

9 June 2015

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa,
President of the 69th Session of the General Assembly,
at the High-Level International Conference on the Implementation of
the International Decade of Action “Water for Life”, 2005-2015**

Delivered by H.E. Mrs. Lyutha Al-Mughairy, Permanent Representative of the Sultanate of Oman, on behalf of President Kutesa

**Excellency Qohir Rasulzoda, Prime Minister of the Republic of Tajikistan,
Excellencies Heads of State and Government,
Honourable Ministers,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

I thank the Prime Minister, and the Government and people of Tajikistan for hosting this High Level Conference on the implementation of the International Decade ‘Water for Life’.

I am pleased to deliver this statement on behalf of His Excellency, Sam Kahamba Kutesa, President of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Excellencies,

Ten years ago, the General Assembly established the Water Decade in recognition of the indispensable role that water and sanitation play for human health, well-being and sustainable development.

Earlier this year, I organized a High-Level Interactive Dialogue on “The International Decade For Action, ‘Water For Life’ Progress Achieved And Lessons Learned for Sustainable Development”. It provided an important opportunity for discussing progress made throughout the Water Decade, while also allowing us to reflect on the good practices that can help guide us in addressing water-related issues in the post-2015 development agenda.

This high level Conference provides a valuable opportunity to explore these issues in greater depth with a wide range of stakeholders from across the international community. I am confident the discussions that take place here will serve as invaluable contributions to our collective efforts to address water-related issues.

Excellencies,

The Water for Life Decade increased attention and support for international water-related objectives and fostered significant achievements. In 2010, the international community met, ahead of schedule,

the Millennium Development Goal target to halve the number of people lacking sustainable access to safe drinking water.

The Decade also contributed to increased efforts and progress on sanitation and mainstreaming the gender perspective in water management.

In pursuing the goals of the Decade, we learned that a comprehensive and integrated perspective to water issues is necessary for concrete and enduring solutions. We recognized that quality is as important as access, and that ensuring comprehensive and integrated management is the only way to tackle the multitude of challenges we face today.

Water impacts human health and well-being, economic livelihoods and ecosystems. It is key for households, industries, agriculture, cities, health, energy production, and transportation.

By 2025, global water demands are expected to increase by 40%, potentially resulting in two-thirds of the world's population living in water-stressed conditions. Furthermore, population increases, urbanization and climate change will present additional obstacles to sustainable water management. Water crises were listed as one of the top global risks by the World Economic Forum in recent years and made the number one spot in 2015.

Excellencies,

Ensuring the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all is critical for the achievement of sustainable development.

As we learned throughout the Water Decade, strong partnerships and collaboration will be essential for overcoming the water-related challenges that exist and we should endeavour to forge these partnerships.

Looking forward, we must take the good practices from the Decade and continue to improve our efforts to achieve water and sanitation access for all, while taking into account the sustainable management of water resources in the face of increasing uncertainty and stress.

We must continue to strive to make water a powerful tool for cooperation amongst countries. We should nurture the opportunities for cooperation at the community, national, regional and international levels. This improves the comprehension of the challenges and benefits which in turn, helps build mutual respect, understanding and trust among countries and promotes peace, security and sustainable economic growth.

Let us use this occasion to celebrate our achievements, while strengthening international cooperation to ensure that water will continue to be a source of life for all.

I thank you for your attention and wish you fruitful discussions.