



**STATEMENT BY MINISTER RONNIE KASRILS, MINISTER OF
WATER AFFAIRS AND FORESTRY, SOUTH AFRICA, TO THE
PLENARY SESSION ON PARTNERSHIPS**

6 JUNE 2002

Chairperson, much discussion here has focused on “process” issues that still need to be resolved. While recognising the importance of such issues, I would like to briefly highlight a concrete example of a partnership in practice that may assist us to focus our minds by drawing the links between targets, timeframes, type one agreements and type two initiatives. This particular partnership also displays all the criteria set out in the guiding principles for partnerships in the explanatory note by the Vice Chairs.

South Africa is a strong proponent of multi-stakeholder partnerships involving governments, international agencies, civil society and the private sector – working together to reduce poverty and build community involvement. In this regard, we have stressed, and continue to stress, the need for equality, mutual respect and shared responsibility between partners giving rise to concrete action on the ground.

The Millennium Declaration Goals include a goal for halving the number of people without access to safe and affordable drinking water by 2015. This forms a strong basis for type one programmes. Many countries represented in the current negotiations, including South Africa, have argued strongly for a similar target for halving the number of people without access to adequate sanitation by 2015. We find it unfortunate that there has not been wider support for this target, considering the impact that lack of water and sanitation has on the lives of poor people each and every day. In South Africa a recent and shocking outbreak of cholera brought these dreadful impacts sharply into focus.

As we are aware, 1.1 billion people in the world do not have access to safe and affordable drinking water. 2.4 billion people do not have adequate sanitation. These issues impact not only on human health and dignity, but on the health of the environment and the ability of people to participate effectively in the economy. Any partnership that addresses access to water and sanitation therefore meets the criterion of an integrated approach, addressing all three pillars of sustainable development.

The Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council has already responded to these needs with a programme called WASH – water, sanitation and hygiene, and is making a proposal in this regard with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, as a Type II initiative. As the first country to launch the WASH campaign South Africa strongly advocates

this multi-stakeholder initiative, and we do so with our fellow African countries as reflected in the statement made yesterday by the Nigerian Minister of Water Resources on behalf of the African Water Ministers.

The financial and technical support of the international community is needed to address a problem that contributes to the death of 6000 children each day from water borne diseases.

The WASH programme, as we have experienced it, contains all the elements of a true partnership – common understanding of the problem and how to address it; clear targets and timeframes; practical delivery of programmes on the ground that enable us to achieve the targets that lie before us.

Such practical partnerships, set within the framework of clear global programmes of action and priorities are what we must put in place if meaningful initiatives are to emerge out of Johannesburg. This programme gives a practical example of how type 1 agreements need to link through type II initiatives to change the lives of people on the ground. This is in line with the guidelines which state, so clearly, that “partnerships are to complement, not to substitute, the globally agreed outcomes; they are not intended to substitute commitments made by governments.”

Chairperson, given the forcefulness of this statement, surely all must be in agreement on the clear cut linkages between type 1 and 2 commitments.

Programmes of this nature must, however, fall within the CSD (Commission for Sustainable Development) monitoring programme. Monitoring of sustainable development has not previously included indicators such as access to water and sanitation. In order to truly understand whether we are progressing towards sustainable development and the eradication of poverty, such indicators must be included in the CSD monitoring programme.

I believe that this example can assist us to understand how to advance towards Johannesburg within the correct parameters and with the right spirit to ensure that we do emerge from Johannesburg with new and viable programmes of action that move us forward to the vision contained in Agenda 21.