

**High Level International Conference
On International Decade for Action
“Water for Sustainable Development” 2018-2028**

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Your Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have now surpassed the decade on “water for life” and are now at the start of a new decade on “water for sustainable development”, with even more challenging issues facing various stakeholders. Water scarcity and environmental implications in many parts of the world pose the greatest challenges to sustainable development. There is now much greater need, than ever before, to focus on management solutions while striving to address, wisely, the never ending supply-demand chain. Allocating a decade for water would provide the opportunity for concerted efforts to plan and to act locally as well as collectively.

Iranians have been traditionally harnessing water resources ingeniously and efficiently throughout their rich history, however, over the last four decades the rapid pace of development, demographic expansions, over-urbanization, disintegrated large agricultural expansions, and perhaps most importantly climate change and variation have taken their toll on a barely stable water resources supply/demand chain.

While infrastructural activities are pursued in earnest, management of over-consumption is given high attention.

Formation of the national governmental “Task Force on Adaptation with Water Scarcity”, adopted by the Iranian cabinet is the latest development among various national strategies led by the Minister of Energy for addressing the current challenges in line with the national development goals and the recommendations of the water decade.

Islamic Republic of Iran has been in the forefront of networking actions even before the onset of the first Decade. Establishment of the “Regional Centre on Urban Water Management” and the “International Centre on Qanats and Historic Hydraulic Structures” (both under the auspices of UNESCO) in the early to mid-2000s and the variety of activities conducted by these centres are proof of advocacy and networking, realised by the water sector in Iran.

It is therefore expected that the wealth of experience and competences accumulated in these centres over the years, would be utilized best to enhance the activities planned for the current Decade.

I take this opportunity to offer my support for regional as well as international cooperation in line with the goals and visions of the current water decade and to express my most sincere gratitude to the government of Tajikistan for hosting this high level international conference.