



UNITED NATIONS

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AFFAIRS**

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**Opening Remarks**

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

**Dushanbe, 20 June 2018**

**Your Excellency President of the Republic of Tajikistan,  
(*Your Excellency the President XXX and the Prime Minister XXX,*)**

**Excellencies,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**It is my honour and pleasure to join you today in this inaugural  
International High-Level Conference on the Water Action Decade 2018-2028.**

**I thank President Emomali Rahmon for his inspiring leadership in  
convening this high-level conference.**

**[WATER AND SANITATION CHALLENGES]**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**Water and sanitation are at the core of sustainable development. The range of services they provide underpins poverty reduction, economic growth and healthy ecosystem.**

**However, our communities are confronted with mounting water-related challenges, including limited access to safe water and sanitation, increasing pressure on water resources and ecosystems, as well as increased frequency and severity of droughts and floods.**

**This situation is projected to worsen if we continue business as usual. More must be done.**

**The solutions are there. The challenge is whether we have the political will to change our mindset and to take renewed action.**

**It is high time to change the way we think about water, the way we go about the water business.**

**Water is at the heart of recent milestone agreements such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change.**

**Last March, the Water Action Decade 2018-2028 was launched. The Secretary-General presented an Action Plan to facilitate its implementation in cooperation with Governments and other relevant stakeholders.**

**This Conference represents the first opportunity for all stakeholders to engage in the Action Plan.**

**[HIGH LEVEL PANEL ON WATER OUTCOME]**

**In this connection, I wish to draw your attention to the outcome of High-Level Panel on Water, convened by the United Nations Secretary-General and the President of The World Bank Group, of which President Rahmon was a member and in which he played an active role.**

**The Panel called for a new approach with actions to transform our water challenges into opportunities, by rethinking how we understand, value and manage water as a precious resource. This approach seeks to catalyze change and build partnerships to achieve the water-related goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.**

**The Water Action Decade will provide the opportunity to use this new approach, and will further help strengthen cooperation among countries and stakeholders.**

**The Water Action Decade serves as a platform for policy dialogue and for exchanges of best practices, and for building global partnerships.**

**[CONCLUSION]**

**Excellencies,**

**I believe this Conference will also provide a timely and effective opportunity to contribute to the review of water-related SDGs at the 2018 session of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development next month.**

**The United Nations stands ready to support countries in implementing water- and sanitation-related targets of the 2030 Agenda, including by promoting policy dialogue, exchanging best practices, raising awareness and forging partnerships.**

**Water connects us, unites us. Let us work together for a sustainable future, through a successful Decade of “Water for Sustainable Development”.**

**Thank you.**

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