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Statement submitted by the Agency for Economic and Cultural Development North-South, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.



Statement

Promoting technology transfers for improved water management

While extreme poverty is tending to diminish thanks to the coordinated efforts of governments, the United Nations, the private sector and civil society, achieving the Millennium Development Goals still poses a daunting challenge. Their achievement is largely dependent upon the global partnership for development

Water now appears to represent a major global challenge. As a common good of all humanity, making up 60% of our bodies and 75% of the Earth, water is literally vital. Yet, more than one in seven people in the world lacks access to clean water and more than one third of the world population lacks connection to a sewage system. Apart from its implications for health, water is vital for the durability of production patterns. In connection with the International Year of Water Cooperation, it is necessary to achieve recognition of everyone's right to safe water and sanitation and the effective exercise of that right, and to take steps to conserve this precious asset. International cooperation is essential for achieving these goals. It is vital to harness the know-how and skills needed to export the technologies capable of facilitating access to safe water, curbing pollution, and ensuring that all actions affecting water are consistent with sustainable development.

International solidarity has gone far beyond the "charitable" dimension it may once have had. Because it has become professional and increasingly imbued with a civic approach, its impacts can be felt in both South and North.

Since 2005, the Midi-Pyrénées region in the southwest of France has been pursuing a proactive policy of equitable management and rational use of water, as well as widespread prevention and mitigation of pollution. In a series of actions, the Agency for Economic and Cultural Development North-South is actively engaged in developing inter-regional and international cooperation on a win-win basis, and testifying to the fact that private enterprises and universities are quite capable of garnering support for actions expressing international solidarity. Certain water companies in the Midi-Pyrénées are getting involved in water and sanitation projects and several agreements have been signed, in particular with Hungary and Uzbekistan, to improve water management through technology transfers.

International solidarity is certainly needed to reduce the percentage of the population lacking access to safe water or basic sanitation services and to reduce water pollution, but both also require technology transfers. Innovation on behalf of poor countries with respect to water management is therefore essential for achieving the goals of the Millennium Summit held in New York.

Now that the right to water has been recognized at the United Nations, the laws embodying it need to be written and enforced all over the world, a task that can be fulfilled by promoting and making full use of international cooperation.