



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY H.E. MR. MOHAMED EDREES, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT TO THE UNITED NATIONS IN NEW YORK, AT THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR ACTION, "WATER FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT", 2018-2028 (Dushnbe, Tajikistan , 20 June 2018)

Mr. President, honorable ministers, ladies and gentlemen,

1. I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.
2. The Group recognizes the active role of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan - the initiator of the International Decade for Action "Water for sustainable development, 2018-2028" in advancing SDG6 and other water related goals. In this regard, the Group welcomes the convening of the High-Level International Conference on the Implementation of the International Decade for Action, "Water for Sustainable Development", 2018-2028.
3. The Group congratulates Brazil for the successful leadership and organization of the 8th World Water Forum. We recognize that the World Water Forum, since its first convened in Marrakesh, Morocco, in 1997, has contributed to international dialogue on water and has promoted local, national and regional action on integrated and sustainable water resources management worldwide.
4. The Group believes that the International Decade for Action "Water for sustainable Development", 2018-2028 shall provide a platform for increasing awareness, advancement and promotion of water cooperation at different levels, as well as for strengthening dialogue on the search for and establishment of mutually advantageous and efficient water cooperation.
5. The Water Decade would provide us another opportunity to promote international partnership to implement water and water related development goals and targets. In this regard, we encourage our development partners to support developing countries in their efforts to implement SDG 6 and other water and sanitation related internationally agreed development initiatives.

Mr. President,

6. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development reflected the evolution of the multilateral approach to water going beyond just access to safe drinking water to a broader approach to water through including aspects of tackling scarcity of water, water pollution, protect and restore water-related ecosystems and call for cooperation and coordination at all levels.
7. The Group emphasizes the need to continue stressing that water is critical and cross cutting element for sustainable development and the eradication of poverty and hunger and is indispensable for human development, health and wellbeing and an important element of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and other relevant goals in the social, environmental and economic fields.
8. We are concerned that water stress is above 70 percent in some countries, which are mostly in Northern Africa, Western Asia and Central and Southern Asia, which indicates strong probability of future water scarcity. The Group acknowledges the additional challenges facing countries suffering

from water scarcity and concerned with the impacts of such challenges including, inter-alia, on their ability to achieve the SDGs.

9. The Group is also concerned that too many people still lack access to safely managed water and sanitation facilities. It is a matter of concern that 844 million people around the world still lack basic managed drinking water services, and 2.3 billion people still lack a basic level of sanitation services.

10. We are alerted by the fact that over 80 per cent of countries report insufficient financing to meet national WASH targets. The ODA commitments to water and sanitation have declined since 2012, in particular for sub-Saharan Africa.

11. We believe that this bad situation of water and sanitation in the world will be exacerbated by urbanization, population growth, desertification, drought, floods, and other extreme weather events and climate change, as well as by the lack or gaps of capacity to ensure integrated water resource management.

Mr. President, distinguished guests,

12. In order for us to overcome all the previously mentioned obstacles, the Group of 77 would like to highlight the following points:

a. Increasing water efficiency and improving water management are critical to balancing the competing and growing water demands from various sectors and users. In order to achieve this, international cooperation and capacity building support to developing countries and transfer of environmentally sound technologies to achieve that water efficiency must be provided;

b. While ODA for the water sector has reportedly and steadily increased, it should be significantly increased to ensure access to safe water and sanitation, especially among developing countries, taking into consideration that any reduction in external aid is likely to hamper progress towards implementation of SDG6;

c. There is a dire need to improve knowledge generation and dissemination, facilitating access to knowledge and the exchange of good practices, generating new information relevant to the water-related Sustainable Development Goals, pursuing advocacy, networking and promoting partnership and action by different actors to implement the water-related Goals and targets in coordination with existing initiatives and strengthening communication actions at various levels for the implementation of the water-related Goals;

d. Development partners should ensure facilitated access of developing countries, in particular those facing water scarcity, to provisions of support; and increase their investments in water and sanitation sectors, including those related to access to water, sanitation networks, waste water treatment facilities;

e. There is a need to promote transboundary cooperation through the increase in joint investments and joint management of water infrastructure as well as through joint consultation mechanisms and joint plans for the development of river basin, lakes, and aquifers;

f. Global cooperation and collaboration must be strengthened to promote the sound management of freshwater ecosystems through exchange of best practices and knowledge sharing, transfer of environmentally sound technologies, and joint consultation;

g. UN-Water, the specialized agencies, the regional commissions and other entities of the United Nations system must play a clear role in the implementation of the Water Decade.

h. The Group stresses the importance of the participation and full involvement of all relevant stakeholders, including women, children, young people, older persons, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and local communities, in the implementation of the Decade at all levels;

13. In conclusion, the Group of 77 and China concur with the view that considerations must be given to equitable and universal access to safe drinking water, while addressing the balance between water supply and demand.

Thank You