

ECOSOC Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation

Session 3: Science Technology and Innovation (STI) for Sustainable management of water and sanitation for all (SDG 6)

5 June 2018, 3:00 – 4:00 pm

Conference Room 4, UN Headquarters

Panelist remarks by H.E. Ambassador Katalin Annamária Bogyay, Permanent Representative of Hungary to the United Nations:

- Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Colleagues,
I'm very honored to address this distinguished Forum today on the important topic of **sustainable management of water and sanitation** for all, a theme that had been a longstanding priority for my country Hungary.
- **Water is not only the most critical natural asset, but also an enabler for development.** It is widely present in **science, history, arts** and in all **aspects of everyday life.**
- **Water resources management is linked** to all areas of **sustainable development**, and therefore the **implementation of the 2030 Agenda will largely depend on achieving SDG 6.**
- I am proud that I can share with you the **outcome of the work of the High Level Panel on Water.** The **UN Secretary General** and the **World Bank President** convened this High Level Panel to provide **leadership in tackling one of the world's most pressing challenges: an approaching global water crises.**
- They invited 11 sitting Heads of State and Government, and a Special Advisor to work in the Panel **for a two-year period starting in April 2016** under the **co-chairmanship of Mexico and Mauritius.**
- During the UN General Assembly in **September 2016, the Panel issued an Action Plan**, which **called for a fundamental shift** in the way **the world currently looks at and manages water.**
- In the past two years the Panel members have explored ways in which the Plan can be implemented. They have taken initiatives to lead by example and summarized their findings and recommendations in **the report entitled "Making every drop count"**, which was **presented in Brasilia at the World Water Forum by Hungary's President, H.E. Mr János Áder in March this year.**

- The Panel revealed that if the world continues on its current path, projections suggest that humanity may face a 40% **shortfall in water availability**, affecting at least 1.8 billion people by 2030 and 4.8 billion by the middle of the century. There is a wide recognition that **climate variability** will make water extremes even worse. The main message to take away is that **the world can no longer take water for granted**.
- Individuals, communities, companies, cities and countries **need to understand, value and manage water better**. To take effective action we need to **invest in data** in order to help better understanding, **value water in its social, cultural, economic and environmental dimensions**, and **strengthen water governance** mechanisms to **manage it efficiently**.
- The Panel underlined the need for an **integrated approach across political and sectoral boundaries**, building more **resilient societies and economies**, improving **disaster risk reduction**, **investing in water-related infrastructure** and building sustainable **cities and human settlements** while preserving the environment.
- The Panel's report recommends **progress in innovation, increase financing, promote partnerships, enhance global and international water cooperation**, as well as seizing the **opportunity of the Water for Sustainable Development Decade 2018-2028**.
- With regard to **technology and innovation**, a study commissioned by the Panel found that the **water sector is still under-invested in innovation**, relative to other sectors such as health. In order to foster the **uptake of new water-related business models and technologies**, the Panel supported the program of **Water Innovation Engine**, which brings together entrepreneurs, new ideas, and flexible financing to accelerate innovation by encouraging coordination and investment.
- I was asked to give a brief overview on **sanitation as well**. In 2015 almost 4.5 billion people did not use a sanitation facility that safely disposed of excreta, and 892 billion people - most in rural areas - still practices open defecation, while safe water and proper sanitation are **key to health, poverty reduction and development** for all.
- **SDG 6** goes beyond basic access to water and sanitation and **calls for safe levels of services that are sustainable and provide more inclusive and equitable access**.
- The Panel has committed itself to a range of **initiatives** to spur progress on SDG 6 encouraging all Member States to **ensure universal access to safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) for the growing world population**, estimated to reach about 10 billion by 2050. The Panel in its report called on governments to

mainstream WASH in national, subnational and community level **planning** along with **review** processes and **innovative financial strategies** with the aim of **addressing gaps** in service delivery models, technology and behavior change, which limit access to sustainable drinking water and sanitation.

- The Panel encouraged Governments to join the **Sanitation and Water for All Partnership**, and give special attention to the **needs of women, girls, and communities in vulnerable situations, as well as of people with disabilities**.
- The report **calls on all stakeholders to get involved** with responding to the urgent challenges related to water. In most cases, **governments** need to take the lead, including through **cooperation across national boundaries**, but **citizens, civil society, the private sector, academia and international organizations** also have their vital role to play.
- **Member States and the whole international community should work together, undertake coordinated efforts** and adopt both **urgent and long-term measures**. The case is particularly relevant for **waters shared among sectors as well as surface and groundwater shared between communities and countries**. With the rise of water scarcity, it is time now more than ever before to ensure that **cooperative frameworks for efficient water management** are being put in place.
- Regarding **good practices, as the current presidency, Hungary supports the universalization of the Water Convention of the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), which is now open to all UN Member States**.
- Our best chance to avoid shortages in water – and the associated rise in conflicts – lies in our ability to **adapt and develop our water management practice** as rapidly as possible.
- The first **Budapest Water Summit** in **2013** contributed to awareness raising about the global water problems through its role in the formulation of a **stand-alone SDG in the 2030 Agenda on water and sanitation**. In **2016**, the second Summit – attended by over 2,200 participants from 117 countries – represented a milestone in the implementation of SDG 6, as **the Summit connected leading representatives of the multilateral financial institutions, who agreed to double their investments in the sector**.
- Another important **example** from Hungary's experience with the summit was the organization of the **Forums of Women and Youth**. I participated in the Women's Forum, which tackled the topics of empowerment, education and training. Both

Forums had an added value, and I would like to emphasize that **youth** may provide us with a **new perspective** on the approach to the traditional water-related problems that we are faced with. **Let's keep in mind that the future belongs to them!**

- I would like to share with you some **personal experience from my work in the field of science**. I had the pleasure to be part of the preparation of the **World Science Forum** as a member of its Steering Committee starting with the very first World Science Conference in 1999 initiated by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and UNESCO with the support of the Government. Based on the success of this first event, the Forum evolved by now into one of the most important gatherings of the scientific sphere. **Since 2013, the Forum is being hosted every four years outside Budapest**. For the first time it got hosted by a foreign partner, it was taken to Rio de Janeiro in 2013 with a great success.
- **Last November's Forum took place in Jordan** at the Dead Sea around the theme of **Science for Peace**. It was the largest ever scientific gathering in the Middle East under the patronage of His Majesty King Abdullah II. bin Al-Hussein, and chaired by Her Royal Highness Princess Sumaya bint El Hassan.
- At the forum I led the **thematic session on "Women as Leaders for Diversity and Development" as moderator**. The session tackled how the powers of science, technology and innovation (STI) are to achieve economic growth, accelerate the pace of development, and contribute to evidence-based policy making with the contribution of diverse science leaders, including the role of women scientists.
- With regard to practical implications of STI, it is crucial to have concrete solutions: our **companies developed low-cost, easily usable water retention products, energy-generating processes fueled by wastewater, highly efficient, nature-based wastewater recycling methods and bioreactor-based systems**.
- In Hungary's view the development of these **integrated urban water solutions and financing schemes for high quality water infrastructure** is the **highest investment in sustainability, which can also prevent crisis**.
- **On today' World Environment Day, I encourage the utilization of water and wastewater as a renewable resource, to integrate it into the circular economy more comprehensively**.
- **The international community needs to support scientific endeavors**. As **diplomats** together with decision makers, we **must raise awareness on the critical importance of water management to our sustainable future**.

- Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Colleagues,
I wish you a successful continuation of this important STI Forum and Happy World Environment Day.
Thank you for your kind attention!