately address any of the thematic areas within our multi-year programme of work if we were to overlook the water-related issues in the future discussions of

