

Statement by Representative of the Permanent Mission of Ethiopia to the United Nations, at the Event “Presentation of Outcomes of the Dushanbe High-Level International Conference on the International Decade for Action “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018-2028”

UN Headquarters, New York, 19 July 2018

Honorable Ministers,

Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates,

Allow me my deepest gratitude for the organizers of this side event, and those who made tireless effort in in shaping the “International Decade for Action: Water for Sustainable Development 2018-2028” specially the Republic of Tajikistan in collaboration with United Nations for organizing the High Level Conference in the run up to this HLPF 2018. Ethiopia strongly supports the outcome and resolution of Dushanbe conference.

Ethiopia deeply appreciates the continued positive and result oriented leadership of Tajikistan on an issue that we in Ethiopia attach very high importance. When we Members States agreed to proclaim the Water Decade, we have decided that the fundamental objective is to bring “a greater focus on the sustainable development and integrated management of water resources for the achievement of social, economic and environmental objectives and on the implementation and promotion of related programs and projects.”

The positive roles of Water such as drinking water, sanitation, productive use in agriculture, hydropower, industry, manufacturing, ecosystem service, and so on on one hand and its negative influence on mankind in the form of flood, drought, hurricane, contaminant transport, cause of water borne diseases, and so on; aggravated by climate change, on the other; makes water one of the most crucial resources that needs to be managed appropriately. In fact, we can confidently say the success of all other goals intimately linked to achieving the water goal and its targets.

Countries have reached consensus to use the Decade to further enhance cooperation. Therefore, we underscore that through the Decade, it is indispensable to mobilize financial resources, improve knowledge generation and appropriate technology transfer and capacity building to developing countries, particularly least developed countries, to support the implementation of their water and water related national plans. We are convinced that it is such kind of concrete initiatives through coordinated and enhanced partnerships that would enable us to have a successful International Decade for Action.

Hence, we hope that this convening be used as a unique opportunity to create a spring board to initiate concrete actions at all levels that would contribute to fully implement water and water related internationally agreed development goals and targets in line with national development plans.

In Ethiopia, we have been implementing SDGs, including Goal 6, according to our national development priorities. In fact, Sustainable Development is one of the five pillars of our national development known as GTP. Hence, implementing SDGs has been among the top development priorities of the Ethiopian

Ethiopia has made significant progress in water and sanitation over the last two decades. It has increased water supply to 70 per cent now at the end of June 2018 compared to 58% in 2015. We are working to further improve the coverage to 83 per cent by 2020 and 100 per cent by 2025. There has also been considerable progress during the past decade in improving sanitation.

What has been achieved so far is largely due to the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Program. This nationally-owned and led program has been implemented in an integrated approach, involving our development partners- both UN agencies and bilateral development partners. Through this program, we have developed one coordinated and integrated planning, budgeting, reporting, procurement, and monitoring and evaluation system. The WASH Program, which is aligned with our national development strategy, could help us to meet the SDG 6.

We are also making progress in target 3 on water quality and pollution; target 4 efficient water use across sector by maximizing investment return through multi-purpose development, target 5 on IWMR including TB water management and target 6 on restoring water related ecosystem where millions of people are investing up to 30 days free labour to invest on watershed management.

However, it is very well known that achieving all the water and water-related development goals in the least developed countries, requires scaling up the existing implementation capacities and innovative financing options to secure adequate financing for water and sanitation infrastructures. While underlining the importance of increasing public financing, enhancing the role of the private sector in water and sanitation infrastructure investment could contribute to alleviate financing constraints. In addition to addressing the funding gap, capacity building for public institutions, water utilities, universities and research centers are imperative to achieve the 2030 Agenda in developing countries, particularly LDCs. Let me add that capacity building interventions should also target women, as they are particularly vulnerable due to lack of access to water and sanitation services. It is also important to stress that the transfer of appropriate technology is key in supporting the implementation and management of water and water-related projects.

Supporting developing countries such as Ethiopia, to meet SDGs 6 would not be possible without genuine and revitalized global partnership. We reiterate our hope that this HLPF side event would contribute to promote and further strengthen global solidarity and cooperation.

Let me conclude, Ladies and gentlemen, by reaffirming the commitment and readiness of Ethiopia to promote and implement the objectives of the Decade in close collaboration with our domestic and international partners.

I thank you.