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Statement

by

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At the

**Multi-stakeholder Dialogue on Water in the Post-2015 Development Agenda
Presentation and Discussion of the Results of the Global Thematic Consultation
on Water**

The Hague, 21 March 2013

Distinguished panellists,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to thank the Government of the Netherlands for inviting me to this Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue on the Post-2015 Development Agenda to share with you the results of the Thematic Consultation on Water.

As mentioned by Ms. Brandt, the objective of the Thematic Consultation on Water has been to gather the views of people around the world on how they see the theme of water fitting into the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

This consultation relied greatly on a web platform. The first two months of the web consultation considered water in a wider framework, looking at what water security means and examining issues such as water and population, and water and ethics.

In early January 2013, the water consultation broke into three separate, but interdependent, sub-consultations on issues that were highlighted in the Rio+20 outcome document, namely, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene; Water Resources Management; and Wastewater Management and Water Quality.

Each of these three “streams” developed a framing paper that laid out the key issues and questions concerning these topics. Over the course of five weeks, discussions were organized into weekly themes related to those areas, such as Water for Schools, Water for Peace, and Innovation and Developments in Wastewater Reuse. This allowed the consultation to cover a lot of ground and at the same time to go into depth on each of the three streams.

Each weekly discussion was led by one or more partner organizations that provided background documents and moderated the discussions on the different themes. The outcomes and the key messages and issues were documented for follow-up each week.

These discussions and recommendations serve as the foundation of what will be discussed today and should be adopted tomorrow as the outcome of the whole process.

What are the key challenges in water resources management?

The discussions on **Water Resources Management** were organized around six topics that not only stand out as priorities within water resources management, but are also very closely related to the other two water consultation streams as well as many of the other "World We Want" thematic areas.

The discussions on **Water for Energy, Energy for Water** not only underlined the growing linkages and interdependency between water and energy but also stressed that this is not adequately reflected in global, national and local policies.

The discussions on **Water and food** pointed to the growing need for water to feed a world population rising to 9 billion by 2050, and underlined the potential gains that can be derived from increasing efficiency and reducing waste from field to fork.

The discussions on **Climate Change and Water-related Risks** showed once again that water is at the heart of climate change adaptation and that water management is the key to increasing the resilience of societies to climate change and disasters. This is particularly important for developing countries which are more vulnerable to climate change.

Water is as important for nature as nature is for water. This theme underlined that water-related ecosystems, such as forests and wetlands, provide a myriad of benefits for development. We should therefore value and protect water-related ecosystems as the return on the investment is high.

Water for peace, a key issue for UNECE, was clearly high on the agenda. Against rising demands for water, and geopolitical tensions, risk analysts warn of "water wars." These have not materialized yet though concerns over such a possibility are high. What emerged is that it is necessary for transboundary cooperation to be based on international water law, such as the 1997 United Nations Watercourses Convention and the 1992 UNECE Water Convention, and that international agreements and joint institutions can go far in promoting cooperation in shared river basins.

The last week of the water resources management discussion was focused on **governance**, an overarching issue that impacts all water-related themes. While significant efforts have been made to increase

coordination across sectors that use water, a large gap still remains in ensuring that water is managed in a socially equitable, environmentally sustainable and economically beneficial manner.

What are the key messages from the consultations?

What emerged clearly from the consultations is that water is a key determinant in all aspects of social, economic and environmental development.

Producing food is impossible without water. Achieving sustainable energy for all will not happen without taking water into consideration. For healthy people and healthy ecosystems, water is crucial.

However, one of the major challenges that water faces is that, even though central to other development and environment issues, it is not seen as such by the professionals working in those areas.

We are living with a veritable blind spot when it comes to how serious water issues could become in the future. Not only is a water crisis increasingly possible, but also crises in other sectors caused by the lack of quality and quantity of the water required to meet their demands.

At the same time, water provides economic opportunities that have the potential to reduce poverty, and safeguard environmental integrity.

That is why a recommendation that strongly emerged from the consultation is that water should feature prominently in the Post-2015 Development Agenda. An explicit sustainable development goal was called for to fully address water's fundamental role in supporting life, economic development and well-being.

Thank you for your attention.