HIGH LEVELTHEMATIC DEBATE ON WATER
CONCEPT PAPER

22 March, "World Water Day"

Water-related issues are at the top of the world's sustainable development agenda and are relevant to many challenges the global community is facing. This is particularly relevant to the availability and quality of freshwater resources, as well as the issue of access to drinking water and sanitation services.

By its resolution 58/217, the General Assembly proclaimed 2005-2015 as the International Decade for Action "Water for Life", to commence on 22 March 2005, and recalled its resolution 55/196, in which it had proclaimed 2003 as the International Year of Freshwater.

Furthermore the General Assembly through the adoption of its resolution 64/198, *invited* the President of the General Assembly to convene a high-level interactive dialogue (HLID) of the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly in New York on 22 March 2010, World Water Day, on the implementation of the abovementioned International Decade.

The primary goal of the International Decade for Action "Water for Life" is to promote efforts to fulfill international commitments made on water and water-related issues by 2015.

The Millennium Declaration commits Governments around the world to a clear agenda for combating poverty, hunger, illiteracy, disease, discrimination against women and environmental degradation. In the area of water resources and sanitation, Heads of State and Government pledged in 2000 to reduce by half the proportion of people who are unable to reach, or to afford, safe drinking water by 2015 and to stop the unsustainable exploitation of water resources.

Additional goals adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg in 2002, aim at developing integrated water resource

management and water efficiency plans by 2005 and at halving the proportion of people who do not have access to basic sanitation by 2015.

Since the commencement of the International Decade for Action "Water for Life" on 22 March 2005, and taking into account the call for a coordinated response, many member-states in collaboration with the United Nations system[1], undertook efforts that have resulted in significant increase of awareness, understanding and recognition of crucial importance of sustainable use and efficient management of freshwater resources and sanitation issues.

However, progress in many Member States lags behind the internationally agreed targets[2]. This is mainly due to the lack of resources, capacity and financing. Moreover, progress is jeopardized by multiple crises, such as the food, energy and economic and financial crises. Additional challenges such as population growth, increased pressure on ecosystems and climate change also impede the achievement of the envisaged goals. According to UN-

[1] In particular the United Nations Department on Economic and Social Affairs, UN-Water (the UN systems' coordinating mechanism on water issues and for the Water for Life Decade, hosting also the two UN-Water Programmes on the Water for Life Decade in Bonn and Zaragoza and UN-Water's World Water Assessment Programme), the United Nations Secretary-General Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation, the UN Inter-agency Network on Women and Gender Equality, WHO-UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme, Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council and other regional and sub-regional organizations. In addition many non-UN organizations, are contributing actively to achieving the goals of the Water for Life Decade, such as the World Water Council, International Water Management Institute, Wateraid, Global Water Partnership, International Water Association, Stockholm International Water Institute and other regional, national and local organizations.

[2] -UN-Water (2009), Third World Water Development Report, Water in a changing World; Earthscan, London
-UN-Water (2008a), Status Report on Integrated Water Resources Management and Water Efficiency Plans, Prepared for the 16th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development; available at: http://www.unwater.org/downloads/UNW_Status_Report_IWRM.pdf
-UN-Water (2008b) Roadmapping for Advancing Integrated Water Management (IWRM) Processes; available at: http://www.unwater.org/downloads/UNW_ROADMAPPING_IWRM.pdf
-WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme (2008) (2010 Report forthcoming in March 2010) http://www.wssinfo.org/en/welcome.html
-UN-Water (2008) The Global Annual Assessment on Sanitation and Drinking-Water (GLAAS) Pilot Report (2010 Report forthcoming in March 2010) http://www.unwater.org/downloads/glaas_2008_pilot_finalreport.pdf

Water, every sixth person *(more than 894 million people)* does not have access to safe drinking water, and, 2.5 billion people, including almost 1 billion children, do not have access to basic sanitation. More than 4 thousand children die every day from infectious diseases, resulting from shortage of safe drinking water and insanitary conditions. The First, Second and Third World Water Development Reports prepared by the UN experts in collaboration with other international organizations also indicate these problems and recommend ways to overcome difficulties connected to water supplies and sanitation.

The challenge of the International Decade for Action "Water for Life" is to focus attention on action-oriented activities and policies that ensure the long-term sustainable management of water resources, in terms of both quantity and quality, and include measures to improve sanitation. Achieving these goals will require sustained commitment, cooperation and investment on the part of all stakeholders up to 2015 and beyond.

Water-related impacts of climate change are being experienced in the form of more severe and more frequent droughts and floods. Higher average temperatures and changes in precipitation and temperature extremes are projected to affect the availability of water resources through changes in rainfall distribution, soil moisture, glacier and ice and snow melt, and river and groundwater flows. These factors are also expected to lead to further deterioration of water quality. Areas identified as the most vulnerable include the least developed countries, small island developing states and arid areas with fragile populations, economies and environments. In this respect, adaptation to the hydrological impacts of the climate change is of primary importance.

Some would argue that as demand for water resources approaches the limits of finite supply, potential conflicts on trans-boundary waters between nations seem imminent. Nevertheless, water resources also present an opportunity for cooperation rather than a source of conflict, and in that regard, reaching agreements on equitable and sustainable use and management of trans-boundary rivers, lakes and aquifers is a matter of great importance.

Midterm comprehensive review of the International Decade for Action "Water for Life" is an opportunity to take stock of the progress achieved in the implementation of internationally agreed water-related goals and

fulfillment of the international commitments on water and water related issues by 2015, and an opportunity to discuss measures to accelerate efforts toward timely and full achievement of these goals.

This high-level dialogue will provide an important input to the preparatory process of the High-Level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly, to be held on 20-22 September 2010 in New York. It will also contribute to the High-Level International Conference to be hosted by Tajikistan in June 2010.

A summary of the key documents on water related goals will provide the background for discussions in the High Level Interactive Dialogue and High Level International Conference.

OUTCOME:

Summary of the Chairman (President of the General Assembly). Inputs from the synthesis provided by the Moderators will be considered as part of the summary.

Taking into account the time constrains of the one day event, and in order to fully benefit from the Member States perspectives, a website related to the event will be launched, for which all Member States are invited to provide statements/ papers, on a voluntary basis, to serve as input for this Mid term Review of the International Decade as well as to the High Level Meeting in September 2010 and other related processes.

The website will be available at http://www.un.org/ga/president/64/thematic/water.shtml and Member State's inputs can be sent to pga64@un.org.

A possibility to have a publication with all these inputs at the end of the event, will serve as a contribution from the President of the General Assembly on the implementation of the Water Decade, recommendations for the MDG's Summit, and for other processes related to the water issues towards the 65th session.

FINAL PROGRAMME FOR HIGH LEVEL INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE ON WATER - INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR ACTION "WATER FOR LIFE: 2005-2015"

22 March 2010, Trusteeship Council Chamber.

09h00-09h40 Opening Segment
H.E. Ali Abdussalam Treki, President of the General Assembly.
H.E. Asha-Rose Migiro, Deputy Secretary General
H.E. Akil Ghaibullayevich Akilov, Prime Minister of Tajikistan.

09h45-10h00 Special Presentation by H.E. Sha Zhukang, Under-Secretary-General, Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

10h00-10h15 15 min. Video link to the celebrations on World Water Day in Nairobi (Executive Director of UNEP, Achim Steiner, and His Royal Highness, Prince Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands.)

10h15-10h45 Panel I: Water and Millennium Development Goals
Moderator: H.E. Jan Eliasson, President of the 60th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sweden.

Panelists:
H.E. Ms. Buyelwa Patience Sonjica, Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs, South Africa, Chair of the African Ministers Council on Water (AMCOW).
H.E. Ambassador Mohamed Mijarul Quayes, Foreign Secretary of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.
Richard A. Grainier, CEO Hestiun Environment.

10h45-11h30 Discussion

11h35-12h15 **Panel II: Water, climate change and disasters**
Moderator: H.E. Jorge Jurado M., Minister for Water of Ecuador.

Panelists:
H.E. Abdelkebir Zahoud, State Secretary for Water and Environment, Ministry of Energy, Mines, Water and Environment of Morocco.
Mr. Salvano Briceño, Director, United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), Geneva.
Barbara Frost, Executive Director of WaterAid, United Kingdom.

12h15-13h00 Discussion

15h00-15h45 **Panel III: Water and peace and security**
Moderator: H.E. Dr. Mahmoud ABU-ZEID, President of Arab Water Council and Former Minister of Water Resources and Irrigation of Egypt.

Panelists:
H.E. Mr. Joao Gomes Cravinho, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Portugal.
Mr. Jan Kubis, Under-Secreary-General and Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, Coordinator of the Regional Commissions.
Mr. Olcay Unver, Coordinator - UN-Water's World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP) (UNESCO).

15h45-16h30 Discussion

17h00 Closing Segment

18h15 Opening ceremony for the Photographic Exhibition hosted by the Permanent Mission of Tajikistan to the United Nations and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and UN-Water.

Summary of the High-Level Interactive Dialogue on Water, 22 March 2010

In keeping with the priorities of the sixty-fourth session as outlined in his letter of December 24, and at the request of Members States as contained in the resolution 64/198, the President of the General Assembly, H. E. Dr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, convened a High Level Interactive Dialogue on World Water Day, in New York on 22 March 2010, with the participation of representatives of governmental and non governmental organizations, civil society and private sector, focusing on the implementation of the International Decade for Action "Water for Life 2005-2015" and the realization of the internationally agreed water-related goals.

The dialogue, held at the Ministerial Level, comprised of an opening and closing segment and three interactive multi stakeholder panels on the following themes:

- Water and the Millennium Development Goals;
- Water and climate change and disasters;
- Water and peace and security.

Welcoming all participants, President Ali Abdussalam Treki, in his opening remarks, underlined the crucial significance of water as a common resource of the mankind, in the achievement of peace and development objectives, and the need for its efficient utilization and preservation for the good of the present and future generations. The High Level Dialogue presented a timely opportunity to review and speed up the full implementation of the water related goals. The President of the General Assembly invited H.E. Asha-Rose Migiro, United Nations Deputy Secretary-General and H.E. Akil Ghaibullayevich Akilov, Prime Minister of Tajikistan to address the opening segment. Mr. Sha Zhukang, Under-Secretary-General, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, made a special presentation.

The Prime Minister of Tajikistan also took the opportunity to invite Member States to the High Level International Conference on Mid-term Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the International Decade for Action "Water for Life" 2005-2015, to be held in June 8-10, 2010 in Dushanbe.

Through a video link with the celebrations of World Water Day from Nairobi, His Royal Highness, Prince Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands and H.E. Achim Steiner, Executive Director of United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) conveyed the results of the discussions in Nairobi to the High-Level Interactive Dialogue in New York.

The high level and expertise of Moderators and panelists and the overwhelming participation of Member States enriched the discussions and promoted a fruitful and interactive dialogue.

Panel I: "Water and Millennium Development Goals"

Moderator: H.E. Jan Eliasson, President of the 60th Session of the United Nations General Assembly and Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sweden.

Panelists:

H.E. Ms. Buyelwa Patience Sonjica, Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs, South Africa, Chair of the African Ministers Council on Water (AMCOW)

H.E. Ambassador Mohamed Mijarul Quayes, Foreign Secretary of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Mr. Richard A. Grainier, CEO Hestiun Environment.

Water is central to achieving each and every one of the Millennium Development Goals. There is no substitute for water. Access to water for drinking and productive activities, as well as access to sanitation services are a prerequisite for lifting people out of poverty, food security, for promoting gender equality, reducing child mortality and increasing maternal health. Water and sanitation relate directly to human development and dignity.

Sustainable management of water resources is vital for achieving economic growth and safeguarding ecosystems. Preventing pollution, treating polluted water and restoring ecosystems are vital to safeguard water quality. It is estimated that about 700 million people in 43 countries suffer from water scarcity, and by 2025, this figure could increase to more than 3 billion.

Almost one billion people do not have access to improved sources of safe drinking-water. 2.6 billion people do not have access to improved sanitation. It impacts health and productivity and is a key impediment in achieving the development potential of communities. Lack of financial resources and their allocation, as well as lack of means of implementation, especially in developing countries, have held back progress on providing access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.

Water resource management issues, as well as providing access to safe drinking water and sanitation services, present a global challenge, which must be addressed at the local, national, regional and international levels. It is vital to engage Governments, the private sector, NGOs, international organizations and all stakeholders to strengthen existing partnerships and create new partnerships where needed.

Women are often not adequately involved in the decision making processes on water, while it is recognized that they are often the most informed of local water sources.

Some Member States recognized the right to access to safe drinking water and sanitation as essential for securing an adequate standard of living, particularly since it was one of

the most fundamental prerequisites for survival, and which was recognized in some of their own Constitutions and legislations.

There are human rights obligations related to access to safe drinking water and sanitation, they being inextricably linked to the enjoyment of many human rights including the right to education, food, health, housing, life, physical security and the freedom from inhuman and degrading treatment.

Member States urged and encouraged the Ministers of Finance, of water and development gathering in Washington DC on 23rd April 2010, to take global action on the most basic of rights of the world's citizens – access to a safe toilet and clean water.

It is essential to turn words into action. A focus on sustainability is needed as well as a global commitment, accountability, financial resources and capacity building. Water resources and sanitation must be managed in a sustainable manner to allow human development, dignity, and economic growth as well as to safeguard water quality and ecosystems.

Member States underlined their engagement on water related issues by reflecting to the best practices and cooperation patterns adopted by them for the development and implementation of country-led water and sanitation plans with their partners, as well as the mechanisms for managing water resources.

A proposal was made to develop a global action plan on water in 2012 to reflect existing water and sanitation related goals, fill the gaps in the international water and sanitation agenda, highlight recent accomplishments and outline a roadmap to make progress on the water and sanitation agenda as a whole. While efforts under different initiatives were recognized, it was also noted that water can be best managed in an integral way through an inclusive organ like the United Nations.

The private sector was also active in proposals on finding ways of cleaning the water at source. There were new ways on identifying, researching and developing products and solutions that take into account environmental concerns and cost constraints.

2010 was signaled this is as a critical year halfway through the International Decade for Water and approaching the 10 year milestone towards the MDG targets.

Panel II: "Water, climate change and disasters"

Moderator: H.E. Mr. Jorge Jurado M., Minister for Water of Ecuador

Panelists:

H.E. Abdelkebir Zahoud, State Secretary for Water and Environment, Ministry of Energy, Mines, Water and Environment of Morocco.

Mr. Salvano Briceño, Director, United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), Geneva.

Barbara Frost, Executive Director of WaterAid, United Kingdom.

Water-related impacts of climate change are already being experienced, as more severe and frequent droughts and floods occur. Higher temperatures and changes in extreme weather conditions are projected to affect the availability and distribution of rainfall, snowmelt, river flows and groundwater, and further deteriorate water quality. It is mainly through water that climate change affects people's livelihoods and well-being.

As it was pointed out by the panelists, when disasters strike, a lack of drinking water and sanitation can become especially acute, such as in Haiti. With increasing floods, pit latrines overflow and pollute the wells. Women and children often suffer the most.

Building resilience and reducing vulnerabilities to extreme events is vital. Water related hazards can result from too much water causing floods and landslides or too little water causing droughts, forest fires and the loss of wetlands. It is however, the lack of resilience as well as poor infrastructure, urban planning and water management that mainly create the risks for the population.

Disaster risks threaten the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Reducing these risks to natural hazards can contribute greatly to climate change adaptation by implementing the Hyogo Framework for Action and available technical methods, as well as the capacity development tools for new legislation, multi-stakeholder national platforms, scientific and technical networks, community-based risk management and resilience programmes, along with risk (hazard and vulnerability) assessments, land use planning and environmental protection, awareness of appropriate construction codes, early warning systems, and risk education, training and awareness.

Water stress is already high, particularly in many developing countries; improved management is critical to ensure sustainable development. Managing increased variability

of water resources requires additional natural and constructed water storage, support frameworks for regional and international cooperation, south-south cooperation, and other forms of partnerships. Improving the management of water resource management systems will help countries to adapt to the challenges of climate change.

Transfer of technology, such as remote sensing devices, can provide the tools to forecast and better prepare for an impending disaster and thus help reduce vulnerabilities.

Agriculture as the main user of water is particularly affected by climate change. As most countries in the world still depend primarily on rain fed agriculture, changing rainfall patterns constitute a risk for food security and livelihoods. Improved water management and adapted irrigation technologies that increase the efficiency of water use are vital in many regions to adapt to climate change and reduce vulnerabilities.

There was a call for the international community to work inclusively and productively to achieve effective actions and leverage further commitments at the UNFCCC COP-17 in Mexico at the end of this year. A call was also made to fulfill the pledges made in relation to fast track financing in order to improve the resistance, especially by Small Islands Developing States, to rising sea levels, increased droughts and severe weather events.

Panel III: "Water and peace and security"

Moderator: Dr. Mahmoud ABU-ZEID, President of Arab Water Council and Former Minister of Water Resources and Irrigation of Egypt

Panelists:

H.E. Mr. Joao Gomes Cravinho, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Portugal.

Mr. Olcay Unver, Coordinator - UN-Water's World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP) (UNESCO)

Mr. Jan Kubis, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and Coordinator of the Regional Commissions.

History shows that cooperation, not conflict, is the most common response to transboundary water management issues. Past experiences confirm that it is possible for parties with divergent interests to use a common resource in a cooperative spirit. Many emphasized the fact that water management can be a catalyst for cooperation and that water is an essentially unifying element for cultures, politics and policies. However, population growth, changing consumption and production patterns and climate change create new challenges for the equitable and peaceful management of shared water resources.

Transboundary water management arrangements must be tailored to a given basin's characteristics and reflect a range of environmental, hydrological, political, economic, social and cultural circumstances. Moreover, cooperation on water management may serve as a catalyst for integration in other areas. Water resources policy must also be coordinated with other natural resources and sectoral policies, such as land-use management and spatial planning. It is critical to think "outside the waterbox" as one participant put it. Climate change will bring new challenges to water management negotiations.

Peace is a precondition for security, and at the same time a sense of security is essential for the sustainability of peace. A combination of both peace and security is necessary to

achieve stability, sustainable development and decent governance. None of these values should be taken for granted, as they require a constant effort of dialogue, mutual understanding, cooperation and negotiation.

There is an urgent need to cope with the existing legal frameworks and other negotiating tools such as the principles enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Law of Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses, adopted in 1997 by the General Assembly, the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes adopted in Helsinki in 1992, as well as resolutions of the General Assembly in the framework of the Commission of International Law on transboundary aquifers.

A proposal on the possible framework for agreements, which came from one of the panelists, comprised the need to establish a shared long-term vision of common goals and benefits; a definition of global strategy for the good management of water resources; a permanent effort of surveillance and control; and the active involvement of citizens in the process, since a participatory approach with the involvement of all relevant stakeholders has proved to be highly useful for the success of any transboundary water management strategy.

Exchange of data and joint or at least harmonized monitoring and assessment among all riparian countries represent the basis and a possible starting point for effective transboundary water management. The deterioration of monitoring networks to collect water data presents a challenge for its effective management.

Successful experiences have been registered in water related issues through South-South cooperation mechanisms among Asia, Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean countries, but there is a need to promote sub-regional, regional and international South-South partnerships including civil society, community groups, the private sector and academia. Public participation is fundamental to enhance transparency in the decision-making process.

There were special presentations from Member States on the national, regional and international initiatives where water issues have been addressed in a very timely manner. Member States from different regions informed on their proposals to host regional and international Conferences in order to address the emerging challenges of water and to promote water management.

This summary of the High Level Dialogue is intended to give Member States an account of the common challenges as well as opportunities in order to address the water related issues in the future. As the President of the General Assembly invited Member States to provide their points of view as well as the national, regional and international proposals on how to accomplish the goals, all presentations received have been uploaded to the website of the event. All Member States are also encouraged to refer to detailed presentations as well as the webcast of the World Water Day for more information.

THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

12 February 2010

Excellency,

In keeping with the priorities of the sixty-fourth session outlined in my letter of 24 December 2009, and at the request of Members States in the resolution 64/198, I would like to inform you that I am convening a high level interactive dialogue in New York on 22 March 2010, World Water Day, with the participation of representatives of governmental and non governmental organizations, civil societies and private sector, on the implementation of the International Decade for Action "Water for Life 2005-2015", and the realization of the internationally agreed water-related goals.

This dialogue at the Ministerial Level will be an important opportunity for Member States and other stakeholders to take stock of the progress achieved and the outstanding challenges for the full and timely implementation of the international commitments on water and related issues by 2015. By examining national and international efforts and best practices, Member States will be able to draw upon relevant information and trends, moving forward collectively towards implementation of the International Decade for Action.

The meeting will comprise three interactive multi stakeholder panels on the following:

Water and the Millennium Development Goals;
Water: climate change and disasters,
Water and peace and security.

Speakers will include prominent officials from various Member States, from the United Nations System, civil society representatives, working at various levels on the water issues.

All Permanent Representatives
And Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York

While expecting strong participation of Member States in the high level dialogue, I am aware of the time constrains of the one day event, and in order to fully benefit from the Member States perspectives, I will launch a website related to the event, for which I would like to invite all Member States to provide statements/ papers, on a voluntary basis, to serve as input for this Mid term Review of the International Decade as well as to the High Level Meeting in September 2010 and other related processes.

A Background paper and details about the panels, including biographies of the speakers will be communicated shortly.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Ali Abdussalam Treki

UNITED NATIONS NATIONS UNIES

NEW YORK

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The Office of the President of the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly, presents its compliments to the Permanent Missions and Permanent Observer Missions to the United Nations and has the honour to attach herewith the Concept Note and the draft programme for the High Level Interactive Dialogue on Water, to be held on World Water Day, Monday, 22 March 2010.

The Office of the President of the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Permanent Missions and Permanent Observer Missions to the United Nations, the assurances of its highest consideration.

New York, 4 March 2010.

All Permanent Missions and
Permanent Observer Missions
to the United Nations
New York

Muscat Declaration on Water
adopted by the First Ministerial Forum on Water of the Group of 77
Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, 23-25 February 2009

We, the Ministers in charge of water resources of the Member States of the Group of 77, met on the occasion of the first G77 Ministerial Forum on Water held in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman from 23 to 25 February 2009 and agreed on the following conclusions and recommendations:

1. The vital importance of water to sustain habitat and species' survival and human existence was recognized. The key importance of water resources and sanitation in achieving progress in all fronts of development in the South was reiterated as well as the fact that improving and promoting easy access to water and sanitation production, irrigation and hydro-energy production will lead to tremendous progress in the eradication of poverty and food insecurity, in accordance with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM).

2. Despite the great number of the institutions addressing the issues of water management and projects for access to water, progress in reaching the goals to halve the number of people without access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation is slow and uneven.

3. The main challenges namely the lack of capacity, finance and political will to implement the decisions and other actions recommended by numerous conferences and meetings were stressed. We reiterate that knowledge skills and technologies exist for managing water resources and providing water services for all in support of development.

4. Stress the importance of strengthening the networking of research and development institutions on water as well as data information, equipped by new technology in national and regional information centres on water resources which received unanimous support.

5. There is a need for countries of the South to explore new ways and means among themselves in order to tackle basic needs in terms of water resources. There is also a vital need to be active both in management and development of water resources and infrastructures in order to increase access to and effective use of safe drinking water and food security to developing countries' populations.

6. Encourage developing countries to work together to strengthen strategic partnerships so as to contribute to the sharing of knowledge, innovation and transfer of technology for better access to improved water resources and sanitation. Special efforts must be made to build and sustain scientific capacity

both at the individual and institutional levels; additional resources and partnerships are necessary to bring science based solutions to critical water challenges and social and economic needs and to secure water for developing countries. As part of the follow-up action, a number of steps should be pursued in terms of exchange of scientific and technological know-how among developing countries that could facilitate the sharing of information on science and technology in promoting water resources data, including:

- Knowledge of managing shared water resources;

- Enhancing capacities of Member States in negotiation skills and providing technical advisory services in the field;

- Promoting exchange of experiences, best practice and lessons learnt in implementing projects dealing with water resources, sanitation and environment management;

- Aligning research programme with regional and national priorities and emerging issues;

- Enhancing hydrologic and meteorological data collection capabilities and developing new data to improve assessments;

- Supporting research that improves fundamental scientific understanding of water resources management and sanitation;

- Identifying new sources of funding with capacities to scale up available resources and exchange of expertise;

- Identifying new approaches for additional funding for capacity-building and infrastructures for water resources, irrigation and sanitation;

- Providing a searchable interactive database of scientists, centres and services to facilitate and encourage information sharing and cooperation among partners;

- Promoting innovative technologies to address the negative impacts of water related disasters such as floods, droughts, cyclones, desertification, deterioration of river watersheds and the intrusion of sea water into the non-saline groundwater in coastal areas resulting from the rise of the sea surface caused by climate change and global warming;

7. Stress the need to take necessary actions, using science based programmes to provide clean water and improved sanitation to communities and households, including:

- Improvements in water treatment, reticulation, use and re-use, taking into account, where applicable, traditional methods and knowledge;

- Integrated water resources management approaches for sustainable use, including protection of groundwater resources, in addition to minimizing impact of pesticides and fertilizer use and industrial pollution;

- Innovative methods of harvesting, storing and recycling, including innovation to reduce costs of desalination, treatment and recycling of agricultural, industrial and waste water, as well as technologies for new and renewable sources of energy, hydro, solar, and wind were widely welcomed;

- Effective sanitation processes and effective use of primary, secondary and tertiary education on water and sanitation received overwhelming support.

8. Recognize the importance and tremendous potential that biotechnology and related irrigation hydropower industries offer for poverty eradication, technological progress, industrial development and health improvement.

9. Stress the importance to respond to public and ethical concerns in the application of some aspects of biotechnology and therefore, public awareness, regulations and legislation on biosafety are of great importance.

10. Agree to identify a networking of institutions and individuals who have made significant progress in the field of biotechnology, particularly in medical, agricultural, forestry, animal, fisheries, marine and environmental biotechnology.

11. Stress the importance to create a comprehensive water data and information centre among developing countries.

12. Encourage the adoption of international conventions to deal with cooperation on transboundary water sharing and conflict resolutions.

13. Call on the United Nations system to play an important role in the exchange of scientific and technological research in the field of water resources.

14. Acknowledge the tremendous progress and breakthrough made by some developing countries in vital areas of water management, water supply and sanitation as well as in dams, irrigation, hydro-energy and measures to alleviate the risks of climate change. We emphasize the need to learn from one another and share best practices and experiences among countries of the South.

15. Welcome the successful experiences registered through South-South cooperation mechanisms in some countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America and the

Caribbean and stressed the need to replicate these performances and achievements in other developing countries.

16. Encourage member countries to work together to strengthen strategic partnerships between countries of the South so as to contribute to the sharing of knowledge, innovation and transfer of technology for better access to safe water and sanitation.

17. Emphasize the importance and the supportive role of the United Nations system, particularly UNDP, FAO, UNESCO, UNIDO, WMO, WHO, UNEP, other United Nations Institutions, the regional Commissions and financial institutions in promoting cooperation in the exchange of scientific and technological know-how in sourcing, efficient management, preservation and sustainable use of water in developing countries. We express our appreciation to the role of other cooperating partners and stress the need to increase the capacity of these institutions to enhance their role in improving access to safe water for basic needs in developing countries.

18. Stress the fact that water is vital to sustain habitat and species' survival and human existence depends on safe and reliable water supply. In this context, we emphasize the key importance of water resources and sanitation in achieving progress in all fronts of development in the South and reiterate the fact that improving and promoting easy access to water and sanitation will lead to tremendous progress in the eradication of poverty and strengthen efficient management, preservation and sustainable use of water in developing countries including the achievement of the following:

    - Adoption of a policy of self-reliance for financing water projects and exert efforts to obtain financing for water projects from lending agencies, capital markets and grants;

    - Construction of dams in developing countries proved its efficiency in alleviating drought and floods impacts. Therefore, capacity-building and financial support are strongly recommended for that purpose;

    - Development and strengthening of human and institutional capacities for effective water management and service delivery and provide technical assistance through expertise to the member countries that need it;

    - Development of irrigation and transfer of low-cost technologies for safe water supply and treatment, in accordance with countries’ needs;

    - Acceleration of the provision of technical and financial assistance to member countries in preparing nationally owned integrated water resources management and water efficiency plans according to their needs;

- Enhancement of cooperation among riparian states taking into account their respective interest, through bilateral and multilateral arrangements;

- Support of more effective water demand and water resource management across all sectors, especially in the agricultural sector for food security and rural development, livelihood, security and poverty eradication;

- Exchange of experience on the application of good governance, water resources legislations, institutional reforms, transparency, and water ethics;

- Establishment of, within the Trust Fund for Science and Technology, a mechanism for South-South cooperation in the field of water;

- Establishment of a G-77 achievement award in the field of water;

- Sharing of South-South experiences on gender initiatives in water management;

- Sharing of South-South experiences and knowledge on institutional and legal reforms, harmonization of policy and regulatory frameworks, decentralization and water rights;

- Promotion of sub-regional, regional and international South-South partnerships including civil society, community groups, the private sector and academia;

- Enhancement of the dialogue mechanisms on water and sanitation under the UN framework, to encourage developed countries to address the concern of developing countries in meeting the requirements of the MDGs such as transfer of technology and other related issues;

- Promotion of groundwater sustainability in the developing world regions by using new technologies for artificial recharge;

- Desalinization is a strategic option for many developing countries and focusing on research in this field is essential to reduce its cost and to enable member countries to expand the use of this technology;

- Call for enforcing international laws so that water facilities and infrastructures are not targeted during wars and conflicts;

19. Stress the importance of food security, as well as the area under irrigation in developing countries which should be increased, including acceleration and modernization of existing irrigation by South-South sharing of experiences and

knowledge on the basis of low cost, water saving, crop yield increasing and knowledge relating to intensification and diversification and conjunctive use of surface and groundwater.

20. Agree to meet on an annual basis, as deemed necessary, in order to exchange views on strengthening South-South initiatives to improve their endeavors in water in relation to environment, livelihoods and poverty eradication. In this context, we welcome the generous offer by the Islamic Republic of Iran to host the next Ministerial Forum on Water. We convey the outcome of this Forum to the 5th World Water Forum to be held from 15 to 22 March 2009 in Istanbul, Turkey and to call on participants to take into account the conclusions and recommendations of this G-77 Ministerial Forum.

21. Express our sincere appreciation to the Sultanate of Oman for the warm welcome and generous hospitality extended to all participants. We express also our appreciation for the achievements made by the Sultanate of Oman in the field of water resources development and management.

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United Nations Nations Unies

THE PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

LE PRESIDENT DE L'ASSEMBLEE GENERALE

22 March 2010

Statement of H.E. Dr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, President of the 64th Session of the General Assembly, at the High-Level Interactive Dialogue on Water - The International Decade for Action, " Water for Life", 2005-2015

H.E. AKIL AKILOV, PRIME MINISTER OF TAJIKISTAN
MADAME DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL
EXCELLENCIES, MINISTERS AND SENIOR REPRESENTATIVES
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

I am pleased to welcome all of you today to this High Level Dialogue on Water. Your strong participation testifies to the importance of this meeting. Let me welcome in particular, H.E. Okil Okilov, Prime Minister of Tajikistan for his presence and for his country's keen interest in this issue.

Water is life. It is an essential component of our bodies. It is a precious and common resource of the entire mankind, and all living beings. How best we are able to utilize and preserve this resource, I believe, is a fundamental question that concerns our present and future generations. The challenges are serious. But the opportunities and the potential to work together to overcome them are no less significant. It is right that the General Assembly discusses this issue and help synergize our efforts to address it effectively in all its aspects.

Excellencies,

Mid way through the International Decade of Action "Water for Life" we need to take stock of where we stand with regard to the implementation of the commitments and objectives contained therein. Appreciable efforts have been undertaken over the years leading to increased awareness and recognition of the crucial importance of sustainable use and efficient management of fresh water resources as well as the sanitation issues. However, when one in six persons does not have access to safe drinking water, when 2.5 billion people do not have access to basic sanitation, and when thousands of children continue to die everyday from preventable water-borne diseases, we know, sadly, that we are lagging behind in the implementation of the commitments related to water and sanitation, contained in the MDGs and other agreed goals in the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development. We must be cognizant of its impact on the achievement of other targets related interalia to poverty, health and environmental sustainability- issues that we will also take up in the context of the MDGs Review Summit review Summit in September.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen

Water impacts on our lives and our environment on a much wider scale. Water is a crucial factor in the climate change debate. There is also a linkage to natural disasters and their aftermath. As we recently witnessed in Haiti and Chile, one of the most pressing challenges facing the affected populations was the supply of drinking water and proper sanitation facilities.

Water related disasters are themselves a puzzle: while on one hand we have floods, tropical storms, typhoons, hurricanes and tsunamis, on the other, drought afflicts various parts of the world. This exacerbates the vulnerability, particularly of many developing countries, including Small Island Developing States. This dialogue provides an opportunity to underscore the connection between water, climate change and disaster risk management and the proactive engagement of all stakeholders to cope with these challenges.

With increased demand for water and dwindling supply, the scramble for water resources is becoming more evident. When it is an issue of survival, trans-boundary waters might become a source of potential conflicts. Nevertheless, water resources also present an opportunity for cooperation, and it is this aspect that we need to promote through dialogue and understanding, underpinning equitable and sustainable use and management of trans-boundary rivers, lakes and aquifers.

I hope this dialogue will provide a rich perspective on all these issues and will contribute to our efforts for global solutions and implementation of water related goals

I am pleased to announce that at 10:00 we will have a Video link to the celebrations on World Water Day in Nairobi from where the Executive Director of UNEP, Achim Steiner, and His Royal Highness, Prince Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands, will join us.

I want to express my thanks to all Member States for their support, as well as the United Nations Development programme, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, through UN Water, Friends of the United Nations, civil society and private sector, among other stakeholders that have contributed to this endeavor.

We have with us, distinguished personalities, as moderators and panelists, and I would like to welcome and thank them all for their participation.

I wish you a most fruitful and substantive discussion.

STATEMENT

by

H. E. Mr. Akil Akilov,

Prime-Minister of the Republic of Tajikistan

at

High-level Dialogue of the 64th session of the General Assembly

on the Implementation of the International Decade for Action

"Water for Life, 2005-2015"

and realization of the internationally agreed water-related goals

New York, 22 March 2010

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Mr. President,
Mr. Under-Secretary-General,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan I would like to express our sincere appreciation to the President of the General Assembly, H. E. Dr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, for convening the *High Level Interactive Dialogue on the Implementation of the International Decade for Action "Water for life" 2005-2015*. The dialogue coincides with the World Water Day and is one of the two important events envisaged by the General Assembly resolution entitled "*The Mid-Term Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the International Decade for Action "Water for Life" 2005-2015*", which was adopted by consensus at the initiative of Tajikistan and 37 co-sponsor delegations. I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to thank all delegations for support and assistance rendered during the negotiations and finalizing the text of the resolution.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are crossing the mid-point of the International Decade that started exactly five years ago today. I believe that it is timely to recall the message of the then Secretary-General of the UN, Mr. Kofi Annan, at the launch of the Decade in 2005.

Quote

*"**Water is essential for life**... This is an urgent matter of human development, and human dignity. Together, we can provide safe, clean water to all the world's people. The world's water resources are our lifeline for survival, and for sustainable development in the 21-st century. Together, we must manage them better."*

End of Quote

Today, five years after the launch of the Decade, this message is still relevant and urgent. We should ask ourselves whether we are on track to achieve timely and fully the goals and targets of the Decade. How many people have had access to safe drinking water and sanitation, how many children were saved from water-borne diseases, how many women and girls have been freed from the daily chore of hauling water?

For sure, the answers to these questions are positive. We achieved some progress on a number of the targets, but the progress on some of them is still lagging at most. Decrease in freshwater resources caused by the climate change may create additional difficulties on the way to the achievement of water-related internationally-agreed development goals. The problem may aggravate the situation, particularly, in arid and semiarid regions that experience the worst water stress. Effective water management has become a pressing issue for the international community.

Drinking water shortage in many countries and regions of the world, deterioration of water quality, degradation of water sources, excessive population upsurge, impact of global climate change and other negative consequences over the past years have considerably exacerbated the existing water problems.

I am confident that the three Round-tables of the High-level Dialogue will provide a solid foundation for interactive discussions on these and other aspects of the UN Water agenda. As the initiator of the International Year of Freshwater and the International Decade for Action "Water for Life" Tajikistan considers it vital to accelerate the implementation of the UN Water Agenda. We believe successful realization of the Decade would not only contribute to the provision of access to safe drinking water and sanitation, but also would facilitate the settlement of a number of other crucial problems, including health, in particular, health of children and mothers, food and energy security, environment, climate change and disaster risk reduction.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Over the independence period, the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan has paid a special attention to the water issue both at the international, regional and national levels. It is known, that Tajikistan is rich in water resources. More than 800 billion km^3 of freshwater are accumulated in the glaciers and lakes of the country. About 60 billion km^3 are accumulated in the river basins that accounts for more than 56% of the water potential of Central Asia. But Tajikistan enjoys only 15% of its rivers' stream, while the rest part is flown to the downstream countries, mainly for irrigation. Moreover, about 40% of the people in the country have no access to safe drinking water, and it is the most pressing issue in rural areas. A number of projects on improvement of water access are being implemented with the donors' assistance. These targets are incorporated as an integral part to the National Development Strategy and the Poverty Reduction Strategy.

Providing access to energy, particularly during the autumn and winter periods, is another urgent problem, which puts the country on the edge of energy crisis. Tajikistan can compensate the energy shortage only by developing renewable energy sources, in particular, by developing its hydroelectric potential that estimates at 527 billion kilowatt/hour a year. Today we use only 3% of this potential. Therefore, hydropower development is an issue of top priority for the Government that is striving for providing access to affordable energy and better living standards for its population.

A number of small, medium and large hydropower plants are under construction. We believe that development of renewable energy, including hydropower, is of vital importance not only for Tajikistan, but also for the whole region.

Water related natural disasters are the other pressing issue the country is faced with. Annually, hardly predictable natural disasters cause severe economic losses, human casualties and deprive families of their shelter. It is not infrequent when the whole settlements with socio-economic infrastructure (schools, hospitals, roads, administrative facilities) are washed down or destroyed by landslides.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The consequences of irrational and unsustainable use of water resources are well known. In the Central Asian states such attitude towards water resources caused degradation of the Aral Sea, which once was the largest freshwater source in the world. It is well known that it was irrigation in the downstream countries that mainly caused the Aral Sea degradation. It is suffice to say that in the middle of the last century the total volume of the Aral Sea exceeded one thousand km^3, and the total area of the irrigated land in the region amounted to 2.8 million hectares. By the end of the last century the total volume of water in the Aral Sea decreased by 10 times. Currently, it accounts for about 98 km^3, and there are 9 million hectares of irrigated land in the region.

Moreover, due to irrational and inefficient water resource management and low efficiency of the irrigation systems the water consumption in the region exceeds the international norms by several times, the water outflow into the Aral Sea has considerably decreased. In addition to that, due to deterioration of the currently irrigated lands, almost 40% of the lands suffer from salinization.

The Aral Sea crisis can be addressed to through the implementation of specific measures on water saving, through the rehabilitation of the irrigation systems, and by improving the agricultural policy with a focus on less water-consuming crops that, in its turn, could facilitate food security in the region.

The excessive population growth in the countries of Central Asian from 22 million in 1956 to the current 64 million people has resulted in increased water consumption. At the same time, due to climate change, the area of the glaciers and snow caps, which are the major water source in the region, has considerably decreased which resulted in the diminished water flow in the rivers. For this reason, our countries must revise their water consumption programs and

strategies especially those in agriculture, and to take concerted actions that will contribute to sustainable development of the entire region and its each country. As for Tajikistan, our country has already decreased by 40% the land allocated for cotton cultivation, and replaced cotton by less water consuming crops.

We believe that the establishment of a mutually acceptable mechanism of water and power resources management in the region that takes into account the interests of both the upstream countries rich in water resources, and the downstream countries rich in hydrocarbon resources, could contribute to mutually beneficial long-term cooperation among the countries and their sustainable development.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Over the last years all efforts at the national, regional and global levels have been undermined by the global financial and economic, food and energy crises, and climate change. Now and then these challenges nullify achieved progress, which is still unsustainable. I believe only efficient and coordinated actions of the countries, civil society, private sector and other stakeholders can accelerate progress in achieving the goals during the second half of the Water Decade.

Given the aggravated water crisis around the world, population upsurge and impact of global climate change, the international community should take concrete measures aimed at a fair and integrated water resources management to meet the needs of all people, economic development of the countries and protection of environment.

To this end, the President of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon put forward a proposal to declare the year 2012 as the International year of Water Diplomacy and to take further coordinated measures towards a fair and rational water resources management at the national, regional and international levels.

I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to convey the invitation to the distinguished representatives of the United Nations, governments, international and regional organizations, civil society and business communities to participate in the High-level International Conference on Mid-term Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the International Decade for Action "Water for Life", 2005-2015, to be held in June 8-10, 2010 in Dushanbe. As it is envisaged by the General Assembly resolution, the Conference will be the next step toward a comprehensive review of the implementation of the Decade. We believe it will provide an opportunity for stock taking of the progress achieved in the implementation of the internationally agreed water-related goals and fulfillment of the commitments, as well as for discussing and developing new measures for strengthening efforts towards the timely and full achievement of the goals.

Thank you for attention.

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Statement by
MR. SHA ZUKANG
UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS
TO THE HIGH-LEVEL INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE ON WATER
OF THE 64th SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
New York, 22 March 2010

Mr. President,

Madame Deputy Secretary-General,

Prime Minister Oqil Oqilov,

Excellencies,

I am honoured to join this high-level interactive dialogue on water.

I spent my childhood in a rural village in China. I knew as a small boy that water is for life – my family depended on river water to grow paddy rice; I took buffalos, ducks to water ponds. Water gave my family our livelihood.

It still does today – thanks in part to integrated water resource management, rural livelihoods in China have improved by leaps and bounds in recent decades.

But we should never take water for granted. Challenges remain in sustainable water resources management.

From Barbados to China, from Ethiopia to Australia, nations, both developed and developing, have witnessed the devastating effects of drought in recent years. Asking the farmers who have seen the rice field go dry, the livestock decimated by shortage of water, you will truly understand why water is for life.

Water resources play a central role in reaching all economic, social and environmental goals and targets. Without water, there will be no prospects for achieving all MDGs. Sound water management must emerge as a strategic solution to development challenges.

Promoting integrated water resources management must become a central focus of UN system activities in implementing the "Water for Life" Decade.

The Department of Economic and Social Affairs, which I head, is proud to serve as the Secretariat of UN-Water, an interagency coordination mechanism bringing together 27 entities of the entire UN system.

UN-Water provides a single entry point to the United Nations system in this important field.

Excellencies,

Water resources issues are multi-faceted and there is no single actor that can claim to have a mandate or expertise to cover all aspects.

This is not unique to the UN system; governments, too, are facing the same reality. Different ministries carry portfolios for water, as it relates to agriculture, commerce, drinking water and sanitation, energy, health, and industrial development.

Within the UN system, we have tapped into our specialized expertise and resources to support member States in implementing the objectives of the Decade.

As part of the actions taken for the "Water for Life" Decade, UNDP and the World Bank have undertaken joint initiatives in water and sanitation. The UNDP Water Governance Programme and the World Bank's Water and Sanitation Programme are working together to develop rural and urban initiatives in water supply and sanitation.

My Department provides policy advice at the national level, through its technical advisory services to developing countries, in particular LDCs and SIDS, for strengthening institutional capacity to develop integrated water resources management and water efficiency plans.

UN-Water, which includes the secretariats of all five regional commissions as members, also encourages regional inter-agency networking and action in support of member States.

During the Water for Life Decade, UN-Water/Africa focus on monitoring progress in implementing regional and global initiatives and on improving access to information on African water resources. The UN-Water/Africa group has set up the African Water Information Clearing House, a continent-wide information system backed up by sub-regional networks of water and geo-information specialists and institutions.

Similar initiatives have taken place in other regions. The Economic Commission for Europe has focused on research and capacity-building in flood management and protection of water-related ecosystems.

The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean conducts research and disseminates information on the economic and institutional aspects of water resources management. It also provides advice on water legislation and regulation of water utilities.

As part of its activities related to the "Water for Life" Decade, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific has initiated programmes focusing on the application of strategic planning in integrated water resources management and on integrating disaster risk management into water resources management.

The Economic Commission for Western Asia has initiated several activities that address the specific water supply challenges in the region, in particular in building capacity for sound management of shared water resources.

Excellencies,

United Nations Funds and Programmes, as well as specialized agencies, have actively participated in the implementation of the "Water for Life" Decade.

Under the umbrella of UN-Water, WHO and UNICEF actively contribute to global water supply and sanitation monitoring through the Joint Monitoring Programme.

UNEP, among other activities, has strengthened the implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities.

UNESCO's International Hydrological Programme has focused on minimizing risks to water resources systems, by improving the scientific and technological basis for the sound management of water resources, including the protection of the environment.

UN-Habitat has adopted a programmatic approach that allows donors to contribute funds to dedicated facilities, such as the Water and Sanitation Trust Fund, as well as the Water for Cities programmes.

Excellencies,

I have given only a snapshot of UN system activities in support of the Decade. You will certainly learn more details from my colleagues in the following panel discussions.

As member States implement the second half of the International Decade, "Water for Life" 2005-2015, UN-Water and its 27 member entities look forward to enhancing our support and contributions. And we'll do so in a coherent and coordinated manner, with UN system acting as One and delivering as One.

Thank you.

United Nations Nations Unies

THE PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

LE PRESIDENT DE L'ASSEMBLEE GENERALE

22 March 2010

Statement of H.E. Dr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, President of the 64th Session of the General Assembly, at the Closing of the High-Level Interactive Dialogue on Water - The International Decade for Action, " Water for Life", 2005-2015

As we conclude this High Level Interactive Dialogue on Water, I would like to thank the entire membership and all other stakeholders for their strong and active participation in the discussions. My special appreciation goes to the panelists, who with their experience and expertise, have contributed immensely to the success of today's event. I would also like to thank our colleagues from Nairobi for sharing important perspectives with us this morning. Let me say that all the interventions will be reflected in a detailed Chairman's summary which will be issued in the next few days. My special thanks to all those countries and major groups that have submitted their statements and presentations. All of these important inputs, along with the summary, will be posted on the website of this event.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, our discussions today reaffirmed the following points:

1. Water is central to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Access to water for drinking and productive activities, as well as access to sanitation services, is a prerequisite for lifting people out of poverty, for promoting gender equality, reducing child mortality and increasing maternal health. Statistics show that much more needs to be done to meet the goals and to fulfill our promises to the people of the world.

2. Managing water resources sustainably is vital to achieve economic growth and safeguard ecosystems.

3. Water-related climate change impacts are already evident as more severe and frequent droughts and floods conditions are experienced. Improving the water resource management systems will help countries to adapt to the challenges of climate change. Managing increased variability of water resources requires additional natural and constructed water storage.

4. History shows that cooperation, not conflict, is the most common response to transboundary water management issues. Past experiences confirm that it is possible for parties with divergent interests to use a common resource in a cooperative spirit.

5. The global challenge that we are facing must be addressed through global responsibility – from local to national, regional and international levels. We need to engage Governments, the private sector, NGOs and international organizations and all stakeholders to strengthen existing partnerships and create new partnerships where needed.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, we need concerted and sustained action for full and timely implementation of the internationally agreed water related goals. I strongly believe that this High Level Dialogue will put the water issue back on top of our international agenda and that the General Assembly will lead our collective efforts by continuing to provide the political momentum to this endeavour.

A detailed summary of today's High Level Dialogue will form an important input for the High Level International Conference in Dushanbe in June and the MDG Review Summit in September, as well as other processes.

Let me conclude by again expressing our thanks to all Member States, the Deputy Secretary General, the Prime Minister of Tajikistan, as well as the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, through UN-Water, the Friends of the United Nations, Civil Society and Private Sector, among other stakeholders, for their support and active contribution. My appreciation also to the conference management services and the interpreters who have worked tirelessly for the success of this meeting.

Permanent Mission of Afghanistan to the United Nations

Statement
By
Enayet Madani
Counsellor
Permanent Mission of Afghanistan to the United Nations
At the 64th Session of UN General Assembly

High-level Interactive Dialogue on Water
International Decade "Water for Life 2005-2015"

New York, 22 March 2010

Mr. President,

I thank H.E. Mr. Abdussalam Terki, the President of General Assembly for convening this important meeting. I take this opportunity to commend the brotherly Government of the Republic of Tajikistan for its initiative and efforts to bring this issue of significant importance to the UN General Assembly's attention. We are confident that the High-level Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of International Decade for Action "Water for Life" which will be hosted by the Government of Tajikistan in June 2010 in Dushanbe will be a success.

This year, the fifth World Water Day, will mark the mid-point in a decade of international action for Water. The theme for 2010 will be "Water Quality for a Healthy World". Since water is a major issue and this year's theme is of particular importance for Afghanistan, therefore, my delegation will actively participate in the discussions.

Mr. President,

Afghanistan is currently ranked 174 among 176 nations for poverty on the Human Development Index for 2007, a number considerably lower than its neighboring countries.

One of the main concerns to the nation is the rate of infant and child mortality. More than one million children die each year in Afghanistan, 22 percent of whom die from water borne diseases due to contaminated drinking water and poor sanitation.

The lack of access to safe drinking water and sanitation is a major cause of high infant mortality figures and will continue to plague development in Afghanistan. The pace of

improvement is too slow. In 2008 only 23% of the population had access to safe drinking water.

According to the statistics, only 21% of the population in urban areas and 1% of the rural population has access to proper and safe sanitation, totaling only 5% of the population. If these numbers do not improve, the percentage of the population with access to safe drinking water will decline instead of improving. Sanitation must also be addressed at the same time as drinking water.

Mr. President,

To improve the situation, Afghanistan has set a goal that 50% of the population should have access to safe drinking water before 2020 This is a modest goal, to be sure, but one that the nation cannot be sure of achieving at present. Through improved access to safe drinking water and improved health conditions the Government of Afghanistan is aiming to reduce the child mortality rate by 50% and the infant mortality rate by two-thirds.

Our national vision for the water sector is to assist in the reduction of poverty through sustainable development in the sector that will help to provide social and economic well-being. Urban water supply for large cities is one of the main development goals for the Afghan Government. Priorities are: Kabul water supply and sanitation; Maza-i-sharif water supply; Kunduz Water supply; and Aibak (Samangan) water supply systems.

As part of a mid to long range strategy, studies are being completed that have identified an investment scheme for the Sahtoot Reservoir that can offer a mid range solution that could supply Kabul with drinking water for nearly 2.2 million Kabul residents. Keeping with the phased strategy, the Gulbahar Storage Dam on the Punjshir River has been envisioned to serve the long-terms water supply needs of the greater Kabul.

Mr. President,

The water resources of modern Afghanistan are paradoxical. Afghanistan abounds with water, and yet the old saying “water, water everywhere, but not a drop to drink” fits. However, the emerging development model proves that, in the absence of necessary and sufficient infrastructure to regulate water use when and where needed, the result will continue to be felt in economic and human losses throughout Afghanistan.

Afghanistan now faces a water supply crisis in its major cities of Kabul, Mazar- i-Sharif, Kandahar, Kunduz, Jalalabad and Samangan. Groundwater withdrawal is rapidly depleting current supplies and without adequate sanitation the groundwater is becoming increasingly polluted. Development of renewable surface water supplies with appropriate treatment to meet the urban demand is critically needed. The Water Sector Ministries have developed mid-term and long-term projects to meet this need but currently there is inadequate donor support for the development of drinking water and sanitation infrastructures.

Additionally, three decades of conflict have prevented the optimal sustainable development of water resources of Afghanistan. Fluctuations in seasonal flow and frequent cycles of droughts and floods have often caused great economic and social upheaval. Only a comprehensive strategy for the Water Sector can provide the solutions needed.

Mr. President,

In the past seven years, Afghanistan, in partnership with its international friends, has tried to overcome enormous challenges in building a platform of good governance while fostering transparency, and accountability. This alliance has worked diligently to build the capacity of those who work in the sector and who are essential to its success. The ingredients of intelligent investment and sustainable development of our resources include both water and the people who work in this vital sector.

We managed to establish a structure for water governance Afghanistan. The 2009 Water Law provides for river basin integrated water resource management. The inter-ministerial Supreme Council on Water Affairs Management (SWAM) and the Technical Secretariat provide a forum for regular discussion, coordination and prioritization of water sector development projects. The Herat and Andkhoi water supply systems are examples of the ability of the Afghan People and the Government to implement and manage successful municipal water supplies.

Afghanistan needs the assistance of the donor community and international agencies to build on these successes to improve water quality for a healthier Afghanistan.

The Government of Afghanistan hopes that in the next few years, working in consultation and partnership with the international donor community, that a quantum leap in the level of investment in the Water Sector will be possible. The Afghan Government and its related Ministries eagerly look to this investment, which will enable the nation to gradual transition into having the ability to manage water resources in an integrated fashion. The ability to evolve and elevate this partnership within the Water Sector will be critical to Afghanistan’s efforts to reach the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

Thank you.

MISIÓN DE ARGENTINA

Intervención
Dialogo Interactivo de Alto Nivel sobre Agua
22 de marzo

Quisiera agradecer en primer lugar al Presidente de la Asamblea General y a su equipo por la organización de este Diálogo de Alto Nivel sobre el Agua, a la Secretaría por los documentos de base que ha elaborado y a los panelistas por sus excelentes presentaciones que invitan a la reflexión.

Señor Presidente, mi Gobierno entiende las cuestiones que se plantean desde la perspectiva del desarrollo sostenible y la erradicación de la pobreza y, consecuentemente, aspira a elevar la comprensión sobre la profunda interrelación entre el cambio climático, los desastres y el ciclo del agua a fin de tomar acciones concretas y decisivas a todos los niveles. El aumento de la temperatura media del planeta producto del efecto invernadero conlleva a diversas consecuencias, todas ellas relacionadas a la variación en intensidad y frecuencia de eventos vinculados al ciclo del agua, dentro de un patrón común que es la ruptura del equilibrio del ciclo del recurso hídrico en sus diversos estados (sólido, liquido o gaseoso).

Desde nuestro enfoque, la comprensión de los procesos de adaptación es esencial para contribuir a determinar los impactos y la vulnerabilidad al cambio climático y, por tanto, la estimación de los riesgos y de los costos asociados. Si bien ha habido considerables progresos y la teoría de los gases de efecto invernadero se encuentra consolidada y es el elemento central de todos los estudios científicos y las políticas vinculadas a la mitigación, no se observa tan claramente en el desarrollo científico y político que la adaptación al cambio climático se comprenda en todas sus complejas dimensiones. Es precisa y principalmente el agua y su ciclo, el foco de toda acción vinculada al desarrollo de estrategias de adaptación. Entender esa relación nos permitirá focalizarnos en profundizar acciones de investigación y desarrollo vinculadas el ciclo del recurso hídrico como así también las herramientas de conocimiento, monitoreo y de políticas públicas que permitan implementar acciones eficientes en el proceso de adaptación.

Mientras que el alcance y los intereses específicos pueden diferir, la adaptación al cambio climático y la reducción del riesgo de desastres tiene objetivos muy similares pues ambos se enfocan en la reducción de la vulnerabilidad de las poblaciones ante las amenazas mejorando los métodos para anticipar, resistir, hacer frente a los impactos y recuperarse ante los mismos. Tanto la adaptación como la reducción del riesgo buscan construir resiliencia en el contexto del desarrollo sustentable.

Por ello, entendemos que la adaptación al cambio climático requiere rediseñar los conceptos de desarrollo, y las prácticas sociales y económicas para responder efectivamente a nuevos o anticipados cambios ambientales. De la

misma forma, la reducción del riesgo de desastres busca influenciar los procesos de toma de decisiones en función del desarrollo y proteger las aspiraciones de desarrollo de riesgos relacionados con el ambiente. La efectividad de ambos enfoques será limitado si no son concebidos en el contexto más amplio del desarrollo sustentable.

Por ello, debe existir una fluida comunicación y colaboración entre los tomadores de decisiones, expertos e investigadores de las comunidades de adaptación al cambio climático y de reducción del riesgo de desastre para asegurar efectivamente un enfoque comprensivo de la gestión del riesgo en el contexto del desarrollo a nivel de gobierno local, nacional e internacional. Una colaboración estrecha es particularmente crítica en este momento mientras se negocia el futuro del régimen climático post-2012.

Finalmente, quisiera destacar que la Nota de la Secretaría A/64/692, al referirse a los instrumentos que proveen el necesario marco jurídico para la cooperación internacional en materia de recursos hídricos, destaca entre otros al Proyecto de Artículos sobre el Derecho de los Acuíferos Transfronterizos elaborado por la Comisión de Derecho Internacional , que ha sido materia de la Resolución de la Asamblea General A/RES/63/124 (15 enero 2009). La Argentina considera que ese Proyecto es un aporte oportuno y valioso a la codificación y desarrollo progresivo del derecho internacional en la materia, especialmente en cuanto reafirma la soberanía de los respectivos Estados sobre la parte del acuífero transfronterizo situada dentro de su territorio y enuncia los principios que deben guiar la cooperación para su utilización equitativa y razonable, la prevención del daño y la gestión responsable del recurso, el monitoreo y el intercambio de información, la protección contra la contaminación y los demás aspectos a especificar en los acuerdos, arreglos y mecanismos que para cada acuífero coordinen los Estados involucrados, en ejercicio de sus derechos y responsabilidades, .

Canada

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STATEMENT BY

H.E. MR. HENRI-PAUL NORMANDIN
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF CANADA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

ON BEHALF OF AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND AND CANADA

AT THE 64TH SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE ON WATER – INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR ACTION, "WATER FOR LIFE, 2005-2015"

NEW YORK, 22 MARCH 2010

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DÉCLARATION DE

S.E. M. HENRI-PAUL NORMANDIN
REPRÉSENTANT PERMANENT ADJOINT
DU CANADA AUPRÈS DES NATIONS UNIES

AU NOM DE L'AUSTRALIE, LA NOUVELLE-ZÉLANDE ET LE CANADA

LORS DE LA 64E SESSION DE
L'ASSEMBLÉE GÉNÉRALE DES NATIONS UNIES

DIALOGUE INTERACTIF SUR L'EAU — DÉCENNIE INTERNATIONALE D'ACTION SUR LE THÈME "L'EAU, SOURCE DE VIE" (2005-2015)

NEW YORK, LE 22 MARS 2010

Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations • Mission permanente du Canada auprès des Nations Unies
885 Second Avenue, 14th Floor • New York, N.Y. 10017 • Telephone (212) 848-1100 • Facsimile (212) 848-1195
http://www.un.int/canada
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Mr. President,

Thank you for convening this interactive dialogue on the occasion of World Water Day. I have the privilege of speaking today on behalf of Australia, New Zealand, and Canada.

We would like to commend the Government of Tajikistan for its efforts to date in bringing this important issue to the attention of the General Assembly, and for its offer to host, in June 2010, a high-level international conference on the midterm comprehensive review of the implementation of the International Decade for Action, "Water for Life", 2005-2015.

We find ourselves now at the midpoint of the 2005-2015 International Decade for Action on "Water for Life". This is an opportune time to review national and international efforts and best practices related to fulfilling international commitments made on water and water-related issues.

We look forward to the multi-stakeholder panels today, which will address key challenges that lie ahead of us, as well as measures to accelerate efforts toward timely achievement of goals.

Mr. President,

Sound water resources management and development are vital for attainment of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally-agreed development targets. Clean water and adequate sanitation are essential to good health worldwide, and particularly in developing countries.

While progress has been achieved towards halving the proportion of people without access to clean water, a number of countries face an uphill battle. 884 million people worldwide still rely on unimproved water sources.

That is why Australia, New Zealand, and Canada are helping the poorest in developing countries gain access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation through improved country and regional water management planning, sustainable watershed management practices, and clean water and sanitation projects. Between 2006 and 2009, Canada invested over 200 million dollars towards water supply and sanitation efforts in various regions of the world. The Australian Government has committed 300 million dollars from 2008-2011 to improve the health and quality of life of poor and vulnerable people through facilitating increased access to safe water and basic sanitation, promoting hygiene behaviour change and supporting the development of sustainable water and sanitation services.

The consequences of climate change will put further strain on effective water resources management - on the availability of water in some regions, while contributing to flooding in other regions. In the absence of effective adaptation measures to cope with these

changes, the effects of climate change on water resources will have further negative impacts on food security and health – particularly in least developed countries.

A healthy and resilient environment is essential for supporting populations and maintaining stable living conditions. This can only be achieved through the sustainable management of resources, including water.

Via our development assistance efforts, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada are helping developing countries to promote sustainable natural resource management, particularly in relation to land management, integrated water resource management and global climate change.

Canada serves as host of the UN Environment Programme's Global Environment Monitoring System Water Programme, which, over the past 30 years, has provided state-of-the-art water assessments and has developed decision-support tools for water managers and policy makers around the globe. Australia has undertaken extensive reform in water resources management in order to ensure sustainable water use now and in the future. Australia's experiences hold valuable lessons for other nations facing similar issues in managing their water resources.

Mr. President,

CANZ looks forward to participating in discussions in order to meet internationally-agreed water goals and in the lead up to the June 2010 Conference, hosted by Tajikistan. CANZ wishes to reinforce our support for these important initiatives.

Thank you.

Monsieur le Président,

Nous vous remercions d'avoir organisé ce dialogue interactif à l'occasion de la Journée mondiale de l'eau. J'ai le privilège de prendre la parole aujourd'hui au nom de l'Australie, de la Nouvelle-Zélande et du Canada.

Nous tenons à féliciter le gouvernement du Tadjikistan de s'être appliqué jusqu'à maintenant à saisir l'Assemblée générale de cette importante question et d'avoir offert d'accueillir en juin 2010 une conférence internationale de haut niveau sur l'examen approfondi à mi-parcours de l'exécution de la Décennie internationale d'action L'eau, « Source de vie », de 2005 à 2015.

Nous nous trouvons maintenant à mi-chemin de la Décennie internationale d'action « L'eau, Source de vie ». Le moment est donc opportun d'examiner les mesures prises aux niveaux national et international dans ce domaine et les pratiques exemplaires à suivre pour l'exécution des engagements internationaux relatifs à l'eau et à des questions connexes.

Nous suivrons avec intérêt l'activité des groupes multipartites qui se pencheront aujourd'hui sur les principaux obstacles à surmonter et sur les mesures à prendre pour accélérer les travaux de manière à atteindre les objectifs dans les délais.

Monsieur le Président,

Il est essentiel de bien gérer et exploiter les ressources en eau pour atteindre les objectifs du Millénaire pour le développement et les autres repères adoptés à l'échelle internationale dans ce domaine. La qualité de l'eau potable et de l'assainissement est essentielle à la santé dans le monde et plus particulièrement dans les pays en développement.

Bien que des progrès aient été accomplis par rapport à l'objectif consistant à diminuer de moitié le nombre de personnes privées d'eau saine, plusieurs pays ont fort à faire pour y arriver. À l'échelle mondiale, 884 millions de personnes ne disposent encore que d'une eau non traitée.

C'est pourquoi l'Australie, la Nouvelle-Zélande et le Canada aident les populations les plus pauvres des pays en développement à obtenir l'accès à une eau potable saine et à des services d'assainissement de base grâce à une meilleure planification de la gestion de l'eau à l'échelle des pays et des régions, à des pratiques durables de gestion des bassins versants, et à des projets d'approvisionnement en eau potable et d'assainissement. Entre 2006 et 2009, le Canada a consacré plus de 200 millions de dollars à ces projets dans diverses régions du monde. Le gouvernement australien a réservé 300 millions de dollars qui sont consacrés de 2008 à 2011 à l'amélioration de la santé et de la qualité de vie des pauvres et des personnes vulnérables grâce à un meilleur accès à une eau saine et à des services d'assainissement, à la promotion de

meilleurs habitudes d'hygiène et au financement de la mise sur pied de services d'eau et d'assainissement durables.

Les conséquences des changements climatiques vont compliquer encore davantage la gestion efficace des ressources en eau, réduisant la disponibilité de l'eau dans certaines régions tout en provoquant des inondations dans d'autres. Faute de mesures efficaces d'adaptation, les effets des changements climatiques sur les ressources en eau auront des impacts négatifs sur la sécurité alimentaire et la santé, particulièrement dans les pays les moins avancés.

Il faut que l'environnement soit sain et robuste pour faire vivre des populations, pour leur procurer des conditions de vie stables. Ce n'est possible que par une gestion durable des ressources, l'eau comprise.

Par leurs programmes d'aide au développement, l'Australie, la Nouvelle-Zélande et le Canada aident des pays en développement à promouvoir une gestion durable des ressources naturelles, particulièrement en ce qui concerne la gestion des terres, la gestion intégrée des ressources en eau et les changements climatiques planétaires.

Le Canada est l'hôte du Programme de l'eau du Système de surveillance mondiale de l'environnement. Ce programme, sous l'égide du Programme des Nations Unies pour l'environnement, réalize depuis de 30 ans des évaluations de sources d'approvisionnement en eau à la pointe du progrès et a mis au point des outils d'aide à la décision à l'intention des gestionnaires de services d'eau et des décideurs du monde entier. L'Australie a opéré une vaste réforme de sa gestion des ressources en eau qui doit assurer une utilisation durable de l'eau pour le présent et l'avenir. L'expérience de l'Australie est riche d'enseignements pour les autres pays qui éprouvent les mêmes difficultés dans la gestion de leurs ressources en eau.

Monsieur le Président,

Le groupe CANZ sera heureux de participer aux discussions pour l'atteinte des objectifs fixés par accord international au sujet de l'eau, et aux préparatifs de la conférence de juin 2010 au Tadjikistan. Le groupe CANZ tient à rappeler qu'il approuve ces importantes initiatives.

Merci.

COLOMBIA

MISSION OF COLOMBIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

140 EAST 57TH STREET, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10022

Statement

H.E. Ms. Claudia Blum de Barberi

Ambassador, Permanent Representative

General Assembly
"Interactive High-Level Dialogue on Water"
Panel I: Water and the Millennium Development Goals

64th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations
New York, March 22, 2010

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Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this interactive dialogue and the panelists for their enlightening presentations. They reveal the great challenges facing the international community to ensure sustainable management of water resources, and the important actions undertaken by different agencies of the UN system.

Water is essential for all development goals. The target of halving by 2015 the proportion of people without sustainable access to drinking water and basic sanitation should be a priority. Similarly, it is of main concern the goal of improving the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020 by focusing on the improvement of water and sanitation facilities. As the quality, availability and use of water are important factors in agriculture and food production, this is also linked to the goal of halving the proportion of people who suffer from hunger, between 1990 and 2015.

Water is also related to the 4, 5 and 6 Millennium Development Goals, since it is a critical component of basic health and wellbeing. The World Health Organization estimates that diseases related to water quality account for 80% of all diseases in the developing world and claim around 5 million lives each year. In this context, it is clear that the supply of drinking water and proper disposal of waste is the kind of intervention that could have major impact on development and human health.

Mr. Chairman,

In the international context, Colombia is considered a privileged country in terms of water supply availability. However, its distribution within the territory is not uniform, due to specific hydrological, topographical and settlement patterns.

In cities with over 500,000 inhabitants, the water supply is considered optimal, but in some smaller cities, its quality is less reliable. On an average year, 25% of the municipalities and 60% of the population face medium, mid – high and high risks shortages of water supply for consumption. Although the goals of water supply and basic sanitation have been mostly fulfilled in the cities, the big challenge is to achieve coverage in the country and in regions and provinces lagging behind.

Some projections, warn that failure to take adequate measures for the management and conservation of watersheds, could result in 69% of the population facing water shortage risks by 2025.

To address these risks, and to incorporate the principles of sustainable development policies and programs and to reduce the rate of depletion and degradation of natural resources, the Ministry of Environment, Housing and Territorial Development recently presented its Policy for the Integrated Water Resources Planning and Management. The policy is aimed at ensuring present and future availability of water as a strategic element for the sustainable development of the nation.

Mr. Chairman,

Water is essential for survival and has no substitutes. Although the world has enough knowledge for a better management of water resources, these are increasingly vulnerable and threatened, mainly by human activities and climate change.

As reported by the UN, failure to adopt measures to meet the basic needs of water, could result in up to 135 million people dying from water-related diseases in 2020. It is therefore necessary to strengthen international cooperation and technical assistance, and actions to achieve agreed development goals, particularly in countries affected the most by shortage of water supply and sanitation deficiencies.

The shortage of this vital resource affects us all equally. We cannot continue our unsustainable practices. The protection and preservation of water resources require joint action by the entire international community.

Mr. Chairman,

In closing, I would like to ask the panelists their opinion on the actions that governments and agencies of the United Nations system could pursue to accelerate the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals' targets pertaining water. I would also like to ask them, what are, from their point of view, the main obstacles encountered by States to achieve these targets?

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Misión Permanente de Guatemala
ante las Naciones Unidas

Mr. President,

Like others, I would like to add my voice in thanking you for convening this meeting and extend my gratitude to the Government of Tajikistan for this initiative.

Guatemala was known until recently as the "land of eternal spring", however in the past few years temperature increased 0.07 degrees and consequently a severe draught has become a serious concern threatening food security and of course water stress and scarcity. Currently 7.5 million Guatemalans lack access to water, let alone safe potable water and sanitation.

While listening to the panelists, I would like to ask the following questions,

1. Why have we under budgeted water? I know the Minister of South Africa asked this pertinent question as a rhetorical question but I would really like to learn more.

2. And, if water is a common good and a basic human right as many delegates here have emphasized then how can we monitor that the price of water does not become more expensive than what can people, particularly the poorest can afford?

I thank you.

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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE FEDERAL
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

866 Second Avenue, 3rd Floor • New York, N.Y. 10017

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Statement water
By
Mr. Reta Alemu Nega,
Charge d' affairs a.i. of
the Permanent Mission of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to the United Nations
At the "High-Level Interactive Dialogue on Water – International Decade for Action
"Water for Life: 2005-2015".
United Nations, New York
22 March 2010.

Mr. President,

Allow me, at the outset, to express my delegation's appreciation to you for organizing this important high-level interactive dialogue on world water.

My delegation wishes to associate itself with the statements made by the distinguished representatives of Yemen and Equatorial Guinea on behalf of the Group 77 and China and the African Group, respectively.

Mr. President,

The Government of Ethiopia exerts maximum effort to improve the access of safe water and sanitation as water resources and sanitation are extremely vital in achieving progress in all fronts of development. We believe that improving and promoting easy access to sanitation, water, irrigation and hydro-energy production will lead to

tremendous progress in the eradication of poverty and food insecurity, in accordance with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM).

Despite the considerable endeavors being made by many developing countries at national level and the great number of the institutions set up to address the issues of water management for access to water, progress in reaching the goals to halve the number of people without access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation is slow and uneven. In Africa alone, over 150 million people do not have access to drinking water and over 500 million Africans do not have access to adequate sanitation.

This challenge is even more pressing as the world confronts the triple threats of climate change, rising food and energy costs, and the global economic crisis. All three are exacerbating poverty, inequality and underdevelopment.

Mr. President,

The challenges are obvious. Lack of capacity, finance and political will to implement the decisions and other actions recommended by numerous conferences and meetings are the main weaknesses. My delegation firmly believes that these problems should be addressed timely and effectively. Without efficient collaboration and cooperation, both at regional and global level, addressing the challenges of accessing water resources and sanitation remains to hinder development in many poor nations of the world.

As per the Muscat Declaration on Water adopted by the First Ministerial Forum on Water of the Group of 77 in Sultanate of Oman last year, there is a need to be active both in management and development of water resources and infrastructures in order to increase access to and effective use of safe drinking water and food security in developing countries. In addition, both developed and developing countries should work together to strengthen strategic partnerships so as to contribute to the sharing of knowledge, innovation and transfer of technology for better access to improved water resources and sanitation. Special efforts must be made to build and sustain scientific capacity of governments to address challenges in water and sanitation and foster economic development.

Mr. President

The Government of Ethiopia developed a water resource management policy in 1999 with the goal to enhance and promote all national efforts towards efficient, equitable and optimum utilization of the available water resources. In 2001 the Water Sector Strategy was developed to use as a road map towards realizing the fundamental

principles, objectives and goals of the water sector policy. The Government's commitment to the improvement of the sector was further embedded through the preparation of the Water Sector Development Program (WDSP) in 2002 and the Universal Access Plan (UAP) in 2006, providing a policy framework with a seven-year timeframe with the aim to increase rural access to potable water from 35% in 2005 to 98% in 2012 by constructing 149,024 new schemes and rehabilitating 48,510 existing ones. The program also aims to increase rural access to latrines from 17.5% to 100% by constructing 13,388,678 latrines.

The Government also crafted the National Protocol for Hygiene and On-Site Sanitation in 2006 with a primary objective of improving the implementation of the national strategy for hygiene and on-site sanitation improvement at local authority level.

Moreover, measures are being taken to strengthen the water committees and water boards for sustainable water services management. Strategies have been identified and are being implemented to increase investments for the water sector development programs.

However, much still remains to be done. Coverage levels for water and sanitation in Ethiopia are among the lowest in the world. In addition to low coverage levels, water quality is another problem which sometimes leads to the outbreaks of water related epidemics. In Ethiopia, estimated three-quarters of the health problems of children and communicable diseases originate from the environment.

Low levels of water and sanitation coverage also have significant social implications. Women and children spend several hours every day fetching water. The time spent fetching water could be used to care for children in the home, rest or employment in income generating activities.

It is in light of these pressing challenges that my delegation calls upon the international community to stand firm in fulfilling its promises and commitments to help developing countries achieve the internationally agreed water-related goals.

It is paramount, Mr. President, therefore, that the deliberation of this high-level dialogue brings forth the urgency that these challenges require and sets out concrete recommendations for the High-Level Meeting on MDGs which will be held in September.

I thank you.

STATEMENT BY H.E. Mr. ANATOLIO NDONG MBA, AMBASSADOR PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF EQUATORIAL GUINEA ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP

AT THE HIGH LEVEL INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE ON WORLD WATER DAY (New York, 22 March 2010)

Mr. President,

I have the honor to deliver this Statement on behalf of the African Group and it is a great pleasure to address this august body on the Opening of the high level interactive dialogue on world water.

The Group wishes to associate itself with the statement made by Yemen on behalf of the Group 77 and China.

Mr. President,

Water is and must remain a key to the achievement of sustainable development in Africa. Water supply and sanitation are a growing challenge in the achievement of food securities on the continent. Over 150 million Africans do not have access to drinking water. Over 500million Africans do not have access to adequate sanitation. The situation is more severe in rural than urban areas hence contributing to rural urban migration and placing pressure on water supply in urban areas. Rapid urbanization is a challenge, which is further complicating the situation

Poor sanitation and lack of access to clean water, negatively affects public health as it causes most of the diseases in Africa, such as Malaria, dysentery, and Cholera, which is responsible for the death of millions annually in the continent, hence increasing the health bills of governments, and negatively affecting economic development.

The World Health Organization estimates that Africa must increase coverage to more than 200 million people to meet the 2050 target. Reports indicate that given progress to date, many African countries will not able to achieve the Millennium Development Goals on Water and Sanitation.

There are clear interlinkages between water supply and sanitation with agricultural productivity, land degradation and rural development, which calls for an integrated approach to water resource management.

The Group acknowledges the efforts of the African Union and NEPAD water initiative which have elevated water and sanitation as priority issues on the political agenda. In this connection, the Heads of State and Governments of the African Union meeting at the 11th Ordinary Session in Sharm El Sheikh in June 2008 adopted the Sharm El Sheikh Commitments to increase their efforts to implement their past declarations related to water and sanitation.

In addition, African countries have taken significant steps to meet their commitments for the achievement of sustainable development. To this end, a number of important declarations have been adopted at important events, including the Ministerial Conference on Sanitation which adopted the eThekwini Declaration, the organization of the 1st Africa Water Week which adopted the Tunis Ministerial Declaration on accelerating Africa's water security, the Ministerial meeting on Water for Agriculture and Energy held in Sirte, Libya (December 2008).

These events and actions have increased awareness of water security and sanitation issues, notably water for growth and development, the achievement for water and sanitation targets in the Africa Water Vision 2025 and the Millennium Development Goals, Impact of Climate Change and Variability on Water Resources, Food Security, Financing, Africa Water Infrastructure as well as the need for improved regional cooperation on Water Resources Management.

The African group welcomes the outcome of the last general Assembly of the African Ministers council on water (AMCOW) held in South Africa, which developed a Roadmap for the implementation of the Sharm El Sheikh Commitments.

Mr. President,

Provision of water is critical for poverty eradication. The challenges ~~the~~ facing African countries in this area include improving the quality of drinking water, addressing causes of pollution and contamination of water, water leakages, natural disasters, and drought. However, efforts of African countries are constrained by the unavailability of appropriate technologies. Furthermore due to the lack of financial resources developing countries, including Africa, find it difficult to increase investment for water.

The lack of the means of implementation is a critical aspect of the international environment that makes it difficult for African countries to fulfill their water objectives. The commitment to provide new and additional resources has not been fulfilled. A recent review shows that only a few developed countries have met the international target of providing 0.7% of GDP. This situation needs to be substantially improved in order to meet the MDGs and the goals and targets set in Johannesburg.

The problem is not only lack of resources but inequity in resource allocation. We therefore advocate the need to prioritize water and sanitation in donor country strategy. We emphasize that the region most in need of improved access to Water and sanitation is Sub Sahara Africa, for which the total aid package needs to be substantially scaled up.

Mr. President

We also note the need for strengthening the partnership at all levels: regional and international, as well as to promote public and private partnerships with a view to fast-tracking actions towards meeting the MDG'S on water and sanitation in our continent.

Mr. Chairman, as we are celebrating International Women's Day this month, we must remember that women, especially in Africa, bear the heavy burden of looking for water and carrying it to their households, therefore increasing investment on water and sanitation will reduce the burden on women and improve their lives.

Finally Mr. Chairman, we believe that the high-level international conference on the midterm comprehensive review of the implementation of the International Decade for Action, "Water for Life", 2005-2015 to be held Tajikistan in June 2010, should result in a practical and implementation oriented outcome. We urge the international community to work for the success of the high level international conference.

Thank you

I T A L Y

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

HIGH-LEVEL INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE ON WATER

INTERNATIONAL DECADE "WATER FOR LIFE: 2005-2015"

STATEMENT BY

MINISTER PLENIPOTENTIARY PAOLO SERPI

SPECIAL ENVOY OF
THE ITALIAN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND
COORDINATOR FOR CENTRAL ASIA

NEW YORK, 22 MARCH 2010

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First of all, I would like to thank you Mr. Chairman and the UN Secretary General with the Secretariat for addressing a crucial event as the High Level Interactive Dialogue on World Water Day.

I want also to thank in particular the Government of Tajikistan for promoting this meeting in view of the next International Conference that will take place in June 2010 in Dushanbé. This will certainly be an important event for international water management.

We are convinced that water management to be tackled successfully need to be treated appropriately at international, regional and local level. We want mainly to focus on the regional level, being a Country traditionally and historically connected to our region, Europe, and through it with the rest of the world.

Together with the European Commission, Italy is coordinating the EU strategy for Central Asia for the Environment and Water sector. We consider water resources as a key issue for the sustainable socio–economic development and the stability of Central Asia and we are convinced that a regional cooperation is necessary to guarantee social and political stability in this important area of the world.

At the second and third EU–Central Asia High level Conferences in Ashgabat, in December 2008, and in Rome last November, we constituted a Platform for environment and water cooperation.

At the same time, we established a Working Group that will coordinate water regional policies and encourage regional cooperation. Europe is ready to give all its political and technical support to facilitate the implementation of best practices, the availability of drinking water and sanitation as well as the increase in the efficiency of water usage in energy and agriculture, while safeguarding the ecological balance in the region.

We also decided to establish a new EU-CA Working Group on Environmental Governance and Climate change with the aim to enhance cooperation on environmental and water issues. Climate change is deeply connected to water issues and Central Asia is particularly vulnerable to its effects. This working group will provide guidance on cooperation activities between EU and CA also with the participation of other donors, international organizations, regional bodies, including the Interstate Commission for sustainable Development in CA, and representatives of civil society, NGOs and private sector.

The "Fourth EU – CA high level Conference", that will take place in Bishkek this year, will be another great opportunity to discuss progress, review

cooperation activities and take new decisions about concrete actions that will strengthen the cooperation between the EU and CA in this delicate sector.

Italy and the EU encourage a regionalization of water policy over all and among Central Asian countries in particular. This is what the EU has been promoting in the past within our region, Europe, and is doing at the moment with the implementation of the "Water Framework Directive". We support the possible use of this legislative model for Central Asia and other regions of the world.

We respect the autonomy of each Central Asian country to use its resources according to its respective economic development model, but we also believe that a more integrated water management would assure regional security, stability and sustainable development.

It appears clearer if we consider the hydro-geological peculiarity of the Central Asian region, which is connected through cross-boundary rivers, lakes and seas.

The EU will assist, as an impartial actor, the five Central Asian Countries in its political negotiations in order to facilitate an agreement on regional cooperation and, and taking into account the complexity of water issues, the EU offers all its technical, legal and scientific know how, gained in the management of multinational European waterways.

Moreover, we support the sustainable development of hydro energy as well as renewable and alternative energies with the minor environmental impact.

A more efficient use of water resources is possible with the improvement and the construction of infrastructures in addition to the introduction of new irrigation and energy saving techniques. For this purpose, a system of sharing costs derived from an efficient regulation and management of water flows of the river basins should be elaborated.

As we all know, about 900 millions of people don't have access to safe drinking water and 2.5 billion people don't have access to basic sanitation. Between 15% and 40% of the population in Central Asian countries have no access to safe water and over 40% to improved sanitation with a direct impact on the health of the population, in particular children.

Water issues represent one of the greatest challenges that the global community has to face and we want to do our best to contribute to solve the common problems and work together focusing at the regional level both for Europe, Central Asia and other regions of the world.

(Interactive Dialogue)

Contribution by:

Mr. Ahmad Rajabi

Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran

For the the High Level Interactive Dialogue on World Water Day (New York, 22 March 2010)

Water and Millennium Development Goals

The saying “Water is life” is found in many cultures around the world. It underscores the fact that clean water is an absolute prerequisite for healthy living. Yet, for a large percentage of the world’s population, water supplies are neither safe nor adequate. Adequate supply of safe drinking water is universally recognized as a basic human need. Nevertheless, more than 1000 million people do not have any access to an adequate and safe water supply, and a variety of physical, chemical and biological agents render many water sources less than wholesome and healthy.

We believe agriculture development and poverty are closely interrelated. It is recognized that the development of sustainable agriculture is an essential driving force for poverty reduction and food security. One of most important elements of development of sustainable agriculture is water resources management particularly in arid and semi-arid regions of South West Asia, CIS and Middle East Countries. Islamic republic of Iran, in line of materialization of MDGs, has established of the Regional Centre on Urban Water Management. At present, 11 countries and 5 International Organizations are actively involved in the Governing Board of the Centre at the highest level. Investments in water and sanitation are vital for Goal

Regarding the population growth and decreasing agricultural lands, the water supply and food products will be two major challenges in the future. In this context, following issues: Prevention of losing water in agricultural and urban water sectors, Increasing water efficiencies, Changing the consumption patterns, Recycling and treatment of waste and used water, Increasing of infiltration rate and Water delivery from far resources to draught region should be considered.

Trans-boundary issues

1- Trans-boundary water resources are often a cause of conflict among countries. Increasing demand for water resources and deterioration of existing water sources underscore the need to resolve conflicts over the allocation of consumption and pollution rights among conflicting uses and users. Because economic growth of the countries that share a water resource depends on sustainability of the resource, water has great potential as a basis for cooperation among countries. However, enforcement of cooperation particularly in international settings is limited. Thus, countries sharing a water resource will form and remain in a cooperating coalition only when economic incentives for each can be identified. In fact, Trans boundary water resources could be consider either opportunity or threat. In this connection, Islamic Republic of Iran has initiated cooperation with its neighbor countries bilaterally and cooperation of international organizations.

Islamic Republic of Iran and Afghanistan has held two meeting in recent years on the shared Sistan basin hosted by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP in Geneva.

The objectives of the Meetings were to establishment of national advisory committees, data survey and exchange and the development of an environmental monitoring system. Besides that, two countries have

signed agreement on shading of Hirmand river water sources. Islamic Republic of Iran has the same cooperation and exchange information with Iraq on its Trans-Boundary water sources.

Thank you

(check against delivery)

Statement by the Head of Delegation of Japan
High-Level Interactive Dialogue on Water, World Water Day
22 March 2010
New York

Mr. President,
Distinguished participants,

I am honored to have this opportunity to speak on behalf of the Government of Japan at this important dialogue held on the occasion of World Water Day.

Water sustains all life and it is an indispensable resource for mankind. Nevertheless, water threatens us in the form of disasters. MDG 7 tackles the water-related issues that jeopardize human security and Japan has been a top contributor in this field for many years.

Groundwater is essential to ensuring people's health and livelihoods and is the primary source of fresh water. Therefore, appropriate management of groundwater is an urgent issue around the globe. In this connection, the International Law Commission (ILC) adopted the draft articles on the law of transboundary aquifers, as a legal framework for the appropriate management of transboundary groundwater, in 2008. According to UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/63/124, the Sixth Committee of the General Assembly is scheduled to discuss these draft articles in its sixty-sixth session in 2011. Given the importance of water resources, Japan expects that Member States of the United Nations will pay necessary attention to these draft articles and seriously examine the final form that might be given to these draft articles.

Today let me also talk about a new emerging issue among the international community, climate change adaptation, and in particular, water-related disasters.

Japan is vulnerable to water-related disasters such as floods, due to its topographical, meteorological and social characteristics. Our economy and livelihoods are based mainly in alluvial plains, which only increase our vulnerability to disasters including floods caused by typhoons and seasonal torrential rains.

Under such a harsh condition, Japan developed floodplains, which promoted agriculture and the development of cities. We have protected our livelihoods in

floodplains in such ways as to combine various measures such as building embankments to prevent inundation and taking preparatory measures to minimize damage even when inundation occurs.

If we look back on our recent history, the numerous typhoons and floods that hit our land already devastated by World War II claimed many lives. Following in the footsteps of our ancestors, we have strongly promoted the construction of flood protection facilities and improved emergency management capacity. The present prosperity of Japan is a product of such longstanding efforts to reduce flood risks.

Through our experiences in managing flood risks, we have provided support to other nations, especially those countries in the Asian monsoon area which find themselves in a situation similar to our own, through contributing to increasing the capacity to deal with water-related disasters.

Japan has consistently contributed to other countries capacity building efforts to cope with flood risks not only through bilateral cooperation, but also through cooperation with UN organizations. Some examples of Japan's assistance measures include, inter alia, support for the introduction of advanced technologies such as flood forecasting through training courses in the International Centre for Water Hazard and Risk Management (ICHARM) under the auspices of UNESCO, cooperative initiatives to develop human resources such as flood protection experts as well as technical assistance for the development of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) guidelines.

Japan has also supported the activities of the UN Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation (UNSGAB). In addition, we recognize the importance of implementing the action plans proposed by the High-Level Expert Panel on Water and Disaster (HLEP) founded in response to a request by UNSGAB.

At the same time, we all recognize the apparent increase in the occurrences of extreme weather events in recent years. While the frequency of occurrences of torrential rains increases, annual precipitation is on the decrease and variations in annual precipitation between the years is on the increase. Such phenomena increase both flood and drought risks. In addition, the risks are projected to increase continuously in the future because of climate change.

We are determined to exert our utmost efforts to reduce the increasing

water-related disaster risks. Not only that, we are also willing to continue our support to other nations in order to improve their capacity to cope with these risks.

Distinguished participants,

Adaptation to climate change requires us to take preemptive and adaptive measures to cope with uncertainties in the future. Given the inevitable increase of risks, we must take action right now, despite the uncertainties, or we will face serious consequences in the future. To that end, it is important that the international community share the recognition of the urgency and importance of climate change adaptation. In order to effectively implement adaptation measures, it is important to accumulate scientific knowledge and data needed to adequately understand and predict the impacts of climate change. Cooperation among UN bodies and participating nations is indispensable to doing this.

In collaboration with the international community, we are determined to make further efforts to tackle this issue, utilizing the knowledge and expertise accumulated through our experiences,

Thank you very much for your attention.

THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

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H.E. Ambassador PARK In-kook
Permanent Representative

Panel II: Water, climate change and disasters

22 March 2010
New York

<Check against Delivery>

Mr. President, Distinguished Panelists,

1. To begin, I would like to thank the panelists for offering their expertise to our discussion today.

2. It is important for us to recognize that water is a crucial resource that must not be marginalized which we deal with other crises. We acknowledge the Secretary-General's recent report on the MDGs, which reminds us that making progress will require national water strategies addressing the four main uses of water: agriculture, household, industry, and ecosystem services.

3. Water is greatly affected by climate change. In many developing countries, people are already suffering from devastating climate change-related disasters, including floods and droughts. The effects are wide-ranging, as stated in the report prepared by the World Meteorological Organization, "Longer dry periods are likely to reduce groundwater recharge, lower minimum flows in rivers and affect water availability, irrigated agriculture, drinking water supply, manufacturing and energy production, thermal

plant cooling and navigation." As such, both climate change mitigation and adaptation must have facets to address water management.

4. These measures should focus on 'no regrets' investments that build and revive sustainable ecosystems and upgrade water quality. Improvements can range from infrastructure changes to demand management, but the quicker we act to implement these types of programs, the more we will be able to minimize climate change impacts on our fragile water systems.

5. My government's past experiences and achievements in water resources management and water-related disaster reduction have led us to launch the "Four Rivers Restoration Project" as a major part of our proactive Green Growth approach to climate change. This project will build resilience against disasters and extreme weather phenomenon, securing abundant water resources against water scarcity and implementing comprehensive flood control measures.

6. We would like to share our experiences with other member states, especially developing countries. We are now seeking potential cooperative projects in water-related policy areas through the East Asia Climate Partnership.

7. President Lee Myung-Bak has also proposed a specialized and unified water management cooperation initiative to address water issues and consider a more effective governance system. We plan to host an international conference, 'Water Management to Combat Climate Change and to Promote Green Growth in the Asia-Pacific Region' on July 1st and 2nd in Seoul as part of the proposal's follow-up. The conference will identify and discuss possible areas for action-oriented cooperation on water issues in Asia-Pacific Region.

8. As I conclude, while it is important that we acknowledge the importance of water today as a standalone issue, it is equally important for us to address the links that emerging issues have to water if we are to achieve real success.

Thank you.

Contribution de la Principauté de Monaco au Dialogue interactif sur l'eau
Décennie internationale sur le thème « L'eau, source de vie » (2005-2015)
Lundi 22 mars 2010
New York

Cinq années nous séparent de l'échéance fixée en 2000 par les Chefs d'Etats et de Gouvernement qui avaient notamment, pris l'engagement de réduire de moitié d'ici à 2015 le nombre de personnes n'ayant pas accès durable à l'eau potable et à des services d'assainissement de base, défini comme l'Objectif du Millénaire (OMD) 7.

Les progrès timides en vue de réduire le pourcentage de personnes n'ayant pas accès à de l'eau salubre sont ternis par l'absence de progrès en matière d'assainissement ; tel est le décevant constat du Secrétaire général au seuil de la phase d'évaluation des OMD, qui se tiendra en septembre prochain. 1,1 milliard de personnes, soit 18% de la population mondiale, n'ont pas accès à l'eau potable et environ 2,6 milliards de personnes, soit 42% de la population mondiale, n'ont pas accès aux services d'assainissement de base.

Elément indissociable de la survie de l'humanité, la question de l'eau est aussi liée à la l'élimination de la pauvreté, à l'amélioration de la santé maternelle et infantile, à la sécurité alimentaire, à l'autonomisation des femmes et en quelque sorte aux aspirations plus larges issues de la Déclaration du Millénaire et à la promotion des droits humains en général. Comme le déclare le Secrétaire général, le fait que l'eau insalubre tue plus d'être humains que toutes les formes de violence, y compris la guerre interpelle notre conscience et doit guider nos politiques.

Et pourtant, nos modes de production et de consommation la menacent. La population mondiale augmente avec ses besoins croissants d'eau douce pour l'agriculture, les usages ménagers, l'industrie et l'énergie. Dans certaines régions du monde, l'eau est devenue un tel enjeu pour les populations, souvent source de conflits, qu'il nous incombe de penser « l'eau » en termes de sécurité.

Le rejet des eaux usées, non traitées, dans les bassins hydrographiques aggravent la pollution de l'eau. En outre, les effets des changements climatiques fragilisent davantage les écosystèmes dont nous dépendons. Sécheresses, inondations, catastrophes naturelles plus fréquentes… L'eau indubitablement se place au cœur des politiques d'adaptation mais aussi d'atténuation qui doivent être élaborées de toute urgence.

S.A.S. le Prince de Monaco S'investit personnellement comme en a récemment témoigné Sa participation au **Vème Forum mondial sur l'eau**, à Istanbul ainsi que les activités de préservation de l'eau entreprises par Sa Fondation consacrée à l'eau, à la biodiversité et au changement climatique. Son Gouvernement s'emploie à mettre en œuvre cette politique volontariste.

La Principauté, consciente des pénuries d'eau dans la région méditerranéenne où elle s'investit auprès de ses partenaires euro-méditerranéens afin que soit adoptée, cette année, une Stratégie méditerranéenne de l'eau. En outre, Monaco s'est engagé dans une campagne de **diminution de consommation d'eau potable** pour certains usages comme la réutilisation de l'eau de certains vallons pour l'arrosage d'espaces verts ou le nettoyage des voieries. L'usage de l'eau public est contrôlé et des lois permettent de sanctionner toutes pollutions du milieu naturel et de l'eau.

A cette fin, la Principauté mène des programmes de sensibilisation aux économies d'eau auprès des différents secteurs de la société notamment à l'occasion de cette **Journée internationale de l'eau** et investit dans la recherche et la mise en œuvre de solutions alternatives.

En 2009, des travaux importants ont été réalisés en vue d'améliorer les performances de l'usine de traitement des eaux, d'optimiser le fonctionnement du réseau de collecte des eaux usées et d'améliorer le traitement des eaux résiduaires. En outre, des études ont été menées aux fins de réutiliser les eaux en sortie de station.

La Principauté place la question de l'eau au centre des priorités de l'agenda du développement durable et de sa politique de coopération internationale dont l'objectif principal est de lutter contre la pauvreté.

La Principauté de Monaco, déterminée à agir en partenaire responsable, ne peut qu'appuyer les efforts de **l'ONU-eau** car seule une approche cohérente et coordonnée peut nous permettre de relever les défis mondiaux liés à l'eau. Elle tient à souligner la précieuse contribution du Programme mondial pour l'évaluation des ressources en eau et du Programme conjoint OMS/UNICEF de surveillance de l'eau à cette fin.

Le succès de **l'Année internationale de l'assainissement**, célébrée en 2008, doit encourager la communauté internationale à poursuivre de manière plus efficace ses objectifs en établissant notamment des partenariats et en élargissant le débat de l'assainissement aux questions de transferts de technologies, d'épuration et de recyclage comme le préconise le Secrétaire général dans son rapport.

C'est dans cette perspective que la Principauté de Monaco soutient la **Décennie internationale d'action «L'eau, source de vie»** qui promeut la réalisation des objectifs relatifs aux ressources en eau, à tous les niveaux, et l'exécution de programmes relatifs à l'eau, convenus au niveau international énoncés dans Action 21, la Déclaration du Millénaire et le Plan de mise en œuvre de Johannesburg. Dans le cadre de cette Décennie d'action, elle se réjouit qu'une attention particulière soit accordée à la participation des femmes aux activités de développement liées à l'eau.

Les efforts de la Coopération internationale monégasque promeuvent un développement durable centré sur la personne et s'inscrivent dans deux types d'intervention liées à l'eau dans le continent africain plus durement affecté par les pénuries en eau, et en particulier dans les régions rurales.

D'une part, les actions du Gouvernement Princier, en collaboration avec les Gouvernements nationaux et les associations locales visent à **approvisionner en eau potable et améliorer ou assurer l'assainissement et l'hygiène** de nombreuses localités. De la mise en place de services de collecte d'ordures, de systèmes de drainage des eaux pluviales, d'aménagement de forages, d'installations de latrines à la réhabilitation de puits, ces activités concrètes permettent à des milliers de personnes dans des villages ruraux, dans des centres de santé ou encore des écoles de vivre mieux.

D'autre part, le Gouvernement monégasque s'emploie à **promouvoir l'irrigation des cultures et préserver les espaces naturels**. Ainsi, en aménageant des terres dégradées Monaco contribue à lutter contre la désertification et à développer des cultures vivrières, sources d'importants revenus pour les populations locales. En Afrique du Nord plus particulièrement, c'est en réhabilitant des palmeraies, qui jouent un rôle social, économique et écologique majeur, que nous contribuons à combattre la désertification.

Statement on behalf of the Least Developed Countries by His Excellency Ambassador Gyan Chandra Acharya, Permanent Representative of Nepal at the High-level Interactive Dialogue on Water, Decade for Action "Water for Life: 2005-2015"(New York, 22 March 2010)

Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Least Developed Countries. I align myself with the statement made by the Republic of Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. I thank the President of the General Assembly and his office for convening this important high-level meeting.

At the outset, Let me welcome the Government of Tajikistan for hosting the high-level international conference on the midterm comprehensive review of the implementation of the International Decade for Action, "Water for Life: 2005-2015" in June this year.

Mr. President,

Water is the basis for the human life. The quality of human life is directly dependant on the quality of good water. Water is linked to the improved maternal and child health, life expectancy, empowerment of women, sustainable development and climate change adaptation and mitigation. While a large number of populations are demanding more water for drinking, sanitation, irrigation, energy generation and other industrial purposes, the water has been contaminated by pouring of the millions of tons of untreated sewage and industrial and agricultural wastes into the world's water systems. Human activity over the past 50 years is responsible for unprecedented pollution of water resources in the history. It is estimated that over 2.5 billion people globally live without adequate sanitation and 2 million tons of sewage and other effluents drain into the world's waters. The problem is worse in developing and least developed countries where most of the raw and untreated industrial wastes are dumped into surface waters.

The adverse impact of climate change has further contributed to melting of glaciers in the high Himalayas, resulting into storm and flooding in the hills and low lands and siltation of lakes and reservoirs. This has further compounded the vulnerabilities of the least developed countries which are already vulnerable with internal structural constraints of their own. The majority of the people of the LDCs are continuing to suffer from extreme weather events like drought to storm and tsunami, natural disasters, pollution, water contamination, water shortages and lack of adequate sanitation. Similarly, the human and economic development of the LDCs is badly affected by the adverse situations like unavailability of appropriate technology and expertise, constrained financial situation to invest in water, and the lack of infrastructure. As a result, the people in the LDCs have been facing multiple problems connected with water that lacks both quality and quantity. Unless we first address these water related problems, it is uncertain to eradicate poverty and achieve the MDGs.

Mr. President,

We believe that water is life and there is sufficient water for everyone, but its equitable distribution and access to clean water is an issue of fundamental concern to us. Water and socioeconomic issues such as poverty, livelihoods, health, and equality are closely linked to each other. Providing and maintaining safe drinking water and sanitation are central to alleviation poverty attaining MDGs, and improving the quality of life for billions of people. As we are in the process of reviewing the MDG targets in September this year, we find a large number of people in the LDCs still relying on unimproved water sources for their drinking, cooking, bathing and other domestic activities and hence face the water-born diseases. The international community is still far from achieving the MDG target of reducing by half the number of people without access to safe water and sanitation by 2015. Around the world, 1.1 billion people still lack access to improved water supply and more than 2.6 billion people lack access to improved sanitation, with greatest challenge to progress remaining in Sub-Saharan Africa and LDCs. To achieve the MDG target, the world needs to provide access to improved sanitation to 173 million people per year.

In this context, we emphasize the following:

1. To complement national efforts, enhanced level of international support is required to achieve the internationally agreed water-related goals contained in Agenda 21, the Program for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, the United Nations Millennium Declaration and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, with particular focus to the LDCs. This is because many goals are intrinsically dependent upon access to clean and adequate water.

2. Assistance and investment is essential in improving and promoting clean and easy access to water and sanitation, production, and hydro-electricity production in the LDCs.

3. The United Nations system should play an important role in the exchange of scientific and technological research in the field of water resources to the LDCs and they should have a supportive role in efficient management, preservation and sustainable use of water in the LDCs.

4. Strong support is essential for more effective water demand and water resource management across all sectors, especially in the agricultural sector for food security, rural development and poverty eradication. Both Financial and technical assistance is needed in the area of irrigation, including acceleration and modernization of existing irrigation and use of surface and groundwater.

Speaking from my own national perspective, water has been both a boon and a bane for us. The variability of the rainfall, impact of climate change and melting of glaciers, which is a water tower of 1.4 billion people, is a real and clearly visible danger. Hence we call for a coherent and integrated approach to manage and sustain water resources and mitigate water related disasters. It is too important to be looked at in a fragmented manner.
Thank you.

I thank you Mr. President.

Interactive Dialogue on Water in AVVN, World Water Day,
22 March 2010: Water and climate change adaptation

Draft statement by The Netherlands (not presented due to time constraints)

'Water and Climate Change' is a very significant global issue.

The Netherlands is a country vulnerable to climate change, with great part of the country situated lower than sea-level; more than half of the country is very vulnerable to sea level rise and higher peak discharges in our river system. Climate change means a higher risk of floods for us, but also the risk of a loss of our fresh water sources, and a lack of fresh water in specific areas and times. Over the past ten years, we have been adapting to these effects, but also to a more uneven distribution of rainfall, with the aim of maintaining and even enhancing our water security.

This adaptation was done not only on infrastructure, such as strengthening our sea defences; measures such as changes in our spatial planning are also a major component. Adapting our delta to climate change not only involves the water system, but also agriculture, nature, recreation and urban planning.

This year, our parliament adopted the National Waterplan for 2010-2015, which sets progressive measures for climate change adaptation (legal, institutional and budgetary measures for water management, knowledge and innovation).

The Netherlands will intensify its cooperation with similar delta countries and exchange knowledge and experience, to contribute to adaptation plans in these countries. This cooperation builds upon our long-term cooperation with Indonesia, Vietnam and Egypt. It also extends to other areas, for instance with the USA.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

International Decade for Action "Water for Life" 2005-2015.
Sultanate of Oman perspective

Abstract

Oman is situated in the south eastern part of Arabian peninsula, bordered by the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E) from north west, Saudi Arabia from the west, Gulf of Oman and Arabian sea from the east and south east. Oman is a leader in the Region in the fields of water resources assessment and management and has excellent record in related institutional capacity-building. Optimization and strategic management of the water sector was seen as a key dimension of the Omani Economic Diversification Strategy at the vision "2020" Conference in 1995. The agriculture sector is the dominant water-using sector accounting 87% of total consumption. Over the next twenty years, the demand for water domestic, industrial, commercial and municipal purposes is expected to increase by more than 50% as a result of; population growth from 2.5 million to over 3.5 million; increase demand for food and domestic water; increased of urbanization; increased water demand within the economic diversification program. To assist in meeting the Vision 2020 strategy and maintaining the country's water security, a National Water Resources Master Plan has been prepared. The plan adopts the widely-accepted Dublin (1992) principles and meets the requirements of the Hague Declaration (2000). The purpose of the Master Plan is to provide a sound basis for planning horizon 2020 and also takes account of the need to provide for sustainable development and security of supplies beyond this date. In 2005 the seventh five years development plan started, the same year when the **International Decade for Action "Water for Life," 2005-2015** , announced, which allowed Oman to review its planes and includes projects that allowed to implement the decade goals. Beyond meeting basic human needs, water supply and sanitation services, were given high priorities taking in to the account that water, as a resource, are critical to sustainable development. Water challenges will increase significantly in the coming years. Continuing population growth and rising incomes will lead to greater water consumption, as well as more waste. The urban population is growing dramatically, generating demands well beyond the capacity of already inadequate water supply supported by dramatic climate change impacts (floods and droughts).

1. Introduction

The Sultanate of Oman has undergone development since 1970 with major investment in infrastructure, education and health. Due to its location in the Arid and Semi-Arid region, water resources are very scarce. Day time temperatures are high, generally above 30 °C and seasonally above 40 °C. The mean annual rainfall is low and highly variable, exceeding 350mm in the mountains of Northern Oman and Dhofar, but reducing to 100mm in the foothills and to less than 50mm at the coast and in the desert interior. Potential evapotranspiration varies from 1.660 mm/yr on the Salalah plain to 2.200 mm/yr in the interior.

Total replenishment of the renewable resources is estimated to be about 1.300 Mm^3/yr. The annual replenishment is equivalent, to about 500 m^3/capita; this is approaching a condition of extreme water stress according to international indices. Oman's reserves of "non-renewable" resources have not been fully assessed; these may serve as strategic reserve or be locally developed for strategic purpose. Nationally, the consumption of indigenous water is 25% more than the resources currently available from renewable resources, desalination and treated wastewater. The growing economy has brought an increase in urbanization with a demand for high levels of service and quality for water supplies. Desalination has been developed to augment natural resources for township water supplies and the collection and treatment of wastewater continues to develop nationally,

The Sultanate of Oman has made major investment in water resources, development and management over the past 39 years. This has included establishment of a national monitoring network, execution of national well and aflaj inventories and major catchments and aquifer studies accompanied by human resource development and institutional capacity-building. Water is, and will remain, one of the nation's most valuable resources. Optimization and strategic management of the water sector was seen as a key dimension of the Omani Economic Diversification Strategy at the vision "2020" Conference in 1995. With the demand for water domestic, industrial, commercial and municipal purposes expected to increase by more than 50% over the next twenty years, effective water management is demanded. To assist in meeting the Vision 2020 strategy and maintaining the country's water security, a National Water Resources Master Plan has been prepared.

2. Strategic Development of Water Resources in Oman

It has long been recognized that the successful and sustainable future development of water resources in Oman depends on a thorough understanding of the available resources to meet potential demands. Significant investment has been made to establish an appropriate technical foundation for resource development, planning and management to meet challenges facing water resources through

- **Effective Monitoring network:** Currently there are over 4600 monitoring stations for climate, rainfall, wadi flow, *aflaj*, groundwater levels and groundwater quality. The national monitoring network broadly complies with WMO Standards although data collection is rather sparse in the desert regions.

- **National Well Inventory project:** Two large scale projects were carried out to establish a complete database for all existing wells and aflaj . ***The National Well Inventory Project***, embarked on 1992, was initiated with a registration process (167,000 wells) and followed by field inspection that provided a comprehensive data set on water levels, water quality, pump types, water use and irrigated areas. The total number of active wells inventoried was 127,000.

- **National Aflaj Inventory Project:** The National Aflaj Inventory Project, commenced in 1997, recorded a total of 4,112 *aflaj* of which 3,108 were found operational. Service areas of individual aflaj vary significantly but most are less than 2 ha; the largest single system extends over 1,227 ha. The total area serviced by *aflaj* in Oman was found to be 26,500 ha of which 66% was under crop at the time of the field survey.

- **Surface Water Assessment and Development:** Surface water assessments have been undertaken in all major catchments mainly through hydrological studies and data analysis, feasibility studies for recharge dams and local flood studies. Such studies and investigations have created a number of resource development opportunities for both storage and recharge dams.

- **Groundwater Assessment and Development:** Groundwater exploration projects have been undertaken in Oman and typically

comprise exploration and test production well drilling, aquifer tests, geophysical and topographic surveys.

There are about storage dams mainly in Jabal Akhdar, to alleviate local domestic water supply problems. A major storage dam is has been completed in Wadi Dayqah to intercept fresh water flows to the sea and supply water to Quriyat and Muscat. The storage capacity of the dam is 100 Mm^3.

Recharge dams have generally been designed to store wadi floods for a few days, to allow silt to settle, before allowing controlled release of water downstream to recharge the alluvium. Water balance estimates indicate that, at national scale, wadi flood flows lost to the sea or the desert average about 119 $M.m^3/yr$. Today there are more than 30 recharge dams in Oman.

3. Non-Conventional Water Resources

Desalination:

Desalination plants make an important contribution to water supplies where natural water resources are unavailable or inadequate. At the moment desalination provides more than about 90% of the potable water supplied nationally. Desalination started in Oman in the early 1970s, primarily to provide potable water to communities but also to other water requirements. They are located both on the coast and in the Interior, primarily of sea water for Muscat and some other coastal towns and of brackish water in the Interior. Desalination supplies have reached areas very fare from the sea to supply drinking water for most towns and rural areas. By the year 2015, Oman will cover the rest 10% of population with a supplied network to replace the groundwater supplies in this rural areas.

Wastewater and Sanitation

At the midpoint in MDG timeline, great progress has already been made in Oman. The global economic crisis has not affect Oman's plans to develop a highly sophisticated wastewater and sanitation network. Om,an considered that investing in development is more vital than ever to ensure social stability, security and prosperity to meet its commitment to reaching the MDGs.

The greater part of the water supplied for domestic, industrial and commercial usage returns to the hydrogeological environment as wastewater. Wastewater treatment has been considered as an initial strategic issue to meet the principal reuse of treated wastewater at present is for municipal landscaping in most of the regions in Oman. Muscat Municipality plans a scheme to extend its sewage collection and treatment system. The first stage (2006) should generate 70,000 m^3/day of effluent, eventually increasing to an estimated 270,000 m^3/day (100 M.m^3/year). This scheme will generate a considerable volume of treated wastewater that may be considered a potential water resource to be used in the most beneficial manner. In Salalah, A wastewater treatment plant has been built that will, in the first stage, treat 20,000 m^3/day (7.3 M.m^3/year) with two further stages to more than double the initial capacity. It is planned to treat the effluent to a tertiary level, to chlorinate it and then to recharge it into tube wells in a line parallel to the coast to stabilize the sea water interface and part will be recovered from wells further inland. At the moment, there are 53 projects for wastewater treatments plants with a comprehensive collection system and networks while more than 43 projects are planned in the next 5 years starting from the year 2011. In completion of these projects Oman will completely meets it commitments toward the Millennium Development Goals.

4. Regulations and Policies

To set a strategy and establish rules and polices that can aid in protection and conservation of the water resources as well as development of the existing water supply, strategic regulations are activated since early eighties represented by:

- Royal Decree 82/88, refer to "the water of the Sultanate of Oman is a national resource to be used according to the restrictions made by the Government for organizing its optimum utilization in the interest of the state of comprehensive development plans".

- Royal Decree 29/2000, refer to a new water low "Water Protection Low" emphasis on regulations for wells and aflaj, and regulations for desalination units on wells.

- Royal Decree 114/2001, organize the disposal of solid and dangerous wastes, environmental pollutants and untreated sewage wastes without a permit.

- Royal Decree 115/2001, refer to organizing disposal of liquid and solid waste products.
- In 2001 a series of Ministerial decisions, refer to the implementation of water supply well fields protection zones at several regions of the Sultanate. The key regularity measures includes; aflaj protection, Well permits, contractor registration regulations, violations and enforcement.

Well fields were also defined and legislation were set to regulate activities to be protected both as a water resources and from pollution. There is also comprehensive environmental legislation towards protection of the water resources from solid waste and waste water disposals. A number of initiatives by the Government organization have been aimed at encouraging water conservation. This includes irrigation improvement and leakage control beside the other commercial activities.

5. National Water Resources Master Plan

The National Water resources Master Plan aims to provide a sound basis for development and management of the country's water resources. It recognizes that water will remain one of the nation's most valuable resources and that it will be of vital importance in the future. The Plan has been formulated to achieve planning horizon of 2020. The Plan also takes account of the need to provide for sustainable development and security of supplies beyond this date. The Plan, summarily described below, was formulated on a number of principles including:

- The development of the country's water resources should be sustainable in the long term, not just technically but also economically, environmentally and socially.

- Where resources are already being degraded due to over-consumption or pollution, the water balance of the aquifer should be restored to sustainability by 2020

- The non-renewable resources should form a strategic reserve and those of potable quality be allocated only for priority domestic and industrial use. Their development should be planned in distinct stages with adequate intervals for evaluation of the aquifer response to pumping. The long-term strategy should be flexible and a well managed approach to the use of these resources adopted.

- The provision of domestic and industrial water supplies has priority over its use for agriculture except where resources are used in *aflaj* areas where the current supply of water will be maintained.

- A reform of irrigated agriculture should be encouraged to increase production from the water made available, to increase financial returns and to minimise "virtual water imports".

The Master Plan has suggested some primary actions that are necessary for best development and management of the country's water resources. This actions includes:

Potable water supply for towns and priority purposes: The Plan provides for the necessary water resources investigations and assessments, including identification and investigation of wellfields and the monitoring and protection of water sources.

Increase in recovery and development of Indigenous water resources: The Plan includes projects to increase the availability of indigenous water that can lead to reduced dependency of the country on much higher-cost supply alternatives and imports of "virtual water", where technically and economically feasible. This can be through reducing surface and sub-surface losses to the sea or to the desert, increasing water availability by treating and re-using wastewater and making limited and strategic use of non-renewable potable and brackish water reserves.

Establishment of sector water allocations: With the increasing demands on indigenous water resources, the Plan recommends that sector water allocations are set, as early as possible, which formally establish the prioritisation of water use. Allocations, on a catchment basis and subject to periodic review, would be made for each of the following sectors:

- Domestic
- Industrial/Commercial/Municipal
- Environmental
- *Aflaj*
- Agriculture (irrigated from wells)

Management of water demand: Many projects have been conducted to evaluate the proper integrated water management plans in agricultural, commercial, industrial and municipal sectors were taken. Adapting cropping patterns, introduction of modern irrigation systems, water demand in agricultural sector can be reduces. Quotas, derived from sector allocations and linked to well permits, have been introduced for those farmers using water from wells for irrigation.

6. CONCLUSIONS

As we are at the Water is essential for life. No living being on planet Earth can survive without it. It is a prerequisite for human health and well-being as well as for the preservation of the environment. Water scarcity, implies large challenges in Oman in addition to what is expected from climate change effect related to natural disasters such as floods and droughts. Meeting basic human needs, water supply and sanitation services, as well as water as a resource critical to sustainable development, Oman have taken important plans to meet this goals.

Water challenges will increase significantly in the coming years. Continuing population growth and rising incomes that will lead to greater water consumption, as well as more waste. The availability of the renewable water resource in Oman is "scarce" and water security demands priority attention with large investment in desalination, wastewater treatment and in , integrated water resources management. Wastewater from municipal areas represents an important resource that should be incorporated within resource planning. As the coverage of collection and treatment systems expands, effluent of better quality may be used beneficially either for direct use in agriculture or to recharge the aquifer through recharge lagoons.

While the long term water security of the population has to be ensured, a sound balance has to be struck between the use of indigenous water and imported "virtual water", within the confines of the economy. Opportunities to augment resources by conventional and non-conventional means have been identified and are at varying stages of development.

The introduction of appropriate demand management measures in areas irrigated from wells will have to be introduced to overcome locally serious deficits, if Oman is to ensure the future sustainable use of water resources and yet meet the demands for domestic and industrial supplies. Public awareness information campaigns should be augmented as a preliminary

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action to active conservation control, of domestic, industrial and agricultural water use. The state of sanitation in Oman is given high priorities with access to sanitation across the country to more than 90% of the population. Progress on sanitation and drinking water were given special

The Millennium Development Goal's (MDGs) targeted by 2015 the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation. At the current rate of progress, Oman allow access to sanitation and safe drinking water to all people by the year 2015 exceeding the millennium goals target.

Thank you Mr. Moderator -

I would like to begin by thanking, through you, Mr. Moderator, His Excellency, Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, the distinguished President of the General Assembly, for convening this High-level Interactive Dialogue on Water – International Decade for Action “Water for Life: 2005-2015” and for the singular opportunity and privilege of the Philippine delegation to participate in this panel in discussing water, climate change and disasters.

Mr. President –

Lack of access to clean and safe water has reached global critical proportions that need the attention and cooperation of the international community to address this problem. When we shall have been finished this evening discussing the issue safe water, thousands shall have died due to lack of access to clean water. It has been reported that there is a nexus between the safe water issue and proper sanitation that requires an integrated approach to bringing safe water to the millions of the poorest in the world who die due to water-related diseases.

The Philippines continues to be engaged whenever and wherever this issue of safe water is discussed because my country adheres to the principle that water is fundamental for life and health. The human right to water is indispensable for leading a healthy life in dignity and a pre-requisite to the realization of all other human rights according to the UN Committee on Economic, Cultural and Social Rights.

Mr. Moderator –

Let me now dwell on water in the context of climate change and disasters.

I would like to draw your attention to the unprecedented typhoon that struck the Philippines in late September last year where hundreds of lives, property damages, and crops ready for harvest were lost. Flooding due to the unforeseen torrential rains was attributed as the cause of the recent calamity that devastated the Philippines. The immediate response of my Government , through the National Disaster Coordinating Committee, as well as the international community, in particular the UN Office of the Coordinator for Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) lead by Under-Secretary-General John Holmes, averted or mitigated what could have been a more disastrous consequences of this natural disaster.

Now, we fast forward to the scenario today in the Philippines where in contrast to the last year's flooding, drought is now at an alarming level which may be aggravated by the forecasted El Nino conditions during the first quarter of 2010. Again, my Government is responding to this potential catastrophe by providing measures for the optimum utilization of water resources in Metro Manila and actively implement water conservation measures as well as to improve the operational efficiency of water service providers (e.g. reduce the level of non-revenue water) to maximize the limited supply of water.

Among the measures that are being implemented to mitigate, *inter alia*, the effects of water shortage are:

- The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), with the National Water Resources Board (NWRB), the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS), and the Public Information Agency (PIA) were tasked to undertake a massive information, education and communication campaign to encourage people to implement water conservation measures;
- All Local Government Units in Metro Manila through the villages or barangays shall monitor and report all water leaks and pilferages to the concerned Water Concessionaire;
- The Department of Public Works and Highways, the Metro Manila Development Authority, and other concerned government agencies shall

provide immediate assistance to the MWSS and Water Concessionaires in improving water service delivery;

- The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), in coordination with the Department of Finance (DOF), shall work for the grant of incentives for the production of goods that conserve water and establishments undertaking optimum water conservation and utilization in Metro Manila.

Mr. Moderator –

Much more need to be done to address the issue of water vis-à-vis climate change and natural disasters.

Transfer of technology such as remote sensing devises, for instance, to provide the tools to forecast and better prepare for an impending disaster could mitigate the massive loss of lives and damages to property.

Foreign direct investments to augment the meager resources of developing countries for adequate and efficient water distribution would accelerate the achievement of the development goals of developing countries, particularly in poverty alleviation and hunger as well as promotion of health.

I thank you.

Permanent Mission of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations

Statement by H.E. Camillo M. Gonsalves
Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations

at the

HIGH LEVEL INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE ON WATER - INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR ACTION "WATER FOR LIFE: 2005-2015"

Panel II: Water, Climate Change And Disasters

22 March 2010

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is an archipelago of over 32 islands, only one of which is blessed with rivers. Nonetheless, from time immemorial, we have managed to satisfy our water needs through wise management of our seasonal rains and our abundant natural resources.

Our carefully planned water management strategies have accounted for increased infrastructural development, an expanded reliance on tourism, our continued dependence on agriculture, and changing patterns of individual water consumption. In the last decade, the percentage of households with pipe bourn water in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has risen from 70% to in excess of 95%. Our forward-thinking water policies have resulted in the development and consolidation of a multitude of water catchment areas – all of which are gravity-fed – to supply the majority of our water needs. On some of our smaller islands, residents and businesses still rely to a large extent on private water tanks, and small-scale desalinization plants.

However, the government and people of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines are unable to adapt to the effects of climate change on our own. As we speak, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines – and much of the Caribbean region – are in the grips of the worst drought in almost three decades. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has been experiencing drought conditions since October 2009, and our rainfall levels are almost 60% below 30-year averages. And the drought is getting worse. In February 2010, for example, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines received 2.7mm of rainfall, which is less than *three percent* of the 91.8mm we have averaged over the past 30 years.

As a state with an increasing investment in tourism, we are normally pleased to see cloudless skies and sun-kissed beaches. But, as this drought stretches into its sixth month, we are praying more and more for rain clouds, and celebrating the slightest drizzle on our parched land.

The effects of this drought are myriad and multifaceted. In addition to water shortages and rationing across much of the Caribbean subregion, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has experienced scores of bush fires, in a volume and frequency that severely tax our emergency response services. Hydroelectricity, which typically accounts for 20% of our energy mix, has plummeted to a mere two percent, as our rivers slow to a trickle. We have had to resort to more expensive, less eco-friendly diesel generators to pick up the slack. Our government has had to send water by boat to the more acutely affected islands in our archipelago.

At the most recent conference of CARICOM heads of government, held earlier this month in Dominica, our leaders identified the "persistence of severe drought and water scarcity in most countries of the Community" as a regional priority.

The linkages between socioeconomic development and the quality and quantity of water are clear. Water is the lifeblood of health, agriculture and economic growth in our country and throughout the world. But much as climate change threatens our coastal infrastructure, our tourism, fishing and agricultural industries, and the very existence of our peoples and culture, so too does it threaten, at its most fundamental level, our access to this most basic building block of life.

If we are talking about "Water for Life," as the theme of this dialogue suggests, then we must acknowledge that the people of my country and my region also see the larger issue of climate change as a life-or-death issue. For it is drought that dries our fragile rivers. It is rising seas that threaten our groundwater and aquifers. And it is increasingly powerful hurricanes and weather events that turn water from a giver of life to an agent of death, in the face of flooding, landslides and coastal sea surges.

The people of our region have neither the financial nor the scientific capacity to independently adapt to the drastic effects of climate change, of which the current drought is but one example. And we have little patience for international intransigence while our rivers dry, our fires burn, and our crops and livestock die of thirst. As we continue to point out, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and other small island developing states have not caused the current crisis of climate change, but we are the ones hardest hit by its increasingly severe impacts.

Water is the essence of Caribbean life and crucial to universal survival and development. While we continue to strive for the achievement and implementation of innovative strategies to mange, conserve and develop our water resources; we must also call for significantly increased international commitments that emphasize technology sharing, capacity building, and adaptation financing in the face of a the grave and gathering threat that climate change poses to our water supplies.

We call also, as we always do, for a meaningful and legally enforceable agreement on climate change, well beyond the tepid, non-binding commitments of Copenhagen. Only then can our continued survival and development be assured.

I thank you.

STATEMENT OF TURKEY
High Level Dialogue on Water, 22 March 2010, New York

Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to address such a distinguished audience. I would like to express my most sincere thanks to H.E. Ali Treki, President of the General Assembly, and his team for having organized this high-level interactive dialogue.

Today's topic is "water" which is a vital resource for life and all civilizations. We gathered here today to discuss a very challenging subject which deserves higher priority on the global agenda.

Safe drinking water and sanitation for all has been one of our goals which we have not achieved as yet. This goal has direct connection with our work towards poverty reduction. Water is of vital importance for sustainable development, food security and the maintenance of well-functioning ecosystems.

Excellencies,

Turkey hosted 5th World Water Forum in Istanbul on 16-22 March 2009. The Forum brought together over 25,000 people from 182 countries, including 1,300 political process participants: 165 delegations, 90 ministers and 19 undersecretaries, over 250 parliamentarians, over 300 mayors and local officials.

The overarching theme of the 5th Forum was "Bridging Divides for Water", a clear call for the water community and all stakeholders to come together to take action.

For the first time in the Forum's history, Heads of States and Governments from a limited number of countries met in Istanbul and launched a compact but a broad-based call for action.

Ministers adopted the Ministerial Statement that covers many important commitments and gives central messages concerning water management and good governance in the water sector. A "Water Guide" was also prepared to address the global challenges related to water.

Parliamentarians agreed upon the establishment of a permanent international Parliamentary "Helpdesk" to aid political cooperation on water legislation and its implementation.

A number of Mayors signed the Istanbul Water Consensus, a new compact for Local and Regional Authorities committed to adapting their water infrastructure and services to the emerging challenges.

106 thematic sessions were organized by more than 400 organizations proceeded by extensive consultative process. Key issues on the global water agenda were elaborated through a number of High Level Panels.

Seven Regional Preparatory Processes, culminating in panel presentations at the 5th World Water Forum, provided rich contributions to both the political and thematic outcomes.

Distinguished Delegates,

During the Istanbul Water Forum, participants affirmed that the production and supply of food and energy are increasingly inter-linked, and both depend on water.

Climate change was called to mind throughout the Forum with a view to bridging mitigation and adaptation divide.

Glaring global inequalities in water infrastructure and services between developing and developed countries were emphasized.

International solidarity, together with comprehensive and coordinated cooperation, was highlighted to provide concrete answers to the current water issues facing the world.

It was further recognized that financing needs for the water sector are still enormous and remain a major constraint for further development. But money alone will not be enough. Political will, good governance, sound institutions and technical capacity are needed at all levels.

Excellencies,

The international community must scale up its support to the sustained efforts to meet the world's water needs and to achieve internationally agreed development goals including the MDGs.

We are right at the middle of the International Decade for Action, "Water for Life", 2005-2015, and we believe that it is a unique opportunity for the UN and its partners to deliver a coordinated response to address world's water issues. We are confident that the comprehensive outcome of the 5th World Water Forum provides an important background for our future cooperation and action.

We should continue to work together and to intensify our cooperation on water related issues in the years to come. The Sixth Water Forum which will be held in Marseille in March 2012 will provide the necessary means and environment to this end. We wish to the French authorities every success in hosting and organizing this important event.

Finally, I would like conclude with the pledge of the Heads of States "to create a more sustainable and water safe world in the 21st century".

Thank you for your attention.

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BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA

STATEMENT BY THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE AMBASSADOR JORGE VALERO

INTERACTIVE HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR ACTION "WATER FOR LIFE" 2005-2015

United Nations General Assembly

New York , March 22, 2010

Mr. President,

Let us congratulate you for convening this dialogue and also thank the distinguished panelists for their presentations.

Mr. President,

In Venezuela, we have reason to celebrate World Water Day 2010, since according to the Bolivarian Constitution "all waters are public and essential to life and development". These objectives are being accomplished in Venezuela.

We wish to reiterate before the General Assembly the commitment endorsed by Ministers and representatives of numerous countries in the 5th World Water Forum, held in Turkey in March 2009 – where they recognized in a Special Declaration that the access to water and environmental sanitation as a human right.

Senior officials from Bangladesh, Bolivia, Chad, Chile, Cuba, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Namibia, Niger, Panama, Paraguay, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Uruguay and Venezuela had agreed, on behalf of their countries, to

implement the necessary actions for the progressive implementation of this right.

Mr. President,

Since the enactment of the Water Act, on January 2nd, 2007, programs for the integrated management of water as a strategic element and indispensable for life, the welfare of our people and sustainable development have been implemented in Venezuela.

The Bolivarian Government, through the Ministry of People's Power for the Environment has been settling a social debt by taking water fit for human consumption to the entire Venezuelan population and increasing in a decisive manner the treatment of wastewater in order to improve the quality of life for all Venezuelans.

In 2009 Venezuela fulfilled the goal of the Millennium Development Goals in the form of halving the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe water. In Venezuela, 95% of all people have sustainable access to safe water and 85% benefit from the sewage collection.

Venezuela is carrying out major infrastructure projects for drinking water distribution and wastewater treatment with an average investment of $600 million a year during the presidency of Hugo Chavez. That is why our country has met this goal 6 years prior to timeline of 2015 established by the United Nations Millennium Goals.

According to our Water Act, the comprehensive management of water includes, inter alia, all the technical, scientific, economic, financial, institutional, managerial, legal and operational activities for the conservation and use of water for the collective benefit. Water is considered in all its forms, including the associated natural ecosystems and the watersheds that contain them.

In Venezuela, the social actors involved and the interests of consumers or users, considering the different territorial levels of government and environmental policy, spatial planning and socio-economic development are taken into account for the integrated management of water.

In that sense, in our country, the community participates actively in the preservation of nature through the organization of *Water Technical Tables* and *Conservation Committees*. With the development of 1500 projects, national plans have benefitted two million 800 thousand Venezuelans.

The Bolivarian Socialism that we are constructing in Venezuela is helping build a broad culture of savings and a spirit of conservation in our people.

Mr. President,

According to reports submitted by the various UN bodies, by 2025, the demand for water will exceed available supply by 56%. This situation must be viewed in a context characterized by the decrease of the sources of supply caused by global warming, which affects the production of water and generates droughts, the destruction of forests, increases pollution and logging in the rivers.

In our country, in the face of this situation, and according to the statement by the Minister of the People's Power for Environment, Alejandro Hitcher Marvaldi, in this year 2010 we will overcome the environmental situation that arises from Climate Change, in particular, the effects of the warming of the equatorial Pacific Ocean, phenomenon better known as El Niño.

According to the World Health Organization, more than one billion human beings are forced to resort to potentially harmful water consumption, thus perpetuating the humanitarian crisis that kills some 3900 children every day and thwarts progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

This situation demands that the United Nations urgently recognize that access to water and environmental sanitation is a human right and demand that the developed countries immediately implement their commitments of technology transfer and financing to developing countries of the South. Nature and especially water can no longer continue to be treated as commodities. That is the most expeditious way capitalism has chosen to destroy nature and affect its vital resources.

Mr. President,

Actions for the International High-Level Conference for the Comprehensive Mid-Term Review of the Activities of the International Decade for Action "Water for Life ", 2005-2015, to be held in Tajikistan in June 2010, should consider, as will be proposed by Venezuela, that the UN adopt principles for the preservation of water.

Mr. President,

Access to water is a fundamental human right. Water is indispensable for life, human welfare, social and economic development and is an essential resource for the eradication of poverty. Consequently, its management must be conducted respecting the unity of the hydrological cycle.

As it is a social good, the State must guarantee access to water for all social sectors, particularly the poor and most vulnerable.

It is a fundamental obligation of the State to ensure the preservation of water resources both the surface water and groundwater.

To guarantee sovereignty and national security, States should not grant water use at any time or place, in any of its sources, to foreign companies or interests.

Water conservation in any of its sources and physical states, must prevail over any economic or commercial interest. Water, as it is part of the natural heritage and sovereignty of the peoples, represents a tool for peace among nations.

Thank you very much

STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY H.E. AMBASSADOR ABDULLAH M. ALSAIDI, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF YEMEN TO THE UNITED NATIONS, CHAIRMAN OF THE GROUP OF 77, AT THE HIGH LEVEL INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE ON WORLD WATER DAY
(New York, 22 March 2010)

Your Excellency Mr. President of the General Assembly,
Your Excellency Mr. Secretary-General of the United Nations,
Your Excellency Mr. Prime Minister of Republic of Tajikistan,
Your Excellency Mr. Under Secretary-General of the United Nations,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

1. It is a privilege and pleasure to address the High-level Interactive Dialogue on World Water Day on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. At the same time, allow me first to thank the President of the General Assembly and his office for organizing this important event.

2. The Group welcomes the generous offer of the Government of Tajikistan to host, in June 2010, a high-level international conference on the mid-term comprehensive review of the implementation of the International Decade for Action, "Water for Life", 2005-2015.

3. No single human being or any other form of life can exist without water. Access to drinking water should be a human birthright, as much a birthright as access to clean air. Since about one billion people in the South lacks access to safe water supplies and two billion do not have access to adequate sanitation, it is vital that the international community increase its efforts in order to facilitate access to drinkable water and better sanitation services for their populations.

4. For that reason, provision of water is critical for poverty eradication. The challenges facing developing countries in this area include improving the quality of drinking water, addressing causes of pollution and contamination of water, water leakages, natural disasters, and drought. Efforts of developing countries are constrained by the unavailability of appropriate technologies. Furthermore due to the lack of financial resources developing countries find it difficult to increase investment in water.

5. The Group wishes to reiterate that the provision of safe drinking water is a critical element of poverty eradication. The lack of safe water, sanitation and hygiene remains one of the world's most urgent health issues. According to the World Health Organization, 1.4 million child deaths result from diarrhea; 500,000 deaths from malaria;

860,000 child deaths from malnutrition; and in addition, 5 million people can be protected from being seriously incapacitated from lymphatic filariasis and another 5 million from trachoma. In improving the provision of safe drinking water, however, developing countries have limited financial and technological capacity to respond to the growing demand for water for agriculture, industrial and potable water. The adequate wastewater treatment facilities in developing countries are very limited, and the public health problems caused by the lack of these facilities strangle our economic and social process. Thus developing countries need the support of the international community to improve the infrastructure for the provision of water, including for water supply networks in the cities and their repair. Access by people living in rural and remote areas in the developing countries to safe drinking water continues to be a major problem due to the huge investment and capacity needed. Natural disasters also have devastating impacts on the ability of developing countries to provide water. Technology transfer and provision of financial resources are crucial for conservation, efficient, equitable, optimal and sustainable use of waters in order to satisfy the human, ecological needs and the demand generated by the productive processes of countries and to guarantee the access to this fundamental resource to all, the urban, rural and indigenous communities. In this regard, the Group will actively participate in the upcoming CSD-18 cycle. The outcome of the CSD regional meetings stress that sound waste management is a key aspect that is often not given the necessary priority it deserves.

6. According to the FAO, one in five developing countries will face water shortages by 2030. The Near East, North Africa and parts of Asia are subject to water scarcity and stress. Taking into consideration also that agriculture is by far the biggest water use, accounting for some 70% of all water withdrawals (industries 20%, domestic 10% while daily drinking water needs of human are very small – four liters per person), it is necessary that the high-level dialogue take into consideration these important issues.

7. I would like to reiterate that the Group of 77 and China believes that the Millennium Declaration targets on poverty eradication and access to freshwater should be supported by targets on the means of implementation.

8. I wish this High-level Interactive Dialogue on World Water Day the success it merits.

I thank you.

Permanent Observer Mission
of Palestine
to the United Nations

البعثة الراقبة الدائمة
لفلسطين
لدى الأمم المتحدة

Paper on

the Situation of Water in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem

submitted by

the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations

to

the High-level interactive dialogue on water – International Decade for Action, "Water for Life, 2005-2015"

United Nations General Assembly
Sixty-fourth session

New York , 22 March 2010

115 East 65th Street New York, NY 10065 Tel. (212) 288-8500 Fax (212) 517-2377

The Situation of Water in the Occupied Palestinian Territory,including East Jerusalem

1. Palestine shares the concerns and problems that most developing countries have with regards to water. At the same time, Palestine confronts other problems unique to its situation as a country still living under foreign occupation.

2. The Middle East region is known for the scarcity of water. Though this shortage is caused by nature and not man-made, it is compounded by the lack of cooperation and sometimes hegemony of one party's access over the others'.

Background:

3. For over 42 years, Palestine and its land have witnessed all kinds of cruelty, destruction and abuse at the hands of Israel, the occupying Power, targeting Palestinian life, livelihoods, and resources. The right of the Palestinian people to access to water resources and better utilize it was not exempted from these violations. Following the Israeli occupation in 1967, and in violation of international law, Israel took control over all natural freshwater resources including surface water, underground aquifers located beneath in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, in addition to exclusive access to the Jordan River Basin. Through a series of military orders the occupation authorities deprived Palestinians access to their water resources (Israeli occupation military order - IOMO 92 of 15 August 1967), forbade the construction of new water infrastructure (IOMO 158 of 19 November 1967) and transferred control of water resources to the military occupation commander (IOMO 291 of 19 December 1968).

4. In 1982, Israel, the occupying Power, illegally placed the water supply system of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, under the control of "Mekerot", the Israeli national water company. It has used that control to engineer a situation of artificial water shortages throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, exploiting 90% of freshwater and allocating only 10% for Palestinian use, while simultaneously preventing Palestinians from developing essential water and sewerage infrastructure, drilling new water wells on Palestinian land, rehabilitating existing wells, utilizing surface water or even accessing areas in the Occupied Palestinian Territory with fresh water springs.

5. In addition to serious discrimination in access to water and negligence in the development of water facilities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Israel has often directly attacked those that existed and that are essential for the provision of water to the population, in a grave violation to its obligations under international humanitarian law. One example after Israeli occupation forces declared the lower Jordan River a closed military zone is the destruction of about 150 pumps that provided Palestinian farmers with water from Jordan River and restricted Palestinian access to the only surface water source in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. As a result of that action, the Palestinian farmers were prevented from pumping water from the river for agricultural irrigation whereas the illegal settlements in the area were allowed to continue to do so. Also, in the summer of 1979, Israeli military authorities destroyed the irrigation canals alongside many of the citrus and banana plantations in the district of Al-Jiftlik on grounds of establishing a new security belt, thus causing the desiccations and destruction of extensive areas of crops.

6. Indeed, the Israeli occupying forces institutionalised discrimination towards Palestinians and administered the Occupied Palestinian Territory in a way that ensured minimal access to water by Palestinians, while embarked on building an exclusive Israeli water network. Water supplies to this water network were mainly extracted from wells in the Occupied Palestinian Territory to serve illegal settlers and

factories in the illegal Israeli settlements built on the Occupied Palestinian Territory and selling the surplus to Palestinians.

7. Following the launch of the peace process in 1993, the Palestinian and Israeli side signed Oslo II agreement in 28 September 1995, which has put in place short-term arrangements, for five years, for the issue of water which is considered amongst the six final status issues that was supposed to be agreed on a final peace agreement. Article 40. of the agreement, inter alia, recognizes the Palestinian water rights, set governance arrangements between both parties and give the Palestinian Authority management over water supply institutions and Infrastructure. However, the implementation of this agreement was again undermined because Israel constantly banned Palestinian water projects, hindering any development, prevented the Palestinians from accessing their additional water allotment which was established in the agreement and continued to exploit their water resources to the benefit of illegal settlements. For example, from 1995 until today, Israel has not allowed the Palestinians to dig a single well to use the waters of the western aquifer but only the eastern aquifer which requires up to 800-m-deep digging at high costs for low-quality water, and in rare cases the north-eastern aquifer. Instead of being able to develop their water resources, this situation has forced Palestinians to purchase water from Israeli companies that are exploiting their resources. Add to that the institutionalized layers of closures, restrictions and siege that undermine the ability of Palestinians to meet basic human needs including water.

Current situation of water in the Occupied Palestinian Territory:

8. Currently, 90% of water in the West Bank goes to Israel. The Palestinians are allotted just 10% of the water that is extracted from their own land. Palestinian villages and farmers are monitored by meters fitted to pumps and punished for overuse. Illegal Israeli settlers are not constrained, and permitted to use more advanced pumping equipment which basically means the settlers use 10 times as much water per capita as each Palestinian. According to the Israeli NGO, B'Tselem, more than 200 Palestinian communities, with a total of 215,000 inhabitants, are not connected to a running water network and are forced to buy water from private suppliers, using up to 20 per cent of their income for the purchase of water. The World Bank reported in April 2009 that water withdrawals per head of the Palestinian population in the West Bank were declining and that there were real water shortages. Water withdrawals per capita for Palestinians in the West Bank are about one quarter of those available to Israeli settlers and have declined over the last decade. At these extremely low levels of consumption in both the domestic and agricultural spheres, Palestinians rank lowest in access to freshwater in the region. Compounding the problem is the nearly 5.5 million cubic metres of wastewater from illegal settlements flowing into West Bank available natural reservoirs, aquifers, streams, valleys that many Palestinians depend on. Since most of Israel's illegal settlements are located on ridges and hilltops, their untreated wastewater flows to nearby Palestinian communities, which are generally located further down the slope. A Palestinian study showed that crops and water sources of 70 Palestinian villages near settlements were contaminated.

9. The most recent studies and reports indicate to what extent Israel, the occupying Power, has sucked water out of Palestinian life. A report published by Amnesty International in October 2009 discusses in detail the level of discriminatory and illegal practices by Israel bringing into sharp focus the harsh reality of Palestinian communities across the Occupied Territory. While illegal Israeli settlers enjoy unfettered access to Palestinian water, consuming up to 300 litres a day, Palestinians have less than the bare minimum they need for a dignified and healthy life because they are provided with barely 70 litres of water a day, less than the minimum standard set by the WHO. In some cases, the situation is even worse, with some Palestinian families barely able to access 20 litres a day, the minimum recommended for humanitarian emergencies. Through its policy of water discrimination, Israel has manufactured a situation whereby 9000 illegal Israeli settlers in the Jordan Valley consume as much water as one third of the entire Palestinian population in the West Bank of 2.5 million. These restrictions increase when illegal settlers'

water demands increase particularly in the summer months and water supply is reduced from 15 to 25% to Palestinian civilians.

10. Moreover and while Israel continues to divert Palestinian water for the use of illegal settlers, it continues to deny Palestinians the right to repair existing water networks, dig wells, build cisterns, or carry out any work that could help manage this manufactured water crisis, which is undoubtedly one of the most stark examples of the discriminatory policies of the occupation. Such a reality has had a devastating effect on the living standards of Palestinians across the Occupied Palestinian Territory, with some communities, like those in southern Al-Khalil (Hebron) left completely parched, their generations-old lifestyle of herding and agriculture on the brink of extinction.

11. These bans are compounded with another on-going illegal policy of land confiscation, settlement expansion, and wall construction. This colonial regime that has institutionalized layers of siege on the Palestinian people and their access to natural resources has dealt a heavy blow to the agriculture sector, which is one of the main pillars of Palestinian economy and heritage. During the first phase of the illegal Wall construction, Israel, the occupying Power, confiscated 200 cisterns and 36 groundwater wells while threatening at least 14 others. All this, while the illegal Wall's route, and the illegal settlements it encompass, are built on Palestine's most important water resources, depriving Palestinians from their right to develop or use their resources. They watch as Israeli illegal settlers splash their water around while they are thirsty, their crops burned under the sun without water.

12. This overall grim situation has resulted in yet another economic burden for the Palestinian people. Palestinian families now pay 12% more of their household income on water, bringing into question their very ability to access fresh water. After all, the first requirement of accessibility is affordability and this requirement, is now in doubt, due to Israel's multi-layered complex system of movement restrictions and closure regime enforced by brutal force and an illegal wall that is devouring Palestinian land, resources, and dreams.

13. In Gaza, the picture is even bleaker. Israel's inhumane siege and illegal exploitation of shared aquifers in addition to its extensive exploitation of ground waters, while its illegal settlements were still in Gaza, has made it so that less than 10% of Gaza's water meets the international standards of safety. According to the World Bank, only 5 to 10 per cent of wells in the Gaza Strip yield safe drinkable water. The water in the Gaza strip suffers from very high levels of contamination caused by bacteria, nitrates, chloride and other contaminants. Some 80 million liters of raw or partly treated sewage water have been discharged daily into residential areas and into the Mediterranean Sea since January 2008, causing serious environmental and health problems, owing to the inability to build or rehabilitate permanent sewage treatment plants in Gaza. These plants, that were damaged by Israel's attacks during its war on Gaza at the end of 2008, cannot be built because of the Israeli crippling siege consequently constant leaks of untreated waste water into the aquifer continues leading to its further deterioration. Security Council resolution 1860 (2009) and General Assembly Special Emergency Session Resolution ES10/18, called for an immediate lifting of the siege. In line with its consistent and abject disregard to the will of the international community and international humanitarian law, Israel continues to defy both.

14. A September 2009 report by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) warned that Gaza is on the verge of water and sanitation collapse. UNEP points to increased salinity from salt water intrusion caused by over-abstraction of ground water as a key concern, alongside pollution from sewage and agricultural runoff. Reinforcing this assessment, Amnesty International reports that the water situation in Gaza has reached a crisis point and highlights that today 90-95 percent of Gaza's water is unfit for human consumption due to sewage and seawater infiltration.

15. The Secretary-General of the United Nations in his report on Israeli practices affecting rights of Palestinian people (A/64/517) of 6 November 2009, points out that Israeli attacks on Gaza's water and sewage systems left them on the verge of collapse; 48 of Gaza's 130 water wells were not functioning due to lack of electricity and damage to pipes. Approximately 45 additional water wells were operating only partially for the same reasons. Restrictions on the entry of construction materials have greatly hampered the repair of those pipelines and water wells. Approximately 10,000 people lack access to the water network, and about 60 percent of the population do not have continuous access to water. OCHA Humanitarian Monitor report of 31 October 2009 states that limited availability of building resources, spare parts, and fuel, since the imposition of the Israeli blockade in June 2007, has prevented the adequate operation and maintenance of the water and sanitation infrastructure in Gaza creating a significant public health and environmental hazard.

Right to water:

16. The Palestinians accept international law and how it governs the allocation of freshwater resources shared by Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

17. Israel, the occupying Power, is obligated to ensure that the Palestinian population under its occupation is able to realize its right to an adequate standard of living, the highest attainable standard of health and adequate housing and food, as elaborated in articles 11 and 12 of the International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, including their right to water. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, noted that "the right to water clearly falls within the category of guarantees essential for securing an adequate standard of living, particularly since it is one of the most fundamental conditions for survival. The right to water is also inextricably related to the right to the highest attainable standard of health and the rights to adequate housing and adequate food. The right should also be seen in conjunction with other rights enshrined in the International Bill of Human Rights, foremost amongst them the right to life and human dignity" (E/C.12/2002/11, para. 3). Moreover, the obligation to guarantee that the right to water is enjoyed without discrimination prohibits any discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status, which has the intention or effect of nullifying or impairing the equal enjoyment or exercise of the right to water.

18. Israel, as the occupying Power, is also responsible under international law for the well-being, including public health and hygiene, of the occupied population. Article 56 of the Fourth Geneva Convention imposes on the occupying State primary responsibility for ensuring public health and hygiene in order to prevent the spread of disease and epidemics. The obligation to protect water sources is also derived from the occupying State's duty to ensure "public order and safety". This duty includes not only the negative obligation to refrain from harming the local population, for example, by damaging or polluting water sources and their supply, but also the positive obligation to take suitable measures to protect the population from dangers to which it is exposed. Furthermore, the Hague Regulations state that the occupying State "shall be regarded only as administrator and usufructuary" of the natural resources of the occupied territory.

19. Targeting civilian water facilities and depriving the civilian population of water supply is considered a war crime. An attack aimed at civilian objects, as defined in Article 52 of the First Additional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions of 1977, is classified as a war crime, where it causes serious injury to body or health and excessive damage to civilian objects and where the perpetrators knew that would be the result. Furthermore, according to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), which was adopted in 2002, such an attack is classified a war crime, regardless of the resultant damage. Attacking civilian targets is also prohibited under customary law, by which all countries are bound. Perpetrators of

such crimes must face justice and are bound to pay full compensation to the victims to restore the destroyed water infrastructures to its full capacity.

20. The United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict found that, as a result of its actions to destroy food and water supplies and infrastructure, Israel has violated article 1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and article 12 (2) of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

21. According to international law, which calls for "equitable and reasonable" allocation of water among the parties with a claim to shared watercourses, Palestinians should have full sovereignty over all the eastern aquifer resources that lie beneath the West Bank, and equitable water rights regarding the western and northeastern aquifers, as these are recharged almost entirely from the West Bank. Under the law of international watercourses, as reflected in the 1997 UN Convention, Palestine is entitled to an equitable and reasonable allocation of shared freshwater resources, including those in the four main aquifers and the Jordan River. Under international law, Israel must also pay compensation for the past and ongoing illegal exploitation of Palestinian water resources.

22. Human rights are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. Depriving people of the right to water involves the violation of a wide array of other human rights as well, most notably the rights to life, health, housing, food and work. The denial of Access to water results in grave and widespread human rights violations, including in relation to fulfillment of the right to health and the right to adequate safe drinking water.

23. Various General Assembly resolutions, including resolution 64/93 as well as Security Council resolution 465 (1980), whereby the Council, taking note of the reports of the Commission of the Security Council established under resolution 446 (1979) to examine the situation relating to settlements in the Arab territories occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, expressed its concern and requested the Commission to continue to examine the situation relating to settlements in the Arab territories occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, and to investigate the reported serious depletion of natural resources, particularly water resources, with a view to ensuring the protection of those important natural resources of the territories under occupation.

24. In October 2009, the United Nations General Assembly had adopted resolution 64/185, which reaffirmed the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people over their natural resources and called on Israel to cease all actions that threatened those resources, including water resources. The Assembly had also expressed concern at the widespread destruction by Israel of vital infrastructure, including water pipelines and sewage networks, in particular, in the Gaza Strip. Since December 1973, the General Assembly overwhelmingly adopts similar resolution on the permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people over their natural resources. This resolution is submitted every year because Israel, the occupying Power, has adopted and enacted a policy of exploiting and systematically destroying the natural resources of the Palestinian people, in grave violation of its obligations as an occupying Power under international humanitarian law and international human rights law, particularly the Covenant of Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, as outlined in the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice of 9 July 2004.

25. Moreover, Israel's illegal policies also violate the principle of permanent sovereignty of peoples and nations over their natural resources, which is an established principle in international law, as outlined in the "Declaration on Permanent Sovereignty over Natural Resources", adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 1803 (XVII) of 1962. This declaration, to which Israel is a signatory, specifically states that permanent sovereignty over natural wealth and resources is "a basic constituent of the right to self-determination" and that violating the rights of peoples to sovereignty over their natural wealth and

resources is "contrary to the spirit and principles of the Charter of the United Nations". This Israeli policy also violates international environmental law.

26. Unfortunately, Israel's inherent disrespect for the above-mentioned international laws and covenants has caused untold damage to the natural resources and environment in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the Occupied Syrian Golan, as described in several United Nations reports including the Secretary-General's report, contained in document A/64/77–E/2009/13. In response, the international community has for over thirty five years repeatedly called upon the occupying Power to cease its exploitation and depletion of the natural resources, including water resources of the occupied Arab territories, starting with resolution 3175 (XXVIII) of 17 December 1973.

Conclusion:

27. The fair allocation of water rights is a critical element for future political stability and achieving peace in the region as a whole. Water is at the heart of the Palestinian-Israeli peace process and it is one of the permanent status issues, along with the issues of Jerusalem, borders, refugees, settlements and security. The Quartet [the United States, the European Union, the United Nations, and the Russian Federation] constantly re-affirmed that unilateral actions taken by either party cannot prejudge the outcome of negotiations and will not be recognized by the international community.

28. When calamities hit, the world rallies to lend a helping hand to those suffering, providing them with water, food, and shelter. The Palestinians now wonder why the world stands idle as they are forced to be parched, denied access to the water that is rightfully theirs, when lending a hand would not cost resources but rather require political will. This situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory is tolerated nowhere else in the world. It is also the direct result of a discriminatory colonial policy that has made it a policy to build wealth and achieve prosperity at the expense of an entire people and by illegally using their water resources.

29. The actions and policies, discussed above, are those of a State attempting to market itself as a country in the "forefront of these advances – by leading innovations in science and technology, medicine and biology, agriculture and water, energy and the environment." But truth overcomes such sinister shams. Israel must be told that its illegal colonial actions will be combated and eliminated. The occupying Power must know that the international community shall not tolerate these deplorable actions anymore because commitment to the principles of international law shall outweigh any other considerations that have so far made a mockery of our international system.

30. The water situation in Palestine, while reflecting a very difficult, almost extreme reality, is not meant to relay despair or surrender to a fate of misery. On the contrary, it is to remind all Member States that ours is a shared fate, based on mutual principles we have enshrined in laws that must govern our practices and policies at all times. Allowing these principles to be broken or disregarded once threatens the very equilibrium of the system we belong to and to which we must all hold onto. It is unacceptable, in fact inexcusable, for such a situation to continue. This misery is not the result of a natural disaster; it is not the by-product of domestic failures. Instead, it is the reflections of our shortcomings as a community of nations - to have allowed this impunity, this discrimination, this illegal occupation to continue at our watch, degrading with every right violated the credibility and viability of the system and principles of our international system. If continued, this situation would lead to further perpetuation of the conflict, but it is not an unattainable situation and it could stop with the collective and active political will of the international community.

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Statement by

H.E. Ms. Marlene Moses

Permanent Representative of the Republic of Nauru

on behalf of the

Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS)

High-Level Interactive Dialogue on the Implementation

of the International Decade for Action "Water for Life"

Panel I: Water and Millennium Development Goals

World Water Day

22 March 2010

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS) represented at the United Nations, namely, Fiji, Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and my own country, Nauru.

At the outset, I would like to thank you Mr President for convening this meeting and all the panelists for their contributions to the issue.

We align ourselves with the statement delivered by Australia on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum.

The Pacific SIDS consider that it is constructive to be assessing water and the MDGs, not only in the context of the international decade for action "Water for Life," but also as part of our work for the review of all the MDGs, as well as review of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (MSI). While all MDGs are interrelated, access to clean drinking water and effective sanitation are essential to achieving many of the other MDGs and are also critical to sustainable development.

Progress towards MDG7 in relation to sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation remains a serious challenge in the Pacific region. As we have highlighted in other interactive dialogues on MDGs generally, data limitations constrain our ability to have an accurate picture of progress towards all MDGs, and the situation in relation to water is no different.

Accordingly, one of the principal issues we wish to prioritise this year, as part of the high level reviews of the MDGs, and the five year review of the Mauritius Strategy, is to work with the UN, our regional organisations and our development partners to improve data collection in our region and the coordination of regional data with data held by the UN. We ask for the support of the international community to address this important issue.

Based on the information that is available, it appears that approximately half of the Pacific SIDS are on track to halving the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation. Much work remains to be done in the countries that are not on track and the gap between rural and urban areas is of concern, with rural areas, including the outer islands, further behind in progress.

In this respect, we observe with concern that the Note of the Secretariat entitled "Water, climate change and disasters," dated 2 March 2010 which states that "[t]he world is on track to meet the MDG drinking water targets … ." In a similar vein, the Note of the Secretariat, entitled "Water and the internationally-agreed development goals" dated 2 March 2010 also indicates the MDG for safe drinking water on a global scale appears likely to be reached in most regions, with sub-Saharan Africa identified as the only exception. This indicates a gap between the information held by the UN on the Pacific and regional information as the Pacific as a region is not on track in relation to access to safe drinking water.

There have however, been a number of significant initiatives in the Pacific to address water and sanitation issues and I would like to thank our development partners for their invaluable support. Australia has supported communities in Fiji, Vanuatu and Tuvalu improve household rainwater catchment and storage. New Zealand has provided four countries with water testing equipment and in country training as part of a water quality monitoring capacity building programme.

In my own country of Nauru, the Italian Government has supported a project that delivered household water tanks to 150 households, responding to the very real need to address water shortages. This project was implemented under of a wider project with Italy and the Pacific SIDS that addresses the constraints that we face in accessing financial resources by providing a Pacific friendly template. We are grateful for Italy's support and hope this relationship can serve as a model for other bilateral donors.

Going forward, key issues that we would like to achieve with our development partners and our regional agencies to ensure that progress is not only maintained, but accelerated, are to increase commitments to capacity building in countries in relation to practical technologies for our island nations and the urgent need to harmonise and co-ordinate funding and address predictability of funding for essential services in relation to clean drinking water and sanitation that are currently project-funded.

Mr President

Finally, while recognising there will be a separate panel addressing water in relation to climate change, we consider it useful to link the topics of our panel discussions. The adverse impacts of climate change are already undermining water security in the Pacific and constraining progress towards MDG7 in relation to access to safe drinking water. Our region has vulnerable freshwater supplies and climate change threatens extreme water shortages.

Keeping the Promise of the Millennium Declaration requires adequately responding to the climate crisis. We call upon the international community to keep up the urgency of the response to climate change in 2010, and to work in an inclusive and productive manner towards a legally binding outcome from COP16 in Mexico, under the two-track process of the Bali Action Plan.

I thank you.

Water & the MDG

Toward a New Mobilization During the Next Five Years

Remarks by Mr. Richard Granier, CEO Hestiun Group, delivered at the high level interactive session convened by the President of the 64th United Nations General Assembly, World Water Day, 22 March 2010

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Your Excellencies

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

First I would like to commend **His Excellency, Dr. Ali Abdussalam Treki**, President of the 64th General Assembly, for sponsoring this initiative, which no doubt will give a new scope and meaning to World Water Day 2010 as well as a greater sense of urgency to the global water challenge.

I believe, Mr. Chairman, that both the theme and the timing could not be more propitious as we enter the last five years of the original timeframe for meeting the agreed targets of the Millennium Development Goals. It is my hope that our deliberations today will serve as a catalyst to mobilize both the global will and our considerable strengths - public and private - to meet the challenge of the one resource on which all life depends which is crucialnot just for poverty alleviation and a stable and sustainable human future, but in a very real sense for the security of our fragile world.

My company stands ready to partner with the United Nations and other relevant agencies to meet the aims of the MDG.

Mr. Chairman, my name is Richard Granier and I am the CEO and Chairman of the Hestiun Group of Companies.We are deeply committed to real and effective corporate social responsibility and, as the records will show, are endeavoring to support the work of the United Nations in its various fields of activities through our five principalareas of action. -I would like to thank the United Nations for

giving my company the honor of being the official sponsor of World Water Day 2010, which is, to my mind, one of the most important world events on the yearly calendar I am an entrepreneur, and as such could have viewed my main goal in life as simply gaining personal & professional success. However, like many of us here today, I am also a family man and firmly believe that my children, and children all around the world, have a right to a better future. Everyone has a basic right to food, water and shelter.

I have instilled my personal beliefs in my company, The Hestiun Group, where we believe commercial success is indivisible from a commitment to our community and the environment. As a diversified investment holding, Hestiun invests as a priority in areas such as environment, energy, healthcare and construction - aiming to provide products and services that provide solutions to some of the world's biggest health and environmental concerns. Through Hestiun Construction, for example, we are building fast, economical, environmentally-friendly mass social housing – giving people a place to call home.

Most of us here, I dare say, take having a home for granted, and having access to safe, clean drinking water as a given. How can we live with ourselves when more than 1 billion people worldwide do not have even such a basic necessity?

Developing countries and areas affected by conflict are clearly the most at risk - but surprisingly even some of our major developed cities have water hygiene problems – even here in New York, where there is a battle to keep an aging sewage system working.

In developing countries the main issue is the quality of the water that is available – it is too often disease ridden through pollutants such as raw sewage and untreated industrial waste.

The solution is to find a way of cleaning the water at source. At Hestiun we have found a number of ways to do this through our specialized environment division. Hestiun Environment concentrates on indentifying, researching and developing companies that aim to provide products and solutions to our environmental concerns. We have therefore invested in a number of companies that are forging the future of water treatment.

One of these is Bionetix, which has created a unique formula of specially selected bacteria which digest organic waste quickly and completely, without any use of chemicals. This system has the ability to clean up entire lakes, lagoons and rivers, and the formula can be used in sewage treatment plants, agriculture, and many other applications. In November 2009, Bionetix won the Global Human Settlements Green Technology Award.

In many developing countries, building large water treatment facilities in the first place is expensive, and even then the infrastructure to actually deliver the water to the people isnon existant. Roads arepoor, electricitysupply is unreliable and laying pipelines is both expensive and environmentally undesirable

Even if there is access to water locally – through a well, lake or river - it still needs to be purified with chemicals. This involves expensive transportation, appropriate storage, technical knowledge and likely ecological risk. These considerations render this method difficult in remote locations and effectively impossible in areas of conflict.

Our company, StarAqua, has invented the solution, the “Oxymatic”. For this product, they won the same Global Human Settlements Green Technology Award as Bionetix – the first time there have been two winners, but both systems were deemed to be of equal innovative merit in providing effective solutions. I am proud to say thatboth Bionetix and StarAqua achieved this accolade in competition with many much larger international companies.

The Oxymatic is a system which not only controls bacteria, viruses, algae etc, but it also clarifies, filters, removesodour, taste and other contaminates such as pesticides and organic matter – all without the use of chlorine or other chemical. The water produced is purewith no side effects to human health.

Without getting too technical, the patented “Oxymatic” system is based on the formation of a disinfectant agent when an electrical current is applied to copper and titanium electrodes. The electrodes produce hydrolysis which breaks down the water molecules.

To re-iterate –the “Oxymatic” does not need chemicals – so there is no transportation requirements. It is low maintenance, simple to install and use – and ecologically safe.

Using this system means that water can be made hygienic at source – locally, less expensively, and without the need of infrastructure – including mains electricity. It can be run from a solar panel or a wind turbine.

It can even be controlled remotely using modern communication technology such as mobile phone networks.

All these benefits mean thatthe “Oxymatic” can be installed in many individual locations, saving on the cost of a large treatment plant for a wide area.

So when a person goes to the pump from their well they can get clean, drinkable, safe water. But what happens when they fill up a bucket, take it back to their home, and pour water into an unhygienic cooking vessel?

StarAqua have the answer..The Oxypen is a pen-shaped device which you drop into a cup of water, or a cooking pot – it hydrolyses and disinfects the water in minutes. Eh Voila! Instant drinkable water!The Oxypen can be used more than once, is powered usingminimal battery power or solar, and is incredibly durable and easy to ship. By the end of this year, this revolutionary product will be ready and could change the lives of millions of people.

Hestiun is very proud to be working with these companies, and we hope that through these products, and the future ones currently being developed, we will assist in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. We believe together we can make it happen.

Thank you for your kind attention. I and my team here today, including the pioneersfrom Bionetix and StarAqua, look forward to answering your questions.

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High-Level Interactive Dialogue on the Implementation of the International Decade for Action "Water for Life"

Panel II: Water, Climate Change and Disasters

World Water Day

22 March 2010

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Pacific Small Island Developing States represented at the United Nations, namely, Fiji, Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and my own country, Nauru.

I would like to begin by thanking the panelists for their helpful contributions to this issue. The topic for this panel is of particular relevance to the PSIDS. Our islands have vulnerable freshwater supplies, we are highly susceptible to natural disasters, and we are at the front line of climate change - droughts, rising sea levels and increased intensity and frequency of tropical storms is the projection for our future. We therefore welcome the international focus on this critical issue and look forward to concrete outcomes.

Mr President

Rainfall is the primary source of freshwater for most islands in the Pacific. The adverse impacts of climate change are undermining the dependability of this resource in our region. Changing rainfall patterns are projected to increase the frequency and intensity of droughts. The IPCC Technical Paper on Climate Change and Water (2008) states that "[o]bservational records and climate projections provide abundant evidence that freshwater resources are vulnerable and have the potential to be strongly impacted by climate change, with wide-ranging consequences for human societies and ecosystems."

Saltwater intrusion into freshwater supplies is a major effect of climate change and has already caused severe freshwater shortages in a number of low-lying islands. Additionally, storm surge and coastal erosion threaten coastal settlements and the transport, water and sanitation infrastructure that support them.

Mr President

Turning now to disasters, it is well known that the Pacific region is highly vulnerable to natural disasters. Last week, two cyclones hit our region causing significant damage, cyclone Thomas struck Fiji and Cyclone Ului struck the

Solomon Islands, as well as our neighbours in Australia. The costs of reconstruction following an extreme weather event can be crippling to the economy of an small island State.

We have undertaken several successful regional initiatives to manage scarce freshwater supplies and build resilience to natural disasters. However, challenges remain, particularly in the area of disaster risk reduction and early warning systems.

Yet, the greatest challenge is an adequate international response to climate change. Better management and building resilience will only go so far, we need urgent international cooperation to respond to the climate crisis. We take this opportunity to express concern about recent signals by some that ambitions should be lowered for Cancun. We urge all countries not to be fearful by what happened to Copenhagen, but for us to learn the lessons and to increase our efforts to work together.

We urge the international community to work inclusively and productively under the two tracks of the Bali Action Plan for legally binding outcomes that can be ratified on long term cooperative actions and on further commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol in Mexico at the end of this year.

Finally, on the critical issue of financing for adaptation, we also urge the international community to fulfil the pledges made in relation to fast track financing, as from our perspective we see very little progress and we need to improve our resistance to increased droughts and severe weather events.

I thank you.

WATER FOR LIFE, 2005 – 2015

Ing. Jorge Jurado, National Secretary for Water, Minister and Presidential Cabinet Member of Ecuador.

On December 2003 the General Assembly of the United Nations sees the necessity to deepen a World wide conscious on the water and declared " The International decade for Action: Water for Life, 2005 – 2015".

The government of Ecuador led by president Rafael Correa assumed the commitment and has made deep constitutional and institutional changes about water management, and actually there is a change coming through a new law of water aiming a towards an equitable and democratic access to the water.

The water like a fundamental human right

Ecuador within its constitution recognizes the water like a fundamental human right, as well as a strategic national patrimony of public use.

Therefore, we think that United Nations should adopt these principles. It is a proposal that since country we do to the rest of nations.

Although this concept already has been handled weakly before within the UN, it is the moment that we assume as States the challenge to defend, and to promote it in order to obtain its real fulfillment.

The Millennium Development Goals have several commitments in which the water constitute the central axis, between the fundamental ones are:

- To reduce to half the number of people who live without access to clean and safe water for human consumption for 2015.
- To stop the non sustainable operation of hydric resources.
- To foment the integrated arrangement of hydric resources
- To elaborate plans on the effective use of water.
- To reduce to half the number of people who do not have access to the basic sanitation for 2015.

For these reasons we insist on the necessity to make part of the Universal Declaration of Human rights, the fundamental human right to the water.

The necessity of hydric management on the continental region must be developed considering a political understanding between its countries.

Ecuador has proposed the South American Agenda for Water like a fundamental commitment to develop a regional integral Management on this matter. This exposition could serve as an example for regional consensuses from and between the south countries that guarantee the sustainability and water and hydric resources conservation.

- The approaches and sector management of water focused only on urgent needs has not allowed a global integral and integrating vision to make possible a sustainable handling care and about all its necessities and uses to obtain an equitable distribution.

The governability of water must be considered like an essential element of adaptation to the climatic change

- There could be impulse new global and regional initiatives to obtain as soon as possible a guarantee the access to safe clean water in amount and quality for human consumption.
- Processes of emergent adaptation must be generated to face opportunely the risks and extreme changes related to the variations in the global, regional, and local hydrologic cycles as they constitute the droughts and floods.

A new global institutionality for water

Ecuador considers that the subject water has high-priority and it needs all the necessary attention in Nations United by its intimate relation with environmental, nourishing, social, political, power and economic subjects of nations..

For that reason, Ecuador proposes to advance in the discussion of water governance at multilateral level for the creation of a Permanent Commission for water at the United nations of Nations United for the Water as well as an Inter government Panel in which all the States take part.

- We recognize efforts of different initiatives unfolded, but insist that water can only be managed in an integral way inside the Nations United, that allows the

expression of its 192 state wills in a sovereign way and in exercise of its respective national policies.

- Taking into account that increasing shortage of water for human consumption can become a threat for world peace, Ecuador considers pertinent and opportune to initiate as soon as possible some actions like the creation of a plan of global action that integrates all the water initiatives which are carried out in United Nations. This Action Plan could depend under the Permanent Commission to be created or, in the process of another instance at the maximum possible level.

High Level Interactive Dialogue on Water
International Decade for Action "Water for Life: 2005-2015"
Panel II: Water, Climate Change and Disasters

Sálvano Briceño, Director of UNISDR

Climate Change and Disasters

Natural hazards by themselves do not cause disasters – it is the combination of an exposed, vulnerable and ill-prepared population or community with a hazard event that results in a disaster. Climate change will therefore affect disaster risks in two ways, firstly through the likely increase in weather and climate hazards, and secondly and more importantly, through increases in vulnerability of communities to natural hazards, particularly through ecosystem degradation, reductions in water affecting food availability, adding to insufficient land use planning, rapid unplanned urban growth and increasing poverty in many countries. Climate change will add yet another stress to those further reducing communities' ability to cope with even the existing levels of weather and water related hazards.

Over the period 1991-2005, 3,470 million people were affected by disasters, 960,000 people died and economic losses were estimated at US$ 1,193 billion. Least developed countries are disproportionately affected, owing to intrinsic vulnerabilities to hazards and comparatively lower capacities for risk reduction measures. Small island developing states are also particularly vulnerable – Grenada's losses of 919 US$ million as a result of hurricane Ivan in 2004 were equal to 2.5 times its GDP. Over the last two decades (1988-2007), 76% of all disaster events were hydrological, meteorological or climatic in nature, these accounted for 45% of the deaths and 79% of the economic losses caused by natural hazards.

Aware of this, climate change negotiators identified the need for reducing vulnerability and disaster risks in the Bali Action Plan, as key elements for achieving adaptation to climate change and sustainable development.

Reducing disaster risk will result in many gains: reduced impact of disasters, better adaptation to climate change, achievement of MDGs and facilitate sustainable development

Earlier, in 2005, governments addressed the issue of disaster risk reduction and climate as part of the Hyogo Framework for Action: 2005-2015, which was adopted in Kobe, Hyogo, in 2005.

Disaster risks are increasing worldwide[1], threatening the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, owing largely to a mix of unplanned urban growth, vulnerable livelihoods and ecosystem degradation. The aim of the Hyogo Framework for Action is to reverse this trend by substantially reducing disaster losses and building resilience to disasters.

The immediate task is to capitalize on the common concerns of CC adaptation and disaster risk reduction, both in policies and practical action, and to seek the multiple win of reducing disaster

[1] 2009 Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction, Risk and poverty in a changing climate, Invest today for a safer tomorrow (United Nations)

risk, adapting to CC, MDGs and sustainable development. Many countries are more active than others in identifying and reducing existing disaster risks preparing better for the changing future.

Key for success: breaking the institutional barriers

In the past and still in many places, the two policy fields have operated largely in isolation from each other. Environment authorities usually have responsibility for guiding climate change adaptation, whereas authorities for disaster management, civil defence and home affairs typically have responsibility for promoting disaster risk reduction. Increasingly, however, countries are seeing the shortcomings of such "silo" approaches and are seeking to systematically link climate change and disaster risk reduction, often as an element of their development planning. In some cases governments have even combined the two into new legislation or in a single ministerial responsibility. In other cases, it is local governments who are taking significant initiatives to address the two development needs in a coherent way.

The long historical experience in reducing risk to natural hazards can contribute greatly to CC adaptation, starting with implementation of adequate policy and institutional approaches, such as the Hyogo Framework for Action and available technical methods and capacity development tools for new legislation, multi-stakeholder national platforms, scientific and technical networks, community-based risk management and resilience programmes, along with risk (hazard and vulnerability) assessments, land use planning and environmental protection, awareness of appropriate construction codes, early warning systems, and risk education, training and awareness.

It is vital for policy makers who deal with water, climate change and disasters, to use and build upon these existing capacities and resources rather than starting afresh.

Case examples of country experiences:

Maldives- A small island country devastated by the Indian Ocean tsunami now prepares for future climate disaster risks by strategic action planning.

Peru, Andean highlands – Interdisciplinary initiatives by national and regional governments and development partners support adaptation to water-related disaster risks in the Andean highlands.

Philippines – New legislation places disaster risk reduction as the first line of defence against climate change risks.

Samoa – A small island state prepares for disasters and climate change by integrating across sectors and stakeholders and by linking action at national and village levels.

South Africa, **Overstrand** – a rapidly growing municipality addresses the increasing risk of drought by implementing a water resource management programme including risk reduction.

United Kingdom – The Capital region is preparing a comprehensive adaptation strategy that stresses parallel risk management efforts to "prevent, respond and recover".

Vietnam – the Government is building linkages between the country's disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation programmes. High level political leadership involvement has helped over come institutional barriers.

Barbara Frost, CE WaterAid
Thematic Debate - General Assembly
22nd March 2010

Good morning. I am truly honoured to be invited to speak on this panel and most grateful to:

The President of the UN General Assembly, His Excellency, Ali Abdussalam Treki for taking this important initiative;

The Government of Tajikistan for drawing international attention to water;

The commitment from honourable Ministerial and Ambassadorial colleagues here today, including the Prince of Orange, a tireless international champion for water and sanitation;

And Minister Sonjica from the Republic of South Africa who Chairs the African Ministers Council on Water, AMCOW.

Slide 1

WaterAid is an international international NGO that works in some of the world's poorest countries of Africa, Asia and the Pacific - with some of the poorest and most marginalised communities where many of the MDGs are unlikely to be met.

When poor people are asked about their priorities, water is invariably number one. Women know that it is dirty water that makes their children sick and that if safe water was closer to their homes they could be able to earn a living rather than spending hours each day collecting it.

When disasters strike, a lack of drinking water and sanitation can become especially acute. In Haiti safe drinking water was critical in the first hours and days of the relief work.

Slide 2

From the perspective of the people we work with, who live without drinking water in unhygienic situations with nowhere to wash and defecate, there is a world 'crisis' now. We all know that climate change is likely to make this crisis worse and have the greatest impact on some of the world's poorest countries bringing further hardship to people already dealing with lack of the absolute basics of life – the right to safe water to drink and a decent place to go to the toilet.

Slide 3

It cannot be right that in 2010 2.6 billion people do not have anywhere safe to defecate and thus risk ill health - children an untimely death and women have

to deal with the lack of privacy and indignity. That is 40% of the world's population lacking this most basic right.

However with the political will and commitment and the right investment we know change can happen. In South Korea child mortality halved between 1960 and 1970 partly as a result of investment in sanitation, - a shining example of what can be done. The number of medical staff hardly changed over that decade.

In South Africa the government is committed to the right of families to have safe water and has made huge strides forward to ensure that there is a basic minimum quantity available for all.

Slide 4

Despite considerable political commitment the people we work with in countries such as Bangladesh or Mali struggle with a falling water table, saline and arsenic contamination, increasing numbers of floods, cyclones, droughts and erratic rainfall.

Slide 5

This poses serious health hazards and livelihood constraints. With increasing floods pit latrines overflow and pollute the wells and it is always women and children who suffer the most.

Slide 6

However we have seen the amazing fortitude shown by communities when they decide through self help to take action – they take control to manage the standpipe in their area or the well which they will maintain or to ensuring improved health and hygiene of their families through the use of pit latrines and improved hygiene practices.

Slide 7

We meet on World Water Day. Today in 70 countries around the world the End Water Poverty coalition of which WaterAid is a founding member is taking part in the 'Worlds Longest Toilet Queue'. People will stand in line to highlight the appalling neglect of the sanitation sector and to inspire those with the power to commit to change.

We will urge and encourage the Finance, Water and Development Ministers gathering in Washington DC on 23rd April to take global action on these most basic of rights of the world's citizens – access to a safe toilet and clean water.

We have seen global compacts work before – we witnessed the success of the Education For All initiative which set out to end user fees in primary education. Ending water poverty is also possible.

We agree with UN Water that Climate Change adaptation is mainly about water. Furthermore migration, urbanisation, changing levels of consumption and pollution compound this and pose significant threats to future water resources. Water is such a precious commodity, as our African partners say, ‘water is life’.

Slide 8

However as we know this is not a crisis of scarcity. It is about equitable distribution as this Google image of a slum area sitting next to a well watered golf club demonstrates.

Slide 9

One in eight people still live without safe water today

While the crisis in domestic water is holding back development it is the sanitation MDG that is one of the most lagging sectors. If current trends continue, the sanitation target will be missed by 1 billion people.

Slide 10

4000 children continue to die every day from diseases caused by unsafe water and poor sanitation. Diarrhoea is the second biggest killer of children under five in the developing world and kills more children than AIDS, TB and malaria combined.

Without improved sanitation children will not get to school - they will get sick or they will die and hospitals will continue to be treating people with water borne diseases that could so easily be prevented.

This is a daily disaster that can be solved. Solved through investment and good governance – through governments, the private sector and NGOs like WaterAid working together. We have seen the dramatic change to people's lives that safe water makes.

Yet despite this only 32% of the aid allocated for water and sanitation goes to the low income countries where the need is greatest.

Slide 11 Tom's graph

Investment in sanitation and water will also enable the other MDGs to be met. Girls will stay at school after puberty if there are decent toilets and women and girls will be healthy, freed from the burden of water carrying, indignity and disease.

This is a critical year for international leaders, halfway through the International Decade for Water, 2 years after the International Year of Sanitation and approaching the 10 year milestone towards the MDG targets.

Targets have been set and commitments made.

Drinking water supplies and sanitation are critical to ensuring the MDGs are met and climate change and increasing natural disasters highlight their importance. At the current rate the MDG for sanitation will not be met in Sub Saharan Africa until 2206, almost two hundred years too late.

We look to governments and the UN to galvanise world leadership and bring to an end this crisis.

The High Level Ministerial meeting at the World Bank in April focussing on *Sanitation and Water for All: a Global Framework for Action* is such a positive step. This will bring together ministers from North and South to take concerted action and to demonstrate their commitment. We call on everyone here to do whatever is possible to make this meeting a success and to reverse decades of political and financial neglect.

We also urge word leaders meeting to review the Millennium Development Goals at the summit in September that they commit to investing more in sanitation as well as water.

Investment in sanitation brings economic and social return ($1 invested brings a $9 return according to WHO). Failure to invest will lead to the failure of other MDGs.

Slide 12

There is an opportunity to change the lives of the poor before climate change exacerbates their suffering. We know this is possible – it just needs leadership and political will.

Barbara Frost
CE, WaterAid, March 22nd 2010

PACIFIC SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES
United Nations Member States

Permanent Mission of the Republic of Nauru to the United Nations
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Statement by
H.E. Ms. Marlene Moses
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Nauru
on behalf of the
Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS)

High-Level Interactive Dialogue on the Implementation of the International Decade for Action "Water for Life"

Panel III: Water, peace and security: transboundary water cooperation

World Water Day
22 March 2010

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Pacific Small Island Developing States represented at the United Nations, namely, Fiji, Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and my own country, Nauru.

Mr President

Please allow me to begin by thanking the distinguished panelists for their constructive contribution to the final panel of today's important discussion. The link between water, peace and security is a matter of great concern to the PSIDS, particularly in relation to climate change. It was of course our great honour to introduce Resolution 63/281 into the General Assembly, which was the first time the entire international community drew an explicit link between climate change and international peace and security.

Competition over water resources can occur between communities within a country, as well as across borders. Many of the same challenges that arise in relation to transboundary water cooperation arise within a country facing water scarcity. As we have outlined earlier in the day, freshwater resources in the Pacific are vulnerable and climate change is already undermining water security in many Pacific Island countries.

The Secretary-General's Report A/64/350 on climate change and its possible security implications highlighted the security threats raised by water insecurity linked to climate change, and noted the finding in the IPCC Fourth Assessment Report that climate change is expected to reduce water resources in many small islands to the point where they become insufficient to meet demand during low-rainfall periods. This is a very real threat to peace and security as communities are forced to relocate in search of adequate water supplies to meet their basic human needs. Forced displacement from the impacts of climate change has already happened in the Pacific, and has lead to social unrest.

We urge the international community to act proactively to respond to this critical issue and we reiterate our call for the Security Council to consider which elements of the security implications of climate change fall within its mandate, particularly in relation to water, peace and security and to seek solutions as a matter of urgency.

I thank you.

HIGH-LEVEL INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE ON WATER – INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR ACTION "WATER FOR LIFE: 2005-2015"
NEW YORK, 22 MARCH 21010

STATEMENT BY JOÃO GOMES CRAVINHO, PORTUGUESE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND COOPERATION

I would like to start by thanking President Treki, firstly for the timely initiative of convening a High-Level interactive dialogue on the implementation of the International Decade for Action "Water for Life 2005-2015"; and secondly for inviting me to participate in this particular panel dedicated to peace and security and their relation to water.

Water, peace and security relate to three essential pillars of human life and its harmonious development and are directly linked to the principles of the United Nations Charter, as well as to many of the actions undertaken by this organization over the past six decades.

Peace is a precondition for security, and at the same time a sense of security is essential for the sustainability of peace; a combination of both peace and security is necessary to achieve stability, sustainable development and decent governance. But none of these values should ever be taken for granted, as they require a constant effort of dialogue, mutual understanding, cooperation and negotiation.

Water is intrinsically associated with life, thus becoming a unifying element of cultures and civilizations. It is a *vital* resource, as well as a

social value and, therefore, access to water should be treated as a human right.

Ladies and gentlemen, the first aspect that I wish to underline in my presentation is the human security dimension of water, as it is crucial for long term peace and security.

At a time when natural resources become scarcer every day and with over 2 million people a year dying from lack of safe sanitation and clean water, this issue is important now, perhaps more than ever before. Almost a billion people still lack access to safe drinking water, and 2.5 billion do not have access to safe sanitation. The human, economic, and developmental impacts of these staggering numbers are enormous. Its implications for peace and security are quite obvious too.

Understanding water and sanitation as human rights brings a specific spotlight to these issues which require priority attention. In the case of sanitation, lack of access has an enormous impact upon health and education. The crucial difference that emerges when we talk of human rights is that we move from simple charity to legal obligation, we move from simple desirability to accountability for ensuring safe and affordable access.

On this day, World Water Day, I would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm Portugal's commitment to the recognition of the human right to water and to stress our intention to continue cooperating with other

countries towards the fulfilment of national and international obligations, as is currently the case with various projects financed by the Portuguese Development Agency in Portuguese-speaking countries to ensure access to safe, affordable and acceptable water. As Secretary of State it has been my privilege to inaugurate safe water systems in São Tomé and in Timor-Leste; I can assure you that little has given me greater sense of accomplishment, or conviction that we are making a very major transformation in the lives of whole communities, and without doubt saving lives that would otherwise be cut short through disease.

However, at the same time that we make some progress, new challenges emerge, and our growing understanding of the effects of climate change is a case in point. The human right to water cannot be dissociated from the effects of climate change and the urgency of devising tools to mitigate those effects. One should bear in mind that populations in developing countries are those most vulnerable and already being affected by the consequences of climate change, from desertification to natural disasters, with direct results regarding the access to clean water. Long-term cooperative action is urgently required. But adaptation to climate change also offers additional opportunities for cooperation. Portugal, with the EU, will participate in the Fast Start financing foreseen in the Copenhagen Accord for developing adaptation capacities, especially in the most vulnerable countries. Water related projects may be and should be envisaged in this regard.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As the concept paper prepared for this panel rightly underlines, increased international cooperation for the sharing of water resources is needed. Since water is a basic element for life, if no action is taken to ensure its good management, shrinking water resources, growing populations, and our changing environment will almost certainly lead to conflict between countries, especially in those cases where water sources are shared.

But there is another possibility, which is that we should look at water and international water-management efforts as elements of **conflict prevention**. Water can constitute an obstacle or a challenge to conflict resolution, yet it is always a fundamental element for **peacebuilding.** Moreover, cooperation on water management may serve as a catalyst for integration in other areas.

These thoughts may come across as mere abstractions in the context of a discussion of very concrete issues and problems and therefore I would like to share with you the Portuguese experience of the management of water basins management with our neighbour Spain, as an example of a longstanding practice of negotiation and cooperation: We believe that there may be some interesting insights that could be of relevance for other similar situations.

Portugal and Spain benefit from an important comparative advantage: the Portuguese borders are the oldest in Europe, as the result of a number of treaties negotiated in the XII and XIII centuries. In 1864, and then again in 1926 for the Southern region, most of the border with Spain was

marked out in great detail, thus leaving very little room for border disputes.

It was the 1864 Lisbon Treaty on the Portuguese-Spanish border that for the first time presented the management of frontier rivers as a shared responsibility of the two peoples; this treaty goes on to add that "those rivers should be subject to the permanent vigilance of local authorities".

During the XX century a number of efforts contributed to defining the terms of that joint management. In the 1960s, a bilateral agreement was the first step to solve important issues such as the guarantee of minimum flows during drought, fish conservation and matters associated with the development of hydropower. The accession to the EU of both countries, Portugal and Spain, acted as an important catalyst for further developments in water management cooperation, especially during the 1990s. By then both countries had undergone far-reaching internal political, economic and social changes, leading to an increase in water use, with the consequent modifications to the life of rivers, and a progressive deterioration of water quality. Water quality also decreased as a result of intensive agriculture practices and the release of domestic and industrial wastewater without adequate treatment.

The more recent agreements – namely the 1998 Albufeira Convention and its additional Protocol that came into force just last year – are essentially attempts to deal with this trend of water deterioration, through the deepening of a common approach regarding the

management of shared water resources. These new legal instruments also address persisting gaps, such as the need for more transparent channels of information sharing, or the difficulties in defining ecologically sustainable water flows throughout the year.

Our experience shows that the success of any agreement on the management of shared river basins represents a common challenge since it requires the simultaneous fulfillment of several sensitive conditions:

- First, a shared long-term vision of common goals and benefits;
- Second, the definition of a global strategy for the good management of water resources, ensuring fair and responsible access to them, in such a way that it responds to present water needs while maintaining its availability for future generations;
- Third, a permanent effort of surveillance and control on both sides, through a joint bilateral commission. In our case, the surveillance functions of the joint commission were, very recently, crucial in limiting the effects of flooding as a result of record levels of rain this Winter;
- Fourth, the active involvement of citizens in the process, since a participatory approach with the involvement of all relevant stakeholders has proved to be highly useful for the success of any transboundary water management strategy. The website of the Bilateral Commission, where useful information on its activities is readily available, together with contributions from NGOs and other civil society actors, is the best example of this participatory approach.

The Portuguese-Spanish experience of cooperation on water resources that I have just described is more than a tool for conflict prevention; it has been, and still is, a strong basis for extending cooperation to related areas. Crossborder cooperation financed by EU structural funds is now a reality between Portugal and Spain, with the involvement of regional and local authorities and covering a wide range of domains, from technology to cultural heritage. There is a clear trend towards coordinated and sustainable regional development, which provides an example of how we moved from conflict prevention to peacebuilding, and now to what we could call "community building", in the sense that one's interests are, increasingly, shared with the other.

Excellencies,

Coming back to the beginning of my presentation, these three pillars of water, peace and security will certainly continue to be linked in a fragile balance. Such a balance can only be sustained through a continuous effort of cooperation by those responsible for water management, but also through an understanding of the various dimensions that need to be tackled, from the human level to internationally agreed norms and practices. For each case of mismanagement and dispute over water resources there are numerous examples of cooperative initiatives that have greatly contributed not just to a more efficient management of water resources but also to a more cooperative international environment. It is

up to all of us to help make sure that the latter increasingly become the norm and not the exception.

Thank you for your attention.

Water, peace and security

United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

World Water
Assessment Programme

UN WATER

Dr. Olcay Ünver,
Coordinator
UN World Water Assessment Programme

UNGA High Level Panel,
22 March 2010

Five Messages:

1. Water issues are immediate and urgent.
2. Water and security are linked both directly and via food, energy, health and environment.
3. Policies and action to tackle climate change, economic crisis and other development issues MUST include water explicitly.
4. There are tools and examples that can help.
5. What we don't know can really hurt us.

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Assessing Water Resources

"water - a finite resource - will become a major limiting factor in socio-economic development unless early action is taken. The seriousness of the situation calls for the highest priority to be given to the freshwater problems facing many regions, especially in the developing world."

19th Special Session of the UN General Assembly (UNGASS), 1997

The World Water Assessment Programme

In 1998, the Commission on Sustainable Development called for UN agencies to combine their efforts in order to produce a periodic report on the status of the world's freshwater resources.

In March 2000, the Director-General of UNESCO announced the launching of WWAP at the 2nd World Water Forum in The Hague.

→ WWAP is the UN System's reporting mechanism to monitor progress towards internationally agreed-upon goals about water.

ONE-UN: UN-Water

It is well known that water is life; what this Report shows is that water also means livelihoods. It is the route out of poverty for individuals and communities. Managing water is essential if the world is to achieve sustainable development.

This challenge is even more pressing as the world confronts the triple threats of climate change, rising food and energy costs, and the global economic crisis. All three are exacerbating poverty, inequality and underdevelopment.

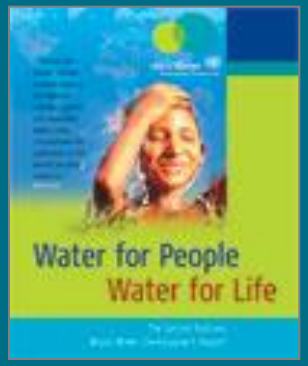
The United Nations has responded by consolidating our work and joining with partners who can make a difference through UN-Water, which brings together more than two dozen UN agencies and other stakeholders. The initiative's World Water Assessment Programme is setting an example of system-wide cooperation based on the understanding that water is such a central consideration that it must be an integral part of all planning and investments.

Ban Ki-moon
Secretary-General
United Nations

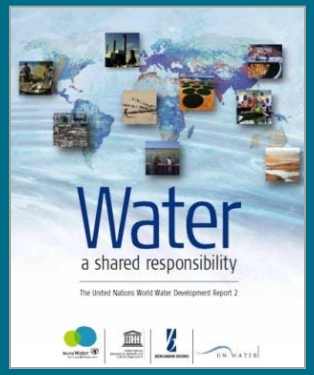
World Water Assessment Programme, 2009, *UN World Water Development Report 3: Water in a Changing World*; Paris, UNESCO and London, Earthscan, p. v

UN System's response: UN-Water

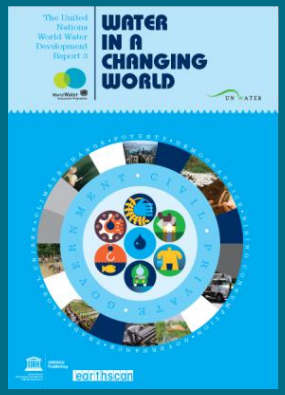
Collective product of UN-Water's 27 agencies, the United Nations World Water Development Report (WWDR), is a periodic, comprehensive review providing an authoritative picture of the state of the world's freshwater resources.



1st report (WWDR1) 2000, Kyoto



2nd report (WWDR2) 2006, Mexico City



3rd report (WWDR3) 2009, Istanbul

The fourth report (WWDR4) is to be launched in Marseille, 2012

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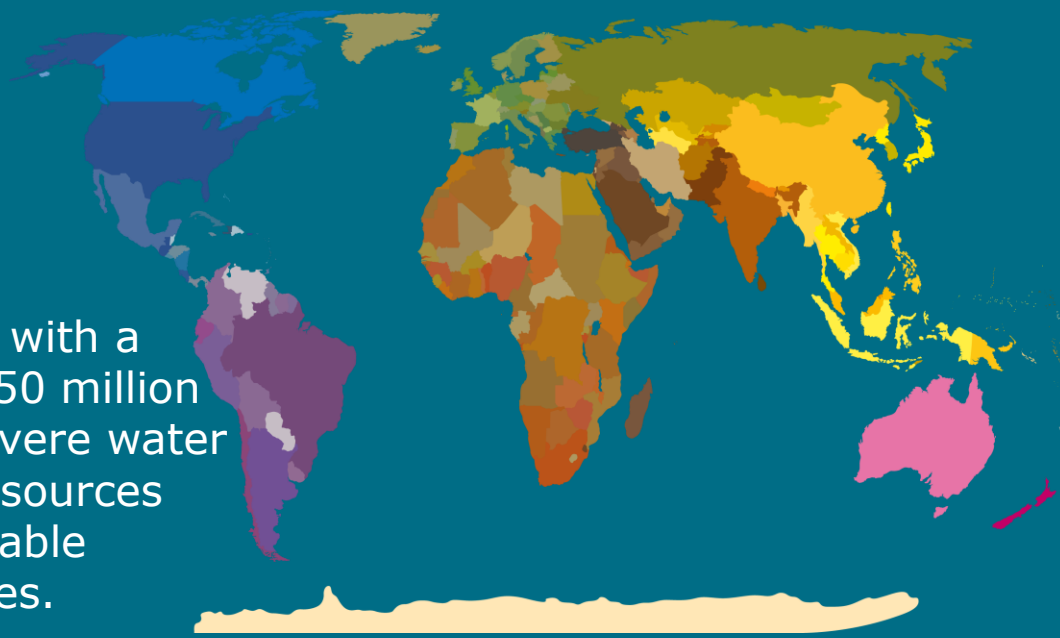
5. What we don't know can really hurt us.

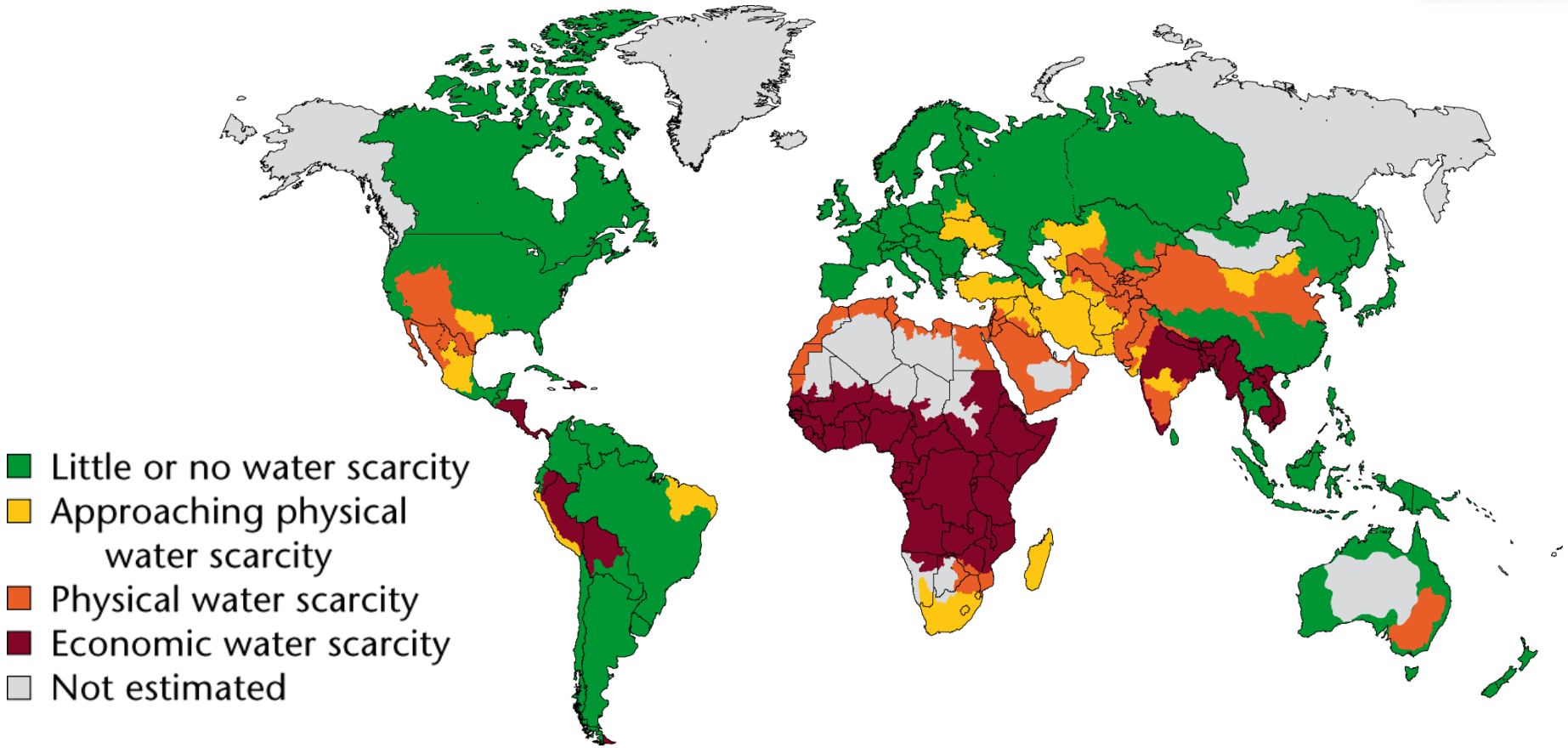
WATER STRESS

- Water use increased at more than twice the rate of population growth during the 20th century.
- 85% of the world's people live in the drier half of the planet. More than 1 billion people living in arid and semi-arid parts of the world have little or no access to renewable water resources.



- Currently, an estimated 26 countries with a combined population of more than 350 million people are located in regions with severe water scarcity where the available water resources seem to be sufficient to meet reasonable water needs for development activities.

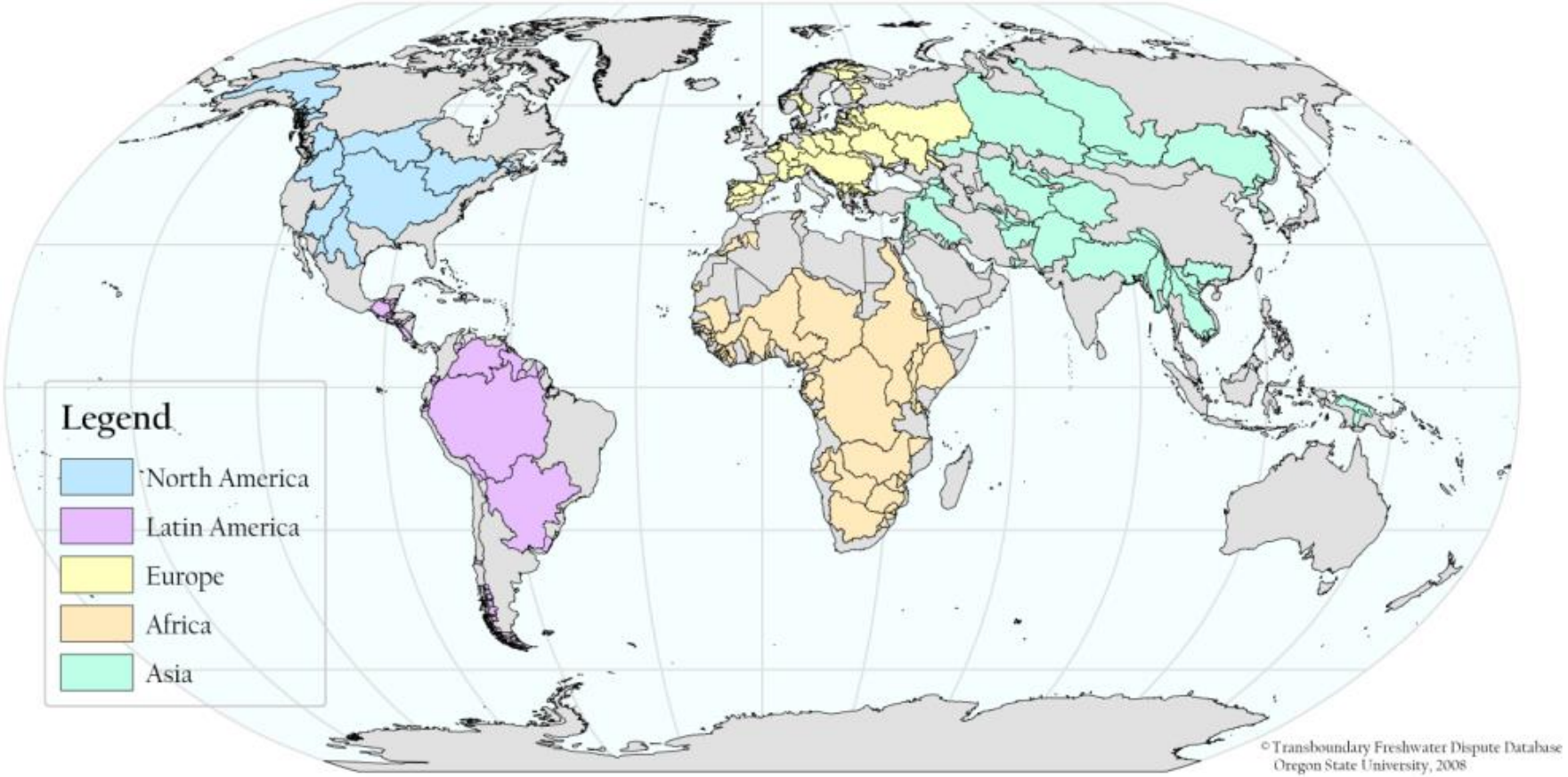
Increasing Water Scarcity



World Water Assessment Programme, 2009. *UN World Water Development Report 3: Water in a Changing World*. Paris, UNESCO and London, Earthscan, Map 8.1.

The Transboundary Context

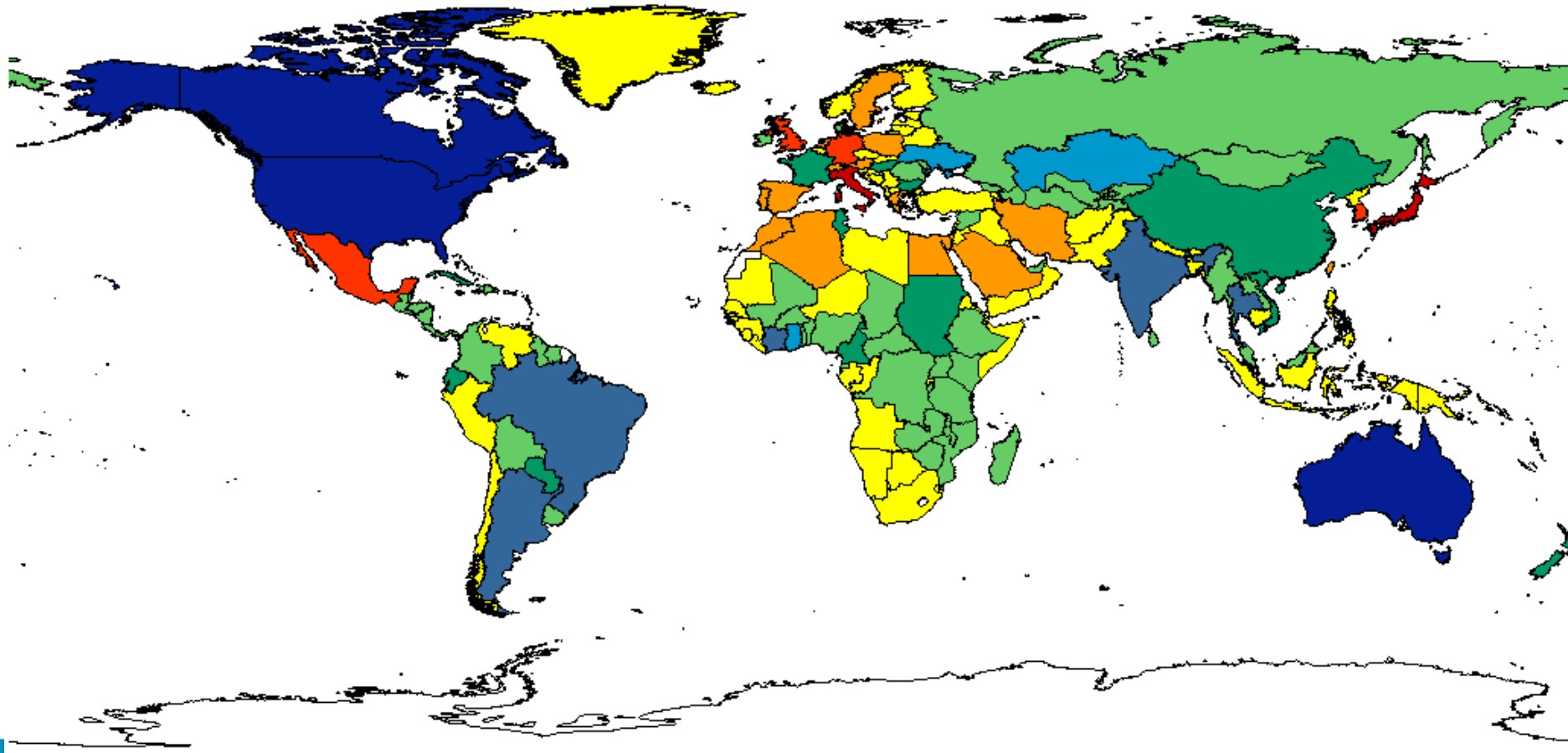
The number of transboundary basins increased from 214 in 1978 to 276 in 2008.



Water is embedded in food and products

- **Trade of virtual water accounts for 15% of all water used globally.**
- **Indicates that scarcity, pollution etc can also be exported.**
- **Used properly in decisions, can provide for better resource allocation.**
- **Also a political tool to convert narrow security concerns into broader security notions (e.g. from food self sufficiency to general food security)**

Virtual water flow via trade



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Water is impacted by

- Environmental security policies
- Food policies
- Energy policies
- Demographics
- Climate change adaptation
- Land use policies
- International trade, subsidies and incentives
  - Among others

Example: Climate change

- Water is the principal medium through which climate change will affect economic, social and environmental conditions.
- Changes in water availability will have economy-wide impacts.

The UNFCC* estimates the additional investment required for adaptation to climate change will average $28-$67 billion a year over the coming decades, reaching as high as $100 billion several decades from now. The additional investment in water supply infrastructure that will be required by 2030 is estimated at $11 billion, 85% of this in developing countries. This is to be complemented by infrastructure for productive uses of water as well as to deal with its extremes.

Five Messages:

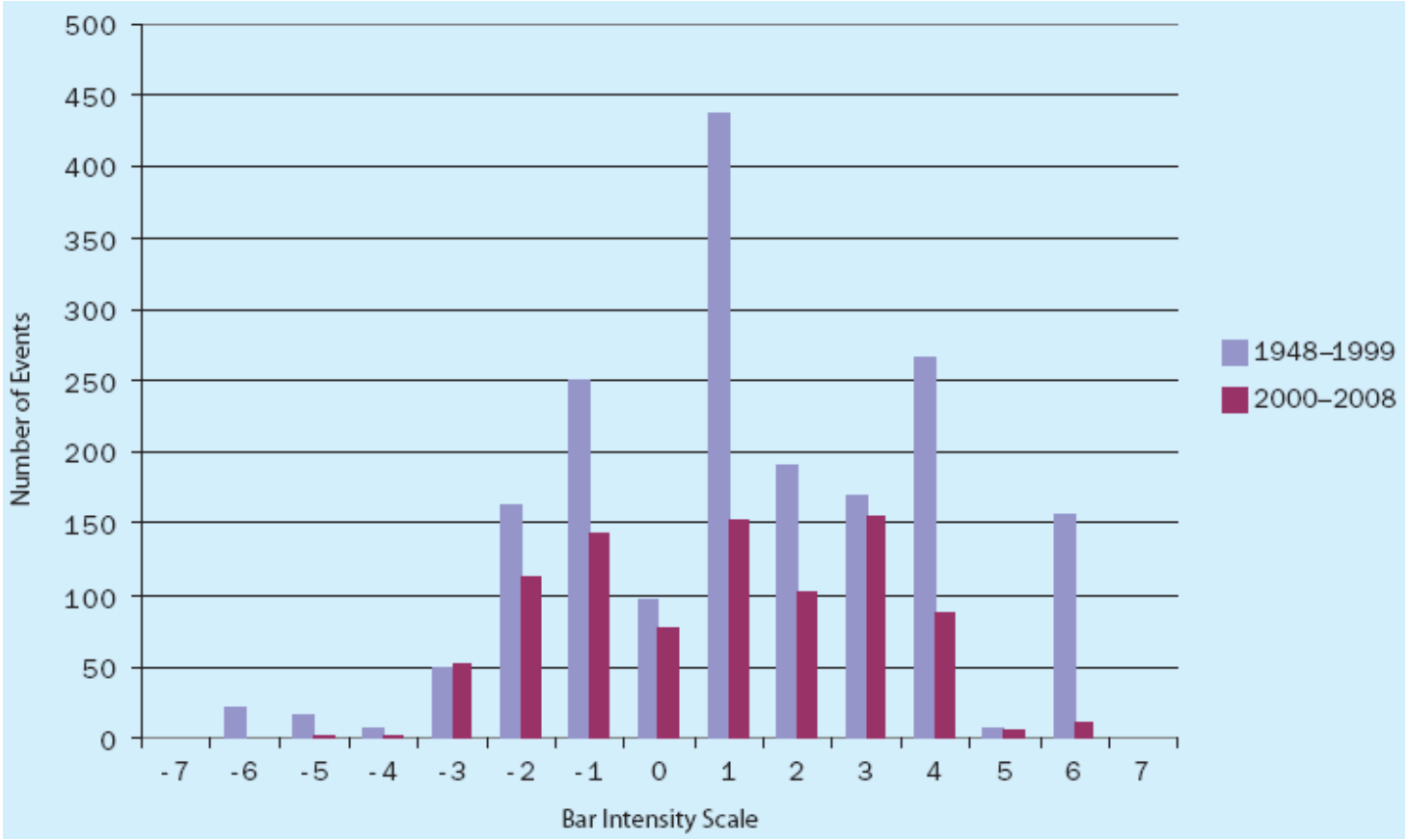
1. Water issues are immediate and urgent.
2. Water and security are linked both directly and via food, energy, health and environment.
3. Policies and action to tackle climate change, economic crisis and other development issues MUST include water explicitly.
4. There are tools and examples that can help.
5. What we don't know can really hurt us.

Defining a Common Interest

- Improving water efficiency,
  - New technology
- Implementing integrated water resources management,
  - Strengthening institutions
  - Capacity-building
- Sharing the benefits
  - Virtual Water

Defining a Common Interest

Cooperation rather than conflict is the norm for transboundary issues



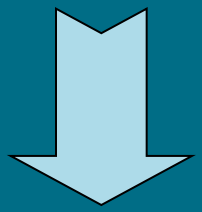
-7 Formal War,

1 Minor official exchanges, talks or policy expressions,

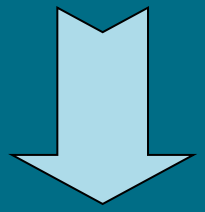
6 *International Freshwater Treaty;* Major strategic alliance

The Dynamics of Cooperation

Coordination: Sharing of information, communication, assessments



Cooperation: Joint projects, active planning, adaptation of national plans to factor in regional costs and benefits



Collaboration: Formalized agreements, Integrated Basin Management, joint institutions

Five Messages:

1. Water issues are immediate and urgent.
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4. There are tools and examples that can help.
5. What we don't know can really hurt us.

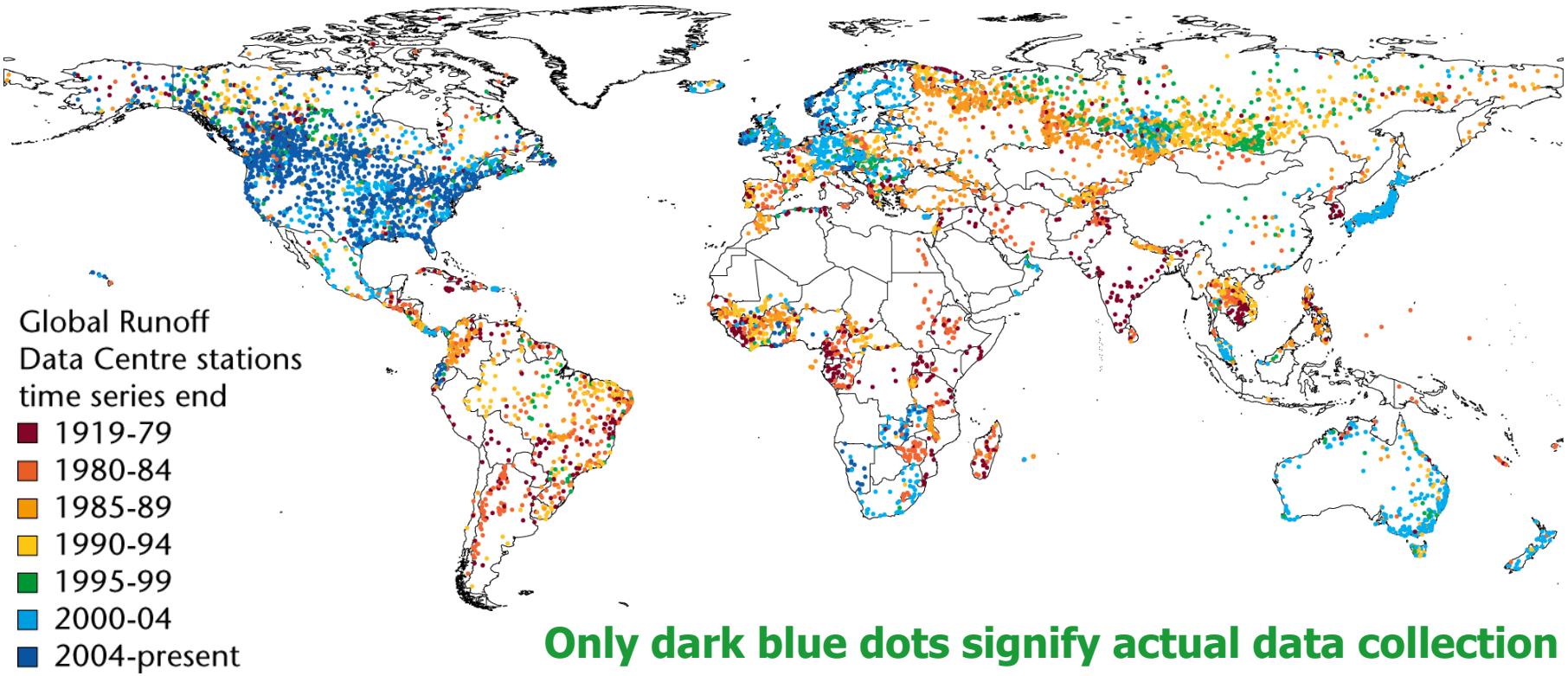
We don’t know enough

- Quantity, quality and distribution of the resource
- How agriculture, cities and industries use it
- How it is managed
- How much is invested

“… the world's network of rainfall and stream gages – often a low priority in science budgets – is slowly eroding. That decline means that at a time when global warming may be exacerbating weather extremes and water shortages, scientists are less able to monitor water supplies, predict droughts, and forecast floods than they were 30 years ago”.

***(Science Magazine, August 20, 1999,* 285:5431, pp. 1199 – 1200)**

Our information base has been shrinking



Only dark blue dots signify actual data collection

World Water Assessment Programme, 2009. *UN World Water Development Report 3: Water in a Changing World*. Paris, UNESCO and London, Earthscan, Map 13.1.

Concluding points:

- Water has remained too low on the list of political priorities for too long.
- Neglecting the need for investments has caused development to lag, people to suffer and the environment to deteriorate.
- The resources needed to address the problems of water management are minuscule compared with the financial resources that have been pledged and secured to deal with carbon emissions or the recent financial crisis.
- As climate change evolves, governments will have to learn to operate under conditions of greater risk and uncertainty.
- Sharing information is key for better sharing of resources/benefits.
- More investment in data is essential, as well as in scenario tools that inform decision-making.

Inaction is not an option.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

World Water Assessment Programme

UN WATER

For more information on the World Water Assessment Programme and its activities,

or to download our publications

please visit:

http://www.unesco.org/water /wwap

Thank you!

General Assembly high-level dialogue on water, peace and security

New York, 22 March

Statement by Mr. Ján KUBIŠ
United Nations Under-Secretary-General
Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

- Ladies and gentlemen, I am extremely pleased to participate in this high-level dialogue organized by the General Assembly on the occasion of the World Water Day 2010 and specifically in the round table on water, peace and security, a subject very dear to the heart of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, the organization that I lead.

- Some experts believe that increasing water scarcity causes, or at least greatly contributes to the threat of inter or intrastate conflicts. Others, on the contrary, stress that so far water has been a catalyst for cooperation and has united people and society. The debate will certainly continue and there are undoubtedly examples that illustrate both points of view.

- However, irrespective of which stand one takes, the importance of transboundary water cooperation is not questioned. And here I would like to speak about the experience from my region, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region (UNECE).

- In the last three decades, the UNECE region has experienced violent conflicts, for example in the former Yugoslavia and in the Caucasus, but despite these conflicts, cooperation on transboundary waters has been growing. An exemplary case is the Framework Agreement on the Sava River Basin which was the first regional agreement since the Dayton Peace Agreement ended the war in the former Yugoslavia in 1996.

- More specifically the need to prevent conflicts was at the root of drawing up the UNECE Water Convention. When in the late ‘80s / early ‘90s UNECE countries decided to negotiate and adopt a regional Convention for transboundary water management, they were looking for a set of common rules, a “legal but also ethical and practical” common basis for the use and protection of their shared waters. The result is the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, also known as UNECE Water Convention. The Convention appeared very timely since many new borders emerged in the region following the collapse of the Iron curtain. It was adopted in Helsinki in 1992 and entered into force in 1996. It can be considered complementary to the United Nations Convention on the Law of Non-Navigational

Uses of International Watercourses, adopted in 1997 by the General Assembly, but not yet in force. In fact, many countries are Parties to both Conventions. To date the UNECE Water Convention has 37 Parties and covers almost all the UNECE region. Its main strength is that it has been elaborated by and for countries. It is intended to strengthen national measures for the protection and ecologically sound management of transboundary surface waters and groundwaters. The Convention is a living agreement which offers assistance, delivers expertise and advice and monitors the state of the waters, mainly through the Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters.

- The Convention is very relevant for the topic of this year's World Water Day, which is, as you know, water quality. It has significantly contributed to improving water quality in Europe since it requires Parties to prevent, control and reduce water pollution from point and non-point sources, to ensure an equitable and reasonable use of the resources, guaranteeing their sustainability. It also includes provisions for monitoring and the exchange information, consultations, warning and alarm systems and mutual assistance. The Convention's Protocol on Water and Health is the first international legal instrument linking water management, and in particular water quality, and human health.

- The Water Convention also provides an important framework for cooperation on adaptation to climate change. As it has been discussed in the previous roundtable of this high-level dialogue most extreme climate events involve too much or too little water. Like climate change, water knows no borders. The danger is that dwindling water resources will increase the risk of conflict; a threat to UNECE member States as well as to many parts of the world. Countries must adapt - and work together when doing so. For this reason, a Guidance on Water and Adaptation to Climate Change has been developed under the UNECE Water Convention which explains step by step how to develop and implement an adaptation strategy in the transboundary context avoiding transboundary impacts and potential conflicts. Since the beginning of the year, work under the Convention has focused on implementation on the ground through projects supporting countries to adapt jointly to climate change in transboundary basins, and through a platform for exchanging experiences with adaptation on transboundary waters.

- But probably the most important strength of the Convention that makes it an asset for peace and security is its strong focus on cooperation, requesting Parties to enter into agreements and establish joint institutions for the management of shared resources.

- Now, I would like to illustrate with some examples of how the UNECE Water Convention promotes conflict prevention and security in practice.

- In South-Eastern Europe, the UNECE Water Convention supports cooperation on the Drin River bringing together governmental, non-governmental from the riparian, but not always cooperating countries, Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, and Greece, as well as international organizations and donor countries. The main objective is to bring cooperation on the whole basin to a higher, more formalized and long-term level.

- Another example is the Dniester basin where the Water Convention brought together not only Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, but also the Transdniester region of Moldova. This project is implemented with partners (OSCE and UNEP), in the framework of the Environment and Security Initiative, ENVSEC. ENVSEC is a cooperative initiative between different organizations in the pan-European region (UNEP, OSCE, REC, UNDP, UNECE) that works to assess and address environmental problems, which threaten or are perceived to threaten security, societal stability and peace, human health and/or sustainable livelihoods, within and across national borders in conflict prone regions.

- Central Asia is also a region where there are obvious link between water and security issues. The challenges that Central Asia faces in the water and energy sectors are well known. Competing demands of electricity generation and irrigation result in recurrent disputes and political tensions. Although the present system for regional water resources management has helped to avoid open conflict, it has repeatedly demonstrated its inability to effectively harmonize the interests of upstream and downstream countries and is likely to be strained further by future challenges such as climate change. Upstream countries plan to build new dams in order to generate electricity both for internal consumption and for export. Downstream countries depend on irrigated agriculture: they are already hard-pressed by soil degradation and inefficient water use and their wish to increase agricultural production to meet the needs of growing populations.

- UNECE has been working for several years on improving the current system of water management in Central Asia together with national and regional institutions. Let me illustrate our engagement with three examples where the UNECE worked to take advantage of political windows of opportunities to move cooperation further – the establishment of the Chu-Talas Commission, our work to develop cooperation on dam safety and our work to strengthen regional institutions and legal frameworks for cooperation in the region.

- The bilateral Chu-Talas Rivers Commission was inaugurated in July 2006. The Commission makes it possible for the Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan to share the responsibility for water infrastructure used by both countries. This is, as you can understand, a frequent issue, as the water infrastructure was developed as one system under the Soviet Union. As part of the bilateral agreement, Kazakhstan has agreed to pay part of the operating and maintenance expenses for a number of Kyrgyz dams and reservoirs supplying water to both countries. It is a significant step towards addressing a contentious issue and frequently referred to as a breakthrough in water relations in Central Asia.

- The second example that I would like to mention is the work on dam safety in Central Asia. Central Asia has more than 100 major dams and other water control facilities, mostly on rivers shared by different countries. The dams are aging and are not adequately maintained. Meanwhile, the number of people living downstream the dams is growing. Two important issues to deal with are national safety legislation and its implementation, and cooperation on dam safety issues including establishment of early warning systems between the countries. I will not go into technical details of the project but this direction of work has proven unexpectedly important in terms of confidence building. All five Central Asian countries have a real interest in improved dam safety and cooperation and the project has become a platform for substantive cooperation in the region.

- Probably the most ambitious of UNECE activities in Central Asia is the programme "Regional dialogue and cooperation on water resources management in Central Asia" funded by the Government of Germany through GTZ, as part of the Berlin Water process. The programme aims to strengthen the legal basis for water resources management in Central Asia and the regional institutions responsible for water management, in particular strengthen the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFAS) and its regional institutions. Strong regional institutions and modern legal framework are a key precondition of sustainable progress towards the solution of bitter disputes over the use of shared water resources in Central Asia. They would help gradually strengthen confidence among upstream and downstream countries and elaborate mutually advantageous, cooperative solutions for problems related to the water and energy nexus. This is extremely urgent also considering that the planned "civilian surge" in Afghanistan, among others, envisages the expansion of irrigated areas (to replace poppy cultivation), using water from river basins shared with Central Asia. To avoid further conflict on water allocation to ensure an effective joint management of shared water resources, strong regional institutions have a pivotal role to play.

- We have no illusions as to the complexity and difficulty of the development of transboundary water cooperation whether it is in Central Asia, in the Balkans or anywhere else in the world. Knowing how much time and effort it took to establish well-functioning river-basin commissions in Europe or Asia, we are acutely aware of the need to work hard on the sustainability of the process. This is where the framework and the active work of the Water Convention are so important. The UNECE Water Convention will now and in the future provide a daily reminder to countries to move forward, an inspiration to experts to address new challenges, a platform to bring together experience of different countries and basins.

- Building on the Convention experience and achievements, its Parties decided to amend it in 2003 to allow accession to non-UNECE member states. Once this amendment comes into force the Convention can become a global framework for cooperation on shared watercourses. I would like to encourage Parties which have not yet done so to ratify the amendment as soon as possible to allow the rest of the world to take advantage of the Convention. I also invite countries outside the UNECE region to participate in the work under the Convention and benefit from its experience and tools.