



## ***THIRD HIGH-LEVEL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR ACTION “WATER FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT”, 2018-2028***

***10-13 June 2024, Dushanbe, Tajikistan***

### **FINAL DECLARATION**

*The Third High-Level International Conference on the International Decade for Action “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018-2028, met in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, on 10-13 June 2024, to discuss how to achieve the objectives of the Decade, contained in United Nations General Assembly Resolution 71/222 of 21 December 2016 in order to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Heads of State and Government, ministers and other high-level dignitaries took part in this historical gathering together with representatives of international and regional organizations, local governments, civil society, the private sector and academia. The Conference provided a timely and necessary platform to follow-up on the progress catalyzed by the UN 2023 Water Conference, including the implementation of the Water Action Agenda. Discussions and key messages that resonated with participants will feed into the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and other future upcoming water-related events and conferences.*

***We, the Heads of Delegation, high-level representatives of the states, organizations, major groups and other stakeholders having met in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, from 10 to 13 June 2024, contributing to the Dushanbe Water Process in our different roles and responsibilities,***

*Reaffirming* commitment to United Nations General Assembly resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, entitled “Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” and determination to achieve Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 to “ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all” and other water-related goals and targets by 2030,

*Emphasizing* that water is critical for achieving all SDGs, and *underlining* that water, ecosystems, energy, health, food security and improved nutrition are interlinked, and that water and sanitation are a prerequisite for human development, including the empowerment of women and girls, and the eradication of poverty and hunger, and are indispensable for addressing the interrelated challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution,

*Recalling* United Nations General Assembly resolution 64/292 of 28 July 2010 which introduced the human rights to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation and United Nations General Assembly resolution 70/169 of 17 December 2015 which affirms that the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation as components of the right to an adequate standard of living are essential for the full enjoyment of the right to life and all human rights,

*Concerned* that water-related challenges are expanding, notably that water is a primary medium through which climate change impacts societies and ecosystems, and vice versa, including through droughts, floods, and changing precipitation patterns that pose risks to biodiversity, agriculture, food and energy security, and basic human needs, disproportionately affecting populations and communities facing vulnerable situations, and *acknowledging* that climate-resilient water and sanitation management is a fundamental part of climate change mitigation and adaptation,

*Noting with concern* that the world is not on track to achieve SDG 6 and other water-related goals and targets at the global level by 2030 at the current rate of progress, which has a negative impact on human well-being and on the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental, *acknowledging* that achieving universal coverage by 2030 will require a sixfold increase in current global rates of progress on drinking water, a fivefold increase for sanitation and a threefold increase for hygiene<sup>1</sup> and *taking note* of the key findings and recommendations from the latest UN-Water SDG 6 synthesis report on water and sanitation 2023,<sup>2</sup>

*Recalling* United Nations General Assembly resolution 71/222 of 21 December 2016, by which it proclaimed the period from 2018 to 2028 the International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development” and United Nations Secretary-General’s Plan: Water Action Decade 2018–2028 that formulated the objectives of the Decade (a) to advance sustainable development; (b) to energize implementation of existing programmes and projects; and (c) to mobilize action to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and *also recalling* United Nations General Assembly resolutions 73/226<sup>3</sup> and 75/212,<sup>4</sup>

*Taking note* of the Midterm comprehensive review of the implementation of the International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018-2028 report<sup>5</sup> of the United Nations Secretary-General that highlights what was accomplished from 2018 to 2022 and pinpoints best practices and lessons learned to identify obstacles and propose actions and initiatives needed to overcome them,

*Noting with satisfaction* the important progress made and follow-up efforts to implement actions and commitments contained in the Declaration of the Second High-Level International Conference on the International Decade for Action “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018-2028 (Dushanbe Water Action Decade Conference) that took place 6-9 June 2022,

*Appreciating* the convening of the United Nations Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018-2028 (UN 2023 Water Conference), from 22 to 24 March 2023, which generated significant momentum towards enhancing water action and political commitment at all levels, including through the Water Action Agenda, to address water-related challenges,

*Recalling* United Nations General Assembly resolution 77/334 of 1 September 2023 on the “Follow-up to the United Nations Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action, ‘Water for Sustainable Development’, 2018-2028” and the important decisions by Member States contained therein, including to convene the United Nations 2026 Water Conference to Accelerate the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all, and also to convene, in 2028, the United Nations Conference on the Final Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018-2028,

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations, [Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals : towards a rescue plan for people and planet : report of the Secretary-General \(special edition\)](#) (New York, 2023). A/78/80-E/2023/64, para. 34.

<sup>2</sup> UN-Water, [Blueprint for Acceleration: Sustainable Development Goal 6: Synthesis Report on Water and Sanitation 2023](#) (Geneva, United Nations, 2023).

<sup>3</sup> United Nations General Assembly resolution [73/226](#), “Midterm comprehensive review of the implementation of the International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018–2028”

<sup>4</sup> United Nations General Assembly resolution [75/212](#), “United Nations Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018–2028.”

<sup>5</sup> United Nations, [Midterm comprehensive review of the implementation of the International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development: report of the Secretary-General, 2018–2028](#), (New York, 2022). A/77/249

*Reaffirming* the political declaration of the high-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the United Nations General Assembly (2023 SDG Summit) resolution 78/1 of 29 September 2023 that commits “to address water scarcity and stress and drive transformation from a global water crisis to a world where water is a sustainable resource, ensuring the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all”,

*Expressing appreciation* to the Republic of Senegal and the United Arab Emirates for their leadership as candidates to co-host the UN 2026 Water Conference, and the Government of Tajikistan for the generous offer to host the 2028 United Nations Conference on the Final Comprehensive Review of the Water Action Decade in Dushanbe, and *committing* full support for the preparation of these forthcoming United Nations conferences on water,

*Noting* the action that was taken by the United Nations Secretary-General to develop a UN system-wide strategy for water and sanitation in consultation with Member States, as requested by United Nations General Assembly resolution 77/334, in order to enhance coordination and delivery of water-related priorities across the United Nations system,

*Also noting* the substantive progress made at the 27th and 28th meetings of the Conference of the Parties (COP) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) through the Global Stocktake, including recognition of the critical role of protecting, conserving and restoring water systems and water-related ecosystems in delivering climate adaptation benefits and co-benefits while ensuring social and environmental safeguards,

*Further noting* the UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience to guide the achievement of the global goal on adaptation and *welcoming* the inclusion of water and sanitation as a vital element for the adaptation goal and its targets,

*Recalling* the water-relevant intergovernmentally agreed outcomes of the 15th Meeting of the Conference of Parties of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in May 2022, 15th meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) including the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework in December 2022, Midterm Review of the Sendai Framework in May 2023, sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly in March 2024 and *looking forward* to their implementation,

*Taking note* of outcomes from other meetings, including the 10<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum with the Bandung Spirit Water Summit in May 2024,

*Recognizing* that glaciers are a critical component of the hydrological cycle and *calling* for support for the implementation and widespread celebration of the International Year of Glaciers’ Preservation in 2025 and the annual celebration of the World Day for Glaciers on 21 March, in addition to *welcoming* the focus of World Water Day 2025 on glaciers, as well as *looking forward* to the International Conference on Glaciers’ Preservation in Dushanbe in 2025,

*Taking note* of the Mapping and Progress of the UN 2023 Water Conference Water Action Agenda report<sup>6</sup> by United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *highlighting* the major hurdles in particular financial constraints, lack of expertise, difficulties in fostering an enabling environment and cooperation issues that emerge as significant barriers to progress towards the fulfillment of these voluntary commitments and *acknowledging* that the Dushanbe Water Process aims to address these challenges and seek solutions,

*Emphasizing* that the Dushanbe Water Process, culminating in the Third Dushanbe Water Action Decade Conference, has enhanced common efforts and support for the implementation of and synergy between voluntary commitments registered in the Water Action Agenda of the UN 2023 Water Conference,

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<sup>6</sup> UN DESA, [Mapping and Progress of the UN 2023 Water Conference Water Action Agenda report](#), advance version, (New York, 2024).

## **Forward looking key messages**

*We, invite and urge all decision-makers and stakeholders to take action in order to:*

*Protect* human health and well-being by accelerating progress in the provision of safely managed water and sanitation services and the promotion of better hygiene and through improved water management, including the protection of all freshwater resources (including surface and groundwater) from pollution, because prevention is more just, more environmentally sound, and more cost-effective than addressing health and pollution issues once they arise,

*Strengthen* leadership and collaboration on drinking water supply, sanitation and hygiene to introduce and sustain transformative changes through policy reforms, regulatory and economic instruments, as well as to improve coordination between water-related sectors and alignment of development partners in support of government initiatives,

*Deliver* on the promise to leave no one behind, including through establishing evidence-based policies and strategies to prioritize universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water and adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene as critical for the progressive realization of the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation for all without discrimination, whilst prioritizing those most in need notably the poor, children, women, Indigenous Peoples and those in vulnerable situations and *emphasizing*, in this regard, the role of governments, local authorities, parliamentarians, private sector, youth and other stakeholders as part of the solution,

*Build* on concrete action being taken to accelerate progress on sustainable water, sanitation, and hygiene services in health care facilities as an entry point for water and health sector collaboration, including through data sharing and strengthened mechanisms for intersectoral coordination, as well as for preventing infections,

*Encourage* resource efficiency and reuse as the norm for economic sectors, which includes, as a priority: improving agricultural water use efficiency and increasing reuse, addressing sources of pollution, and reducing industrial wastewater emissions, water leakage and loss from water networks, as well as increasing water reuse in urban areas in line with the principles of the circular economy,

*Address* increasing water needs for sustainable urban development by implementing integrated urban and territorial planning, where appropriate, with nature-based solutions through the protection, sustainable management and restoration of ecosystems, as well as promoting information and communication technologies such as smart city technologies,

*Ensure* investment strategies take into account their impact on water, especially energy, industry and agriculture, and are backed by strategic environmental assessments and sustainable, inclusive finance policy and allocation,

*Strengthen* implementation of integrated water resources management from source to sea and at all levels, build climate resilience through integrated and inclusive planning and policymaking across sectors and increase cooperation on the ground through the participation of stakeholders,

*Protect and restore* ecosystems, including rivers, forests, peatlands, wetlands, lakes and aquifers to ensure human health, mitigation of and adaptation to climate change, reverse biodiversity loss and desertification, tackle pollution, sustain agriculture, reduce disaster risks, and provide safe drinking water and sanitation and *prioritize*, where applicable, nature-based solutions that are indispensable to ensure a water resilient world,

*Enhance* actions for disaster risk reduction by urging political leadership, supporting science-evidenced decision making, promoting open science policy, and connecting scientific data and knowledge with policy formulation,

*Support* integration of water- and sanitation-related climate adaptation and mitigation measures in the context of formulating Nationally Determined Contributions and National Adaptation Plans where appropriate, in order to significantly reduce climate-induced water scarcity and enhance climate resilience to water-related hazards based on climate-resilient water management, water supply and sanitation approaches and *request* Member States to translate such measures into policies,

*Further strengthen* the recognition of the interconnections between sustainable water and sanitation management and the protection, conservation, restoration and sustainable management of ecosystems with sustainable development, climate action, biodiversity, disaster risk reduction, the environment, and desertification,

*Emphasize* the need to mainstream water issues within relevant intergovernmental processes, as appropriate, including meetings of the respective Conferences of the Parties to the UNFCCC, CBD, Ramsar Convention, and UNCCD,

*Strengthen* inclusive water cooperation, including at transboundary level as a prerequisite for addressing water-related challenges and ensuring sustainable development, regional integration, stability and prosperity, and promoting cooperation in other areas,

*Encourage* governance arrangements and cooperation mechanisms where they do not exist yet, and strengthen existing ones to meet the growing challenges by taking into consideration principles of international law and the United Nations Water Conventions as appropriate,

*Reinforce and sustain* existing basin organizations and support their efforts towards inclusive, sustainable, and integrated water resources management by promoting the financial sustainability, exchange of information, experience, and good practices, including transboundary aquifers and groundwater,

*Make* effective and targeted use of available funding and *increase* public and private financing, including from International Financial Institutions, by establishing enabling conditions, efficiencies and institutional arrangements needed to attract significant new investment to close the large funding gap in the water sector financial resources,

*Stress* the need for scientific data collection and science-based assessments at national, regional and other levels for improved water management, climate resilience, early warning systems, and risk-informed decision-making, paying attention to the needs of developing countries,

*Strengthen* capacity to improve monitoring of water- and sanitation-related targets, inform sectoral reviews and development planning cycles, and feed into global monitoring of SDG 6 and other water-related targets and indicators,

*Provide* quality and accessible education, from childhood to higher education, training and institutional and human resources capacity-development support that responds to national needs and priorities, contributing to a skilled, diverse water and sanitation workforce,

*Encourage* transfer and sharing of technologies to developing countries in water supply and sanitation by developed countries and through South-South Cooperation,

*Ensure* inclusive, transparent and empowering operational policies and procedures for participation of stakeholders, including women, youth, local communities and Indigenous Peoples in water and sanitation decision-making processes, recognizing the value of traditional and Indigenous Peoples knowledge and, where applicable, local communities, for sustainable water management solutions,

**Hereby, reiterate our determination to achieve the objectives of the Water Action Decade and declare our commitment to the following actions, according to our respective capabilities:**

*Reaffirm* the need for water to remain high on the international agenda, including through a high level of ambition at the 2026 United Nations Water Conference to Accelerate the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all, as well as the 2028 United Nations Conference on the Final Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018–2028 as mandated by United Nations General Assembly resolution 77/334;

*Stress* the urgency to keep up the momentum of progress through the implementation of the voluntary commitments registered in the Water Action Agenda of the UN 2023 Water Conference and commitments from prior Dushanbe Water Action Decade conferences, and to stimulate new and innovative partnerships and accelerate actions to achieve the water-related goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

*Emphasize* the compelling need to expand international cooperation and partnerships, including South-South Cooperation to mobilize the necessary means of implementation for SDG 6 and other water-related targets, *urge* all parties to increase efforts at all levels- locally, nationally, regionally, globally, to achieve SDG 6 by 2030 and *address* water-related challenges for current and future generations;

*Pursue* full implementation and achievement of Water Action Agenda voluntary commitments and *look forward* to further dialogue and exchange on the means of implementation during the 2024 United Nations High-level Political Forum for Sustainable Development (HLPF) Special Event on SDG 6 and the Water Action Agenda in New York;

*Call* for monitoring and reporting of Water Action Agenda voluntary commitments, and *encourage* feasible new voluntary commitments to be registered in the Water Action Agenda during Dushanbe Water Action Decade Conferences and other upcoming water-related events;

*Call* for putting sustainable management of water and sanitation at the center of the sustainable development agenda through support to upcoming high-level meetings and conferences including the HLPF, United Nations Summit of the Future, UNFCCC COP 29, CBD COP 16, UNCCD COP 16, UN Special Thematic Sessions on Water and Disasters, as well as other meetings organized by Member States, including the One Water Summit;

*Encourage* the United Nations Secretary-General to appoint a Special Envoy on Water;

***Express our sincere appreciation for the hospitality extended by the Government and People of Tajikistan and the support of the United Nations and of all the partners who contributed to this important conference.***