

30 March 2015

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa,
President of the 69th Session of the General Assembly,
at the High-Level Interactive Dialogue on International Decade for
Action, ‘Water for Life’, 2005-2015**

Delivered by H.E. Mr. Einar Gunnarsson, Permanent Representative of Iceland, on behalf of H.E. Sam Kahamba Kutesa, President of the General Assembly

**H.E. Perry Gladstone Christie, Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas,
H.E. Sirodjiddin Aslov, Foreign Minister of Tajikistan,
Excellencies,
Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

I am pleased, on behalf of the President of the General Assembly, to address this important meeting as we review the progress made in the implementation of the International Decade for Action on “Water for Life”. Today’s interactive dialogue will provide an opportunity to share best practices and lessons learned relevant to the achievement of sustainable development, as well as evaluate progress made in fostering cooperation on water issues.

Excellencies,

The International Decade of Action on “Water for Life” was launched in 2005 in response to the growing recognition of the challenges posed by the global water crisis. The Decade included a number of ambitious objectives, including the acceleration of progress on water-related Millennium Development Goals and other international commitments related to water and sanitation.

In the last 10-years, we have witnessed a significant increase in access to improved water sources, progress on access to sanitation, important steps taken in water cooperation and the mainstreaming of the gender perspective in water and hygiene management.

Over the course of the International Decade of Action, the global community also recognized that ensuring the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation are key in our efforts to achieve sustainable development.

The impact of water on human health as well as economic well-being is better understood than a decade ago, including water’s critical importance for households, industries, agriculture, cities, energy

production and transportation. We also learned more about how the water cycle underpins the Earth's ecosystems and its susceptibility to the effects of climate change.

Nevertheless, as today's event will demonstrate, the world still faces considerable water challenges. In recent years, the world water crisis has been listed as one of the leading global risks by the World Economic Forum. In 2015 it moved to the number one spot in the ranking.

Despite considerable accomplishments made under the MDGs, approximately 800 million people still do not have access to an improved water source, while many more remain without a safe and sustainable water supply. Some estimates indicate as many as 1.8 billion people are living in countries that will face water scarcity by 2025.

**Excellencies
Distinguished delegates,**

This year represents a pivotal opportunity for the international community. From the Disaster Risk Reduction conference in Sendai to Climate Change Summit in Paris; from our on-going negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda in New York to the Financing for Development Conference in Addis Ababa; we are in the midst of an historic opportunity to change our world by improving livelihoods everywhere and protecting our planet.

As we progress in the important negotiations underway, we should continue to take into account the importance of water and sanitation issues. We should also use the critical lessons learned through the International Decade for Action on "Water for Life" to improve our efforts to achieve water and sanitation access for all.

I thank you for your kind attention.