

**PRESS RELEASE**

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**MIKHAIL GORBACHEV, CHAIRMAN OF GREEN CROSS INTERNATIONAL  
ADDRESSES CSD-13 ON WATER ISSUES**

**Geneva, Switzerland, 21 April 2005** - Today Mikhail Gorbachev, Founder and Chairman of Green Cross International, will address ministers and delegates at the 13th Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, which will meet at UN Headquarters in NYC to discuss concrete steps to reach the water-related goals set forth at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg and in the MDGs.

On March 22, 2005, the United Nations World Day for Water, Green Cross International launched a global campaign on the Right to Water. The campaign's objectives are two-fold. The ultimate goal is to contribute to finding a solution to the problem of universal access to water and basic sanitation. The more immediate goal is to urge governments to negotiate and adopt a Framework Convention on the Right to Water, which, when ratified by the member states of the United Nations, will specify the rights and duties of key stakeholders in national and international water management, and will give people a legal instrument to claim their right to safe water and sanitation.

Green Cross International and its partners expect to collect millions of signatures under a Petition in support of the Convention. The Petition itself, as well as other supporting materials are available on the web site [www.watertreaty.org](http://www.watertreaty.org).

The 2003 UN World Water Development report entitled "*Water for People – Water for Life*" is clear about the main cause of the global water crisis. The report says that in many parts of the globe the water shortage is assuming hitherto unsuspected levels due to political inaction.

It is therefore the strong conviction of Green Cross International and its partners that the only practical way of redressing the water crisis is through the consolidation of all stakeholders and the creation of a legally binding mechanism for resolving all water-related issues.

Mr. Gorbachev called on all participants in the meeting to consider seriously the idea of drafting such a Convention. "Should the General Assembly next September support this initiative", he said, "this would be highly appreciated by the international community and by millions of those who need water as a concrete step towards the resolution of the water crisis."

Green Cross International, a member of the CSD NGO Consortium, was actively involved in the preparation of background documents and policy papers for this meeting. Giving a brief overview of the Millennium Development Goals, Mr. Gorbachev underlined: "The critics of the Millennium Development Goals say that they are overambitious and that the targets set are unreachable. I totally disagree with this assessment. I believe we are talking here about the

minimum requirements for a decent human life, so that all people could have shelter and food and access to water and sanitation; so that newly born babies and their mothers would not die from the lack of basic medical care; and so that the inequality of sexes – this humiliating throwback to the past – would disappear for good.”

Green Cross International is an NGO with HQ in Geneva and affiliates in 27 countries, which works in the field of sustainable development. The text of Mr. Gorbachev’s intervention will be available at [www.greencrossinternational.net](http://www.greencrossinternational.net).