

STATEMENT BY
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CATALYZING IMPLEMENTATION AND ACHIEVEMENT OF THE WATER RELATED SDGs
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Excellences,
President of the Republic of Tajikistan,
Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand,
President of the United Nations General Assembly,
Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations,
Minister of Agriculture and the Environment of Finland,
State Secretary and Director of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation,
Distinguished Guests,

First of all let me start by emphasizing that it is every time a great honour to be here with the Friends of Water, a Group that clearly represents how important water is and also how governments shall place a strong emphasis on water.

It is no surprise if I say water unites people among and across generations, nations and cultures and is a source of cooperation. However, its uneven temporal and spatial distribution worldwide, in addition to numerous challenges such as demographic and climatic changes, renders **water management essential and critical as our entry point for sustainable development and poverty eradication.**

Regarding **the challenges that are affecting our water resources the principal driver is population growth.** In addition to this, climate variability contributes to uncertainty that will also contribute to increased risk. As a result of climate change the probability of hydrological extremes will increase. It is likely, that there will be more floods and droughts. In order to double food production in 25 years irrigated agriculture needs to increase. Given that 80% of water use is agricultural it will be a major challenge to meet irrigation needs that are needed for food security. Likewise, of the renewable energies hydropower represents 75 %. As humanity needs to increase the resilience of its systems, more storage capacity will be needed.

In addressing key challenges related to water resources, governments are to improve water governance in general, including institutions, legal systems and anticorruption measures. Above all, good governance at each level, improved capacities and long-term planning are crucial.

You may raise the question how are we going to succeed with **the implementation of the water related SDGs?** Just two days after the opening of the Sustainable Development Summit, we are at a moment when the adoption of the new sustainable development framework creates a novel situation as planning gives place to implementation where **regular global monitoring and reporting are critical elements.** To be able to complete the water SDG it is indispensable to involve international institutions and financial organisations, and to coordinate their support-activities.

Yet, **there is no responsible international institution set up** for the overview of the implementation process of the comprehensive water SDG. None of the existing institutions of the fragmented UN system is capable to perform this task. As the Government of Hungary has several times emphasized, **an Intergovernmental Panel on Water and Sanitation** can efficiently fill this void, an intergovernmental mechanism already proposed by the Budapest Water Summit in 2013. It is believed that a light structured yet robust follow up mechanism is needed. The mechanism envisaged should involve all the Member States, along with the relevant stakeholders. It is also proposed that the mechanism should be under the UN, either directly under the General Assembly or the ECOSOC that would report regularly or comprehensively on the state of progress supported by UN-Water as Secretariat.

In summary: The critical nature of water for human populations and the planet, conditioning any future sustainable development agenda, requires **a robust intergovernmental process to regularly monitor, review and assess progress of the implementation** of the future water goal. It is recommended, therefore, that appropriate institutional mechanisms be soon put in place to regularly review and assess progress in an integrated manner.

Coming from a country which is both upstream and downstream, and 96% of its waters comes from abroad, we Hungarians all recognize that water is an exceptionally valuable natural resource. We think it is important to increase international cooperation in water issues, **a multilevel, inclusive approach for water cooperation works best**. Benefits of water cooperation are clear and need to be shared. History has often shown that the vital nature of freshwater is a powerful incentive for cooperation and dialogue, compelling stakeholders to reconcile even the most divergent views. History also taught us that water more often unites than divides people and societies. Cooperation therefore is essential for sustainable development and environmental sustainability.

Last but not least let me emphasize that all the above mentioned issues and progresses cannot be achieved without a well-planned and organized, effective and successful interaction with regional, national and local organizations. We have to reinforce the relevant UN water programmes, and support NGO activities such as the World Water Council and the Global Water Partnership.

Thank you for your attention!