

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am speaking on behalf of the 175 multinational companies, which are represented through the World Business Council for Sustainable Development. These companies are deeply committed to a sustainable development policy, and they are ready to invest considerable resources in order to assist in achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

We are convinced that our business activities, guided by entrepreneurship and concern for profitability, are good for development, and that development is necessary for business sustainability and growth.

I would like to give three messages to this debate from our membership. First of all, the contribution of companies to the MDGs can be significant. Secondly, a favorable climate for investment is necessary for the success of our projects, and finally, we are ready to commit to work with governments.

The first point is the contribution of companies to the MDGs can be significant in two different ways.

Firstly, through direct investment in developing countries, the members of the WBCSD bring technological and business know-how. They also bring considerable financial resources. They have also demonstrated the positive impact of their commitment through the transfer of their knowledge, their skills and their good management practices.

But our memberships also realizes that they contribute to development in a different way. They invent, develop and distribute new products and services, which are particularly adapted to disadvantaged peoples and allow them greater access to water, energy and electricity. And through these new products and services, they also integrate local small and medium enterprises in their business operations either as suppliers or as distributors. This contributes to the stimulation and professionalism of local SMEs. This represents the basis for business development in developing countries

My second message is that a favorable investment climate is essential for the success of our projects. Coherent policies, which favor development of economies in poor countries, are essential for wealth creation. Without these effective policies, a market economy cannot function, and without them, the poorest people will have no opportunity to actively participate in the local economic activity, nor to benefit from the fruits of globalization. We therefore call upon the political leaders to consider the following priorities:

- 1) The implementation of a regulatory framework to promote the respect for the law
- 2) The promotion of entrepreneurship through capacity building for SMEs
- 3) Investment in the necessary infrastructure for trade such as roads, electricity and ports

By promoting these changes, governments can establish a climate of confidence, which will benefit both multinational companies and local companies.

My third point is that enterprises are ready to work together with governments - those governments which will choose to promote transparency and good governance. The

private sector can in that case contribute actively to developing strategies and development initiatives, to feasibility studies for projects and to establishing partnerships between the public and private sector and other business activities, which can improve the living standards of disadvantaged populations.

The Secretary-General, Mr Kofi Annan, has identified water, energy, health, agriculture and biodiversity as priority sectors for intervention in order to meet the needs for the poor. The members of WBCSD share this and are integrating this in their sustainable development strategies. Counteracting poverty requires new strategies which are audacious and innovative, both on the part of companies and on the part of political leaders. If governments play an active role in creating the necessary environment for business, companies will be motivated to invest financial resources, time and creativity to find business solutions, which will stimulate broad-scale development.

In conclusion, the WBCSD hopes that the important contribution by business to achieving the MDGs will be recognized by governments, and also hopes that the document to be adopted in September will recognize that.

Thank you.