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**Statement by the delegation of Guatemala at the high-level segment of the 13th session of the
Commission on Sustainable Development**

Mr. Chairman:

This being the first time that we take the floor during this session of the Commission, we wish to congratulate you on the manner in which you have conducted our deliberations. Our congratulations extend to all your colleagues on the bureau.

My delegation reaffirms Guatemala's support for the Commission, which we hope will continue being a high-level body responsible for following up on the results that have been obtained and commitments undertaken in the area of sustainable development within the framework of the United Nations. We also wish to reiterate our support for the plan of work adopted at the Commission's eleventh session, which has proved to be a useful tool for ensuring further progress and advances in the implementation of Agenda 21, the Millennium Goals and the Johannesburg Action Plan.

Mr. Chairman:

We also wish to reiterate our commitment, as a member of the G-77, to the agreements reached within the framework of this meeting, particularly the appeal to international cooperation for the purpose of increasing financial assistance for development, and the Rio 92 commitment, reiterated at the 2002 Monterrey conference on financing for development.

Mr. Chairman:

The Government of Guatemala has made a qualitative leap in the fulfillment of the Sustainable Development Agenda, which embraces the obligations undertaken from Rio to the present, blazing a new strategic trail and positioning the environmental agenda as an intrinsic part of development, converting that agenda into one of the four pillars of the National Plan VAMOS GUATEMALA (LET'S GO GUATEMALA) that is being carried out by the Administration of President Oscar Berger. This plan is an effort that brings together all the elements of the management of public affairs. It seeks to prioritize social harmony, through GUATE SOLIDARIA (GUATEMALA WORKS IN SOLIDARITY), a dynamic economy, through GUATE CRECE (GUATEMALA GROWS), and competitiveness, through GUATE COMPITE (GUATEMALA COMPETES). All these endeavors go together with the recognition of the importance of the environmental dimension and the need for mainstreaming it throughout the whole of the strategic framework, from the perspective of sustainability and as reflected through the environmental component, GUATE VERDE (GREEN GUATEMALA).

Given its multidimensional character, this fourth component, i. e. GUATE VERDE, brings with it an enriched vision of development for the Guatemala of today and tomorrow. The country's natural and cultural assets combine within this vision, so as to form, in a rational manner, part of the development equation, and not just as an additional element, but as a vital support, bringing about a harmonious reintegration of human and planetary processes, and meeting the international obligations undertaken and ratified by my government within the framework of the United Nations. This also goes for the principles laid down by the Central American Alliance for Sustainable Development (ALIDES), the constituent instrument of which, adopted in 1994, embodies an undertaking of the Heads of State of the Central American region.

Among the subjects prioritized by GUATE VERDE are: a modern normative and institutional framework that aims to be efficacious, transparent and consistent with world exigencies, as well as to strengthen public and private eco-efficient systems favoring a human culture that better harmonizes with its surroundings. Also provided for are environmental education and training, basic social services for local development that is environmentally sustainable and incorporates eco-efficient use of the soil, comprehensive management of water and solid wastes; renewable and efficient sources of energy, an efficient use of energy, housing and habitat designed to bring about an improvement of environmental management in the urban and rural habitat; and, of course, sustained rural projects that are productive and include sustainable development practices among the productive priorities, chiefly in the area of forestry, forest, genetic and hydro-biological resources. All this goes together with due regard for the rights of use and management of the biodiversity of the indigenous peoples.

Mr. Chairman:

As a result of this integrating effort by GUATE VERDE, the Ministry for the Environment and Natural Resources of Guatemala has, through Decrees 68-86 and 90-2000, which assign it the role of governing body, carried through the necessary legal processes for the integral use and rational management of basins and water systems, springs and other sources of water, for the maintenance and equilibrium of the water system, promoting immediate reforestation of lake basins of rivers and springs, as well as the elaboration of the politics and laws relating to hydrographic basins, coastal areas, oceans and human resources (initiative for water law 3118).

Moreover the Ministry has designed a policy for environmental education, jointly with the Ministry of Education. This policy deals with priority matters relating to water resources (article 3, paragraph g, of the internal organic regulation of the Ministry for the Environment).

Mr. Chairman:

Guatemala associates itself with the speakers who have repeatedly recognized that there is no one-size-fits-all solution. Each country must decide for itself what policies and measures it can adopt to attain its national goals and objectives in connection with water.

We believe that a better management of water resources is a fundamental factor for achieving the desirable goals for the elimination of poverty and hunger, health, industrial development and protection of the environment. For these reasons integrating the management strategies in the area of water resources is the great challenge we must meet as a nation if we are to attain sustainable development and a reduction of poverty.

We are therefore convinced that, in order to promote better national and local management, local authorities should be made responsible for providing drinking water. This is to be done through legal and fiscal frameworks that are transparent and promote participation by the private sector in the improvement of water supply services.

I avail myself of this opportunity to inform that Guatemala will host in May of this year the a Regional Meeting on Integrated Management of Water Resources, to be held in the city of Antigua Guatemala under the auspices of the Global Water Partnership. Needless to say, you are all invited to participate actively and, we welcome you in advance.

We also support the complementary vision provided by the new multi-disciplinary associations and we urge the Commission to establish the monitoring and follow-up mechanisms that are needed in the various areas.

In conclusion, I would like to express the hope that the Commission will not miss the opportunity it has of making a valuable contribution to the summit that is to take place in September within the framework of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly.

Thank you.

New York, 21 April 2005