FINAL Comments for July 25, 2006 United Nations Event
Speaker: Andrew Liveris — Location: New York City
President, CEO and Chairman
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THE DOW CHEMICAL COMPANY'S COMMITMENT TO WATER

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Secretary General, for your warm and generous introduction. I speak on behalf of all of us gathered here when I say that we are honored you have joined us here today. I also want to thank each of you for your time and for your commitment to a cause worthy of the world's attention.

Indeed, the reason we are here today and not somewhere else is that this is a place that embodies the highest aspirations of the human family to work together to create meaningful change in the world … change that values peace and justice, economic prosperity, human health and human rights in equal measure and above all other things.

It is surely no secret that we human beings often fail to live up to our highest aspirations … that is, after all, part of being human. And, as we have seen in the events of recent weeks, it is an important part of the job of this institution to respond when we fail … which is the urgent obligation that has prevented the Secretary General from joining us today.

But even while attending to our failures, the UN has the equally important role of providing a place for us to come to discuss our highest aspirations and ideals. In that sense, then, this place has been established to be the home of those ideals and, Mr. Deputy Secretary General, I thank you for allowing it to be our home for this afternoon.

As you all know, our company is in the business of chemistry. And you will perhaps not be surprised to know that I am a chemical engineer by training and by inclination. You may well ask, "What do the highest ideals of the human family have to do with chemistry, with technology and innovation, with the things we do at Dow?" The answer is "quite a lot" … and I would like to spend my brief time with you this afternoon sharing my point of view about the richness of that connection.

Ten weeks ago, in Washington DC, I announced our company's sustainability goals for the year 2015 and I announced that those goals would include not only improved attention to our own footprint as a company . . . but that they would reach beyond the walls of our company and engage the major technical and social problems of our age:

- Energy and climate change
- Global food supply
- Personal health and safety
- Safe and affordable housing

. . . and access to clean water.

We're here today to take the first step toward fulfilling those promises. We are here to talk about water.

Global water supply is a challenge so important that it has been identified by this body as one of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals for 2015 . . . goals that all 191 United Nations member countries have pledged to meet . . . to reduce by half the proportion of people around the world without sustainable access to safe drinking water.

Today, that proportion is almost 20% or about 1.2 billion people. That is a number approximately equal to the entire population of the world at the time our company was founded in 1897. I will take a moment to let that sink in.

In one sense, the connection to chemistry and to our company is obvious. Water is the single most important chemical compound for the preservation and flourishing of human life.

And yet today, more than a billion people are in peril every day because they do not have enough water or the water they have is unhealthy. There are many fine — indeed heroic — non-profit and philanthropic organizations and people around the world dedicated to addressing this problem. Many of them have graciously come to New York today to be with us and be a part of this event. I know that we have representatives from Water Advocates … Water for People … UNICEF … and the UN's Water Resources, Sustainable Development Division here with us today, to name just a few. These inspired organizations raise money. They develop awareness. They educate communities. They mobilize people and resources in the places around the world where the problem is most acute.

And when we have successfully solved this problem — as indeed we will solve it — history will remember them as the people who prevented human suffering of an almost unimaginable scale through the power of their commitment and hard work.

But for too long they have worked alone . . . and the scope of the world's water problem is accelerating beyond even their extraordinary abilities to fight back. They need reinforcements . . . and I would submit to you that they need reinforcements of a particular kind. To do more than hold the line . . . to defeat the problem of water access faced by more than a billion people around the world . . . we need to bring to the fight the kinds of things companies like Dow do best.

… New technologies …

… Unique processes …

… Focused innovation . . .

. . . and the ability to address the needs of our neighbors with self-sustaining and self-reinforcing markets that accelerate those technologies, those processes and that innovation.

Companies like Dow are the most fantastic engines the world has ever seen for developing the ideas and the technologies to solve what may have seemed like intractable human problems. This is not just true of our company (although it's part of my job to tell you I think we're particularly good at it) . . . this is true of any strong company, whether they make bread or cars or shoes or bricks or computers . . . and it's true if they have the expertise and the will to focus on solutions to problems like access to clean water.

So my message to you today is that we pledge to align part of the vast technical expertise of our business with this problem. We will provide reinforcements for the committed people and organizations who have long been fighting this fight. And we will do it by doing the things we do best … developing new chemistry and creating new markets. Dow's business commitments in the area of water are significant. They include:

- Pioneering new technologies that provide for economically viable desalination . . .
- Developing new and improved chemistry for removing specific impurities in water . . .
- Creating innovative materials for leak proof water piping that can dramatically increase the efficiency of community water systems . . .
- And introducing new low-cost technologies and business models for the provision of clean water in rapidly developing parts of the world.

Together, these initiatives and others that will be announced in the coming months constitute a global commitment by Dow to meet this challenge . . . and make no mistake, we will meet it. And the way we are going to meet it is through the dedication of Dow employees.

We are joined here today by one of our employees, Christian Paetzold, a research technician from our Rheinmuenster site in Germany. Christian has a vision to bring clean, affordable drinking water to the people of Bangladesh, where naturally-occurring arsenic in the water supply is causing serious health problems. Through his innovative application of Dow technologies, in partnership with others, a sustainable solution is on the horizon.

Christian's project is just one example of many that underscore how Dow employees embody the spirit of what we have begun to refer to as "The Human Element". This is the real power — Dow people collaborating with others to apply science to solve real-world human problems. I would like to thank Christian — and all Dow employees — for their continued efforts to bring our "Human Element" commitments to life.

In addition to the business and technical initiatives I have mentioned, we begin with the signature investment in global awareness and education we are announcing today … Dow's partnership with the Blue Planet Run Foundation. Blue Planet Run embodies the extraordinary vision of Mr. Jin Zidell to bring this issue to the collective consciousness of

billions of people . . . starting with a worldwide event on a truly epic scale, a bi-annual around-the-world run through some of the regions of the world most affected by the challenge of access to clean water.

I am an Australian by birth, but I am also Greek by heritage . . . and when I think of the Blue Planet Run, I am reminded of the story of the Athenian herald Pheidippides, who, according to legend, ran the distance between the battlefield by the town of Marathon to Athens to announce the Greek victory over the Persian armies in 490 BC . . . a run we commemorate every time we use the word “marathon” and in the length of a marathon run.

Jin Zidell’s vision is for teams of runners to traverse the entire globe, a distance roughly equal to 1,000 marathons run over a hundred days . . . not, unfortunately, to declare victory — not yet — but to declare loudly and audaciously that we have engaged our foe. . . and that we are determined to win a victory over the problem of access to clean water for every person on earth.

In the coming weeks and months, you will hear more about the Blue Planet Run and Dow’s commitment to making it a global focal point for rallying individuals, businesses and governments around the problem of clean water access. It is an important piece of our educational and philanthropic commitment to this issue . . . and consistent with the compassionate, dedicated, generous spirit of the 42,000 men and women of The Dow Chemical Company.

But I want to be very clear, we approach the challenge of developing water resources not in a spirit of charity, but as a business . . . in a spirit of enterprise. As a large company we take our philanthropic mission very seriously. But philanthropy is not our core competency. Where we create the most leverage, the most value, the most power is in the laboratory and in the marketplace.

Our company was founded 110 years ago as a small business in a small town that was not far removed in years or distance from the edge of the American frontier. We grew because the people who came together in that small, remote place dreamed of solving the problems of their neighbors and their neighbors’ neighbors.

As a company, we have progressively developed a command of the science of chemistry . . . a command, indeed, of the elements . . . but our growth and success has been built on <u>more</u> than that achievement, as important as it is.

It has also been built on our ability to keep faith with the most important element of all . . . the Human Element.

Today we stand before you as a very large company, with operations around the world, led by a diverse and international group of men and women whose neighborhoods were not on the minds of the people who founded our company. And yet today, we are still on the edge of a changing frontier.

Today, it is not a frontier of geography … but of ideas and challenges. And, again, we will either succeed or fail based on our combined ability to solve the problems of our neighbors . . . to make their lives better . . . to contribute more to the human experience than would be possible without us.

Thank you.

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