

High Level International Conference on the International Decade for Action Water for Sustainable Development, 2018-2028"

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Dushanbe, Tadjikistan**

Plenary Session „Mobilizing Actions for Sustainable Water Development“

Ambassador Neithart Höfer-Wissing

First, I would like to thank both, the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan and the United Nations Secretary-General, for organizing the International High-Level Conference on the International Decade for Action "Water for Sustainable Development, 2018-2028". After the launch of the International Decade for Action on this year's World Water Day in New York, this High Level conference marks the starting point for the decade's efforts to accelerate international efforts aiming to improve cooperation, partnership and capacity development in the water sector over the coming ten years. Today, we have the great chance to use this occasion to discuss how we can successfully achieve the internationally agreed water-related goals and targets, defined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda with its ambitious Goal on water, it is clear to all of us that we need to accelerate collective action to ensure the availability and the sustainable management of water and sanitation for all by 2030.

With SDG 6, the global water community has agreed on a holistic view of the hydrological cycle linking Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) and Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) with other water targets. At its core, SDG 6 is an ambitious and highly complex Goal and is closely interlinked with a broad number of the other 16 Sustainable Development Goals. Therefore, cooperation and exchange on different levels and from various perspectives as well as a stronger coordination of UN support to SDG 6 is needed. In doing so, Governments, the UN Development System and other stakeholders need to be able to identify current gaps and ensure targeted action and investments. Therefore, the UN Water's SDG 6 Synthesis Report comes at the right time to guide mobilized action and political discussions for sustainable water development.

With the key messages of UN Water's Synthesis Reports, we, the Member States, dispose for the very first time of political orientations for SDG 6 implementation that are based on comprehensive global evidence. With this, the SDG 6 Synthesis Report serves as a common ground for our discussions on SDG 6 implementation during this Conference as well as during the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and beyond.

Tajikistan is very active in the global discussion on SDG 6 implementation. It mirrors some of the major global challenges that countries are facing today: the melting of glaciers as an impact of climate change which in turn reduces both quality as well as quantity of water available for growing populations in downstream countries. Over the years, my country has taken part in the many efforts to mitigate the disastrous consequences, including by initiating the Berlin Water Initiative and the EU Strategy for Central Asia. In this regard, we very much welcome the closer collaboration of Central Asian states and are ready to support your efforts.

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This, of course, needs to be done within the framework of international efforts, in particular of the UN System.

The example of the Republic of Tajikistan shows us that we need to link our efforts for achieving the 2030 Agenda with the implementation of the Paris Agreement. While sustainable water management can effectively contribute to reaching international objectives on climate change, the achievement of SDG 6 depends largely on our capacities for climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Tajikistan as being one of the five Central Asian countries having started a process of cooperation and partnership in transboundary water management with its neighboring countries is a suitable host for a conference advocating for the benefits of cooperation and partnerships in sustainable management of water. It offers the opportunity to take up on its profound experience in how Water & Peace are closely related.

The UN-Water SDG 6 Synthesis report declares the worldwide implementation of integrated water resources management the most comprehensive step towards achieving SDG 6. It is a prerequisite for successful pollution prevention and mitigation, the sustainable use of water resources and the protection of water-based ecosystems. A greater focus on the sustainable development and integrated management of water resources, as aimed by the Water Action Decade, is therefore imperative for achieving the water-related Goals of the 2030 Agenda.

The Republic of Tajikistan has, by organizing this International High Level conference, taken the first step to go into this very much needed direction. This will build a solid basis for further activities, organized jointly in order to successfully achieve SDG 6 – Ensuring the availability and the sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

However, after the 2018 HLPF, there needs to be a space at the highest political level for Member States to fully discuss the action to be taken. Such a space will enable Member States to generate concise and concerted messages and the political will needed to deliver on them until 2030, in order to achieve SDG 6 and other water-related SDGs. The water decade and this Dushanbe conference should support a call for such a space within the UN at the highest political level, in line with the Report of the High Level Panel on Water.