

**Reflection Speech for Closing Session of the High Level Segment
HRH Prince Willem-Alexander, The Prince of Orange
Chair of UNSGAB**

Friday 15 May at around 10.30am

Madam Chair, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Clearly we have many challenges before us. I found it interesting that the principles set out in Agenda 21 are still very relevant today. The problem is not that we don't understand our challenges, in fact we've identified ways to address them, it is that putting these principles into action is immensely difficult. Changing ingrained patterns altering power structures and taking on entrenched interests is not easy, especially for politicians and decision makers. We must stick to the goals set forth in Agenda 21 and MDG's! These goals are unanimously agreed and globally recognized. Imagine what our world would look like if all countries had lived up to the commitments made in Rio: the planet would be a very different place. But I am seeing a resurgence of concern for the health of the planet and the plight of people who live in poverty. We still have a long way to go but I remain hopeful about the future.

The discussion in yesterday's roundtable highlighted the importance of Integrated Land and Water Management for Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development. It became clear how strongly water, agriculture, rural development, poverty reduction are linked. There are many competing claims on water. We can make huge gains in improving water management in other sectors, but if we don't improve how we use water to grow our food, it will have relatively little impact.

On the other hand, considering how many of the most vulnerable depend for the livelihood on farming, it is clear that efforts must also focus on ensuring that small farmers can thrive in their communities, feed their families, enjoy the dignity of safe sanitation, and have easily accessible clean water. They must also be able to educate their children and save for their future through secured land tenures. People will continue to move to the cities looking for opportunities, and this trend can not be changed, however a refocus on rural development is needed.

I also felt that there was a general consensus on resilience to climate change, improved food production, bio-fuels, water re-use, gender issues, local community involvement and capacity building. Consensus on general principles is not enough. What needs to be done? In my view we should focus on three priorities: Integrated Water Resources Management, Innovation, and Implementation, let us say the three 'I's'.

A recent Economist article published right after the World Water Forum contained the following sentence – "water governance is a mess." Again, there are no easy solutions to this problem, and here comes my first 'I', an IWRM approach which emphasizes improved Institutions for water governance sets us on the right path. CSD process already

recognized the importance of such an integrated approach, with CSD13 asking for countries to elaborate national IWRM plans. We have made progress with IWRM planning, we have a knowledge base on which to draw, and experience on which to build. In my view creating capacity for IWRM, especially at local levels, is an important next step.

My second 'I' is the 'I' for innovation: innovation in Financing, and innovation in technology.

We need more investments and financing in water, sanitation and agriculture. This is a globally agreed fact. But let's pursue more creative ways to fund water supply infrastructure and irrigation systems, such as access to local capital markets, increased leveraged investment, micro – finance and insurance.

I know that technologies capable of enhancing agricultural productivity, have been mentioned during these two weeks. What is really important now is to find ways to share them more widely and make them available for small farmers and small holders.

The third 'I' is implementation:

Agenda 21 and the MDGs provided us with excellent goals and strategies. If we simply focused on implementing all the agreements already made, we would be living in a much fairer and more sustainable world. Let me mention you some concrete means of implementation such as creation and sound functioning of institutions, investments in rural infrastructure, development and enforcement of laws; scaling up of success stories, enhancing market access and capacity building through empowering of local communities.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I challenge you to take these priorities home and include them in your national development plans. Priorities in which water, agriculture and rural development are inseparable for ever and essential for health, dignity and development.

And once you have translated good intentions into concrete actions, our planning horizon should be extended well past 2015 when we have to reach all those who have not been served under the present MDGs.

Thank you.