

Check against delivery

**Speech by His Royal Highness the Prince of Orange in presenting the results of the Ministerial Round Table to the FAO conference “Water for food and ecosystems. Make it happen!”,
The Hague, Friday 4 February 2005**

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to be here with you again today, after a week of very hard work, with very productive results. I will present you the results of the Ministerial Round Table of yesterday.

The main goal of this week was a conference dedicated to action. The world community has already agreed upon clear commitments and targets for sustainable development, the eradication of poverty and rural water management. With agriculture, ecosystems and water management high on the international agenda, we called upon you to deliver, to Make it happen!

The main subject of this conference was how sustainable water management and healthy environment can globally co-exist with substantial growth in agricultural production. Water consumption must be stabilised at 2000 levels and at the same time food must be increased significantly. We have to strike a new balance between water for human beings, water for food production and water for a healthy ecosystem. We can only do this if you and all stakeholders are committed to an integrated approach; internationally, nationally, and also at the local level.

As I said on Monday, the pace must be accelerated and we must take a broader view. If not, we will not meet the targets set for 2015. During the first four years after the Millennium Summit, many experts and critics have wondered how we could ever achieve those goals. Now, with the comprehensive report “Investing in Development” by Jeffrey Sachs and the will of all sectors involved to widen their views and look for synergies within other sectors, the MDG’s might still sound Utopian, but certainly have become more realistic.

We do need commitment from governments involved, so, I challenged the ministers during the round table to focus their interventions in terms of concrete action. Who does what? How and when can you best do it? And who you should work with to reach your goals? Action is what we need, based on an integrated approach, with cooperation among public and private partners, and resulting in investments to make “the new economy” in rural water management a reality.

Already yesterday, upon the start of the Round Table the ministers and vice-ministers were pleased to see what you had agreed upon, the good practises and lessons learned and your proposals to promote action on the ground. I suggested to them, not just to be pleased with this, but also to be inspired and to build on your work. The synthesis of the challenges, produced by the three working groups, proved to be a very good starting point.

Excellencies, yesterday you have shown the same enthusiasm and dedication. Moreover, you have clearly stated your political commitment to implement the actions we are about to agree upon at this plenary session.

The results of the Round Table are contained in the document you have in front of you.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since we know what we need to do, the Ministerial Round Table concentrated on how to promote implementation on the ground.

The message of the ministers is to integrate, to co-operate and to invest:

On the issue of Integration:

It is essential to move away from a sectoral approach to an integrated approach. Therefore, we have to:

- Consider rural water management THE cornerstone for rural development
- Look into social, economic and ecological interdependencies between urban and rural areas
- Develop and manage in a coherent manner legislation, institutions, and capacity building activities

On the issue of Co-operation:

The scarcity of water, hunger, the loss of biodiversity and climate change are common concerns to us all. There is a strong willingness to cooperate, in a way in which we:

- Actively involve all stakeholders and recognize their rights to land and water, while they fulfil their responsibilities to preserve and manage natural resources in a sustainable manner
- Acknowledge the dedication, experience and skills of local people, as custodians of rural areas and natural resources
- Promote public-private partnerships
- Engage actively in transboundary, regional and global cooperation

On the issue of investment:

Substantive resources are needed to make it happen, both from the public and private sector. Given that agro-systems and natural ecosystems are constituted by the same principles of life, such investments are to be based on sound ecology in agriculture and sound economics in biodiversity conservation.

To reverse the declining trend in finance for sustainable agriculture investments have to be made in sustainable intensification of agriculture, which includes cost saving by improvements of water efficiency, recycling and reduction of waste. Furthermore, investments in water for food and ecosystems are directed to:

- Economize the use of water as a scarce resource, to make people aware of limitations in water use and the need to cooperate to share water for food and ecosystems
- Develop, where appropriate, experiences with economic incentives like water pricing mechanisms

...And then, how to make it happen: from words to action.

The Round Table highlighted the need to support the implementation of programmes and activities already in place all over the world for rural development and integrated water management. While recognising that social, economic and ecological circumstances are different from place to place, they endorsed the actions proposed by the Conference. These actions will directly support the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and their associated timeframes.

The ministers underlined the important work done, and provided the following guidance, which has been reflected in the final outcome of the Conference.

Theme 1. Know-how for action - Crucial elements to make it happen are:

- knowledge and holistic approaches fitting specific regional and country needs
- link science to knowledge of local and indigenous people
- awareness and education campaigns, including on integrated water resource management and the ecosystem approach
- new research programmes for emerging issues, such as sea level rise
- address the issue of subsidies and their impacts on water use

Theme 2. A new economy - Crucial elements to make it happen are to:

- set clear time frames for all proposed actions;
- have comprehensive legislative and policy frameworks;
- create awareness, education and information sharing on water efficiency;
- diversify local economies to mitigate drought effects;
- improve water efficiency through new technologies, including biotechnology;
- regional cooperation not only in the field of water management, but also in economic development;
- transboundary, regional and global cooperation, especially in relation to benefit sharing arising out of the use of water and to sharing costs to compensate for water pollution and inefficient water use.

Theme 3 - the enabling environment- Crucial elements to make it happen
Crucial action which under this theme were highlighted are:

- national targets for the achievement of the implementation of actions within a certain timeframe
- continued international information exchange on lessons learned and good practises
- national strategies for integrated water management
- active participation of all stakeholders, recognizing the special role of farmers, women, youth, and local and indigenous communities
- strengthen capacities of NGO's
- alliances promoting the social responsibility of the private sector

5 years ago, during the 2nd World Water Forum here in this same conference centre, the dialogue for Water, Food and Environment was launched. The partners in the dialogue are, among others, FAO, IUCN, GWP, IWMI, UNEP, WHO and the World Wide Fund for Nature . Why was it launched? To bring together agricultural and environmental

communities to find ways of managing water to meet the needs of both. Does this sound familiar after this week ??

On Monday I stated that this conference is neither a beginning nor an end, but an important staging post.

With these results you are sending a clear message to the 13th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development in April. A strong conviction that we can “Make it Happen” and we will do so.

Because we need to make it happen, and we need to make it happen now, we as the member nations of the FAO ask the FAO to present a concrete plan of action at CSD 13 in April this year on how the FAO is going to implement our recommendations and concrete proposals for action. As the crosscutting issues of CSD 14, which starts on April 23rd, are, among others, poverty eradication and changing unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, the implementation can start immediately after the presentation of the action plan and we look forward to seeing the first results presented at the FAO conference in November. Yes, excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, we made it happen!

Thank you.