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Representing the Scientific & Technological Community

at the
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Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD)

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Mr. Chairman, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As President of the International Council for Science, it is my honor to speak on behalf of the international scientific and technological (S&T) community. We have been pleased to note the many calls by delegations over the last few days for more science and technology as major tools for meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the targets in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation -- in particular as regards the focus of this CSD: freshwater, sanitation and human settlements.

Scientific and technological information and knowledge are indeed central to the achievement of these goals. Understanding this centrality as well as the urgency of the problems, the S&T community has actively embraced the immense challenge of providing and sharing the knowledge needed to achieve the goals set. As a consequence, a veritable plethora of new and ambitious efforts is underway that reflect our collective commitment to upholding our end of the important social contract that we have with society.

One of these ambitious new efforts is the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) that will report its findings in early 2005. The MA is linking scientific knowledge about ecosystems to human well-being to provide new insight and guidance to society. New interdisciplinary approaches linking natural and social sciences are uncovering critical connections between the conditions of ecosystems and the provision of ecosystem services such as water purification and waste disposal. One clear message emerging from the MA is that the MDGs will be achieved if and only if they are tackled as an integrated package, not taken selectively or sequentially.

From the S&T perspective, a number of actions by governments and intergovernmental organizations and agencies would vastly improve the acquisition and dissemination of S&T knowledge and information relevant to sustainable development. I highlight 6 priority actions:

1) **Governments should strengthen their support for the involvement of their science communities in international and coordinated research programmes, especially those that address water, sanitation, human settlements and other MDG-relevant topics.**
2) **The Scientific and Technological Community should strengthen its cooperation and coordination with programmes of the UN system, especially UNESCO and UNEP.**
3) **Global observing systems, especially the freshwater component, should be strengthened. However, so too must ground-based efforts that complement remote sensing from space with the collection of on-the-ground socio-economic data so that analyses can be done within geo-referenced GIS. All countries can contribute to and benefit from a coupled global observing system. Likewise, equitable and open access to these data is imperative.**
4) **Better use should be made of existing, low cost, appropriate technologies for water and sanitation. A number of specific examples are provided in our report to CSD12.**
5) **Efforts to strengthen science education at the primary and secondary school level and scientific capacity building should be greatly enhanced.**
6) **It is important that the dialogue and partnership between the Major Groups and the governmental delegations be continued during the policy session of CSD13 and beyond.**

In conclusion, policy making at all levels should be based on the best available knowledge. Some of this knowledge is in hand, but is not fully utilized; in other arenas new knowledge is needed. Some of this knowledge is universal whereas much of it is place-based and scale-dependent. Consequently, scientific expertise is required throughout the world. This morning Mr. Mark Malloch Brown spoke of the "enormous passion and immense frustration" that characterize global attempts to make a transition to sustainability. The S&T community is deeply committed to helping meet this challenge. We stand ready to partner with all of you.