

**STATEMENT
BY
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DEVELOPMENT**

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Mr Chairman, Dear Colleagues

Freshwater management is crucial for sustainable development, both in developed countries, where water is still being wasted, and in developing countries, which cannot hope to achieve the economic and social development they seek unless they can guarantee their populations a safe water supply.

The two years that have elapsed since the Johannesburg Summit is a very short time to assess the progress that has been made towards achieving the agreed water-related targets. Nevertheless, I believe we all agree that based on the current rate of progress the goals still represent a formidable challenge.

Instruments for water resource management have an important role to play in preventing water-related conflicts, through assessing the resource's spatial and temporal variability along the river basin. It is therefore important to design a long-term water policy in order to promote more adequate land

use and better protection of water quality and associated ecosystems. In this context, it is also important to mention the need to tie integrated water resource management in with the prevention of and protection against extreme hydrological conditions.

The implementation of an integrated management approach is best achieved by defining the institutional structure and identifying capacities and responsibilities at the national, regional and local level. A participation mechanism should also be created to promote the active involvement of local people, in order to better identify the real problems, match aspirations and establish correspondingly fitting solutions.

In Portugal, our experience during 1994-1999 has shown that implementing integrated management plans assures an accelerated pace in obtaining better water supply and sanitation services. This experience supports our conviction that integrated management plans are the best tool to achieve the 2015 target.

Portugal has drawn up a National Water Plan based on a process of characterising and diagnosing the water resource situation, the challenges brought about by a new policy approach, socio-economic evolution scenarios and the main pressures on water resources. The plan establishes a set of goals and measures, a timescale for their enforcement, and mechanisms for their implementation and assessment.

Portugal has also drawn up a strategic plan for water supply and sanitation. This covers the 2000-2006 period and sets out the main types of action to be taken. The plan aims to increase the percentage of the population with access to freshwater distribution systems from 88% to 95% and also to increase the coverage of the sewage water treatment from 70% in the year 2000 to 90% by 2005. The implementation of the plan involves the government, local authorities and the private sector.

As stated in the Report of the United Nations Secretary-General, meeting the worldwide water target will require a doubling of spending on drinking water supply.

As we are all aware, government budgets and official development aid are insufficient to meet the costs of achieving international water-related goals and targets. These can only be reached by involving the private sector and exploiting the expertise it can bring to improve management systems by using innovative technical solutions and outside investment.

However, Portugal's experience has shown that the private running of a public utility should always be subject to a strong regulatory framework, to ensure that private investment and management is consistent with the public interest. To that end, public-private partnerships were set up to develop solutions for our domestic needs.

Based on these premises, Portugal is also participating in joint projects with several Portuguese-speaking countries in order to improve capacity-

building in water supply and sanitation and thereby contribute to the improvement of living conditions and the promotion of social development.

In Mozambique, we are one of the partners in the implementation of the National Water Plan, through a company responsible for the water supply to eight municipalities that include the five major cities. Portugal is also responsible for the creation of water supply and waste water treatment facilities aiming to provide freshwater and sanitation to the Island of Mozambique and to rehabilitate the water supply infrastructure to an important area of Maputo.

In Cape Verde, Portugal, in a joint project with the Cape Verde Government, operates the electricity, water supply and waste water collection company using the desalinisation process to produce drinking water. In Angola, we participate in programmes aiming to improve the capacity of Luanda Water Supply Company.

In East Timor, Portugal is currently delivering a training program to the Water Supply and Waste Water authorities and therefore contributing to capacity building.

In short, we propose that efforts should be made to promote the dialogue between governments, private sector and user representatives to develop sustainable solutions for the problem of extending worldwide access to safe and affordable water.