

Launch event of the International Decade for Action

“Water for Sustainable Development” 2018-2028

Panel on the Role of the relevant stakeholders in mobilizing needed means for the implementation and follow-up of water related SDGs

Trusteeship Council Chamber

22 March 2018, 16:30 am

Remarks by H.E. Ambassador Katalin Annamária Bogay, Permanent Representative of Hungary to the United Nations:

Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

- In 2015, a **new era of looking at water** in an **integrated manner** began involving a **paradigm shift**, based on the recognition that water plays a **central role** in **achieving development** and **creating opportunities for inclusive growth** in a **sustainable** way.
- Because of the complexity of water resources management and WASH, the **implementation of the whole Agenda 2030 will largely depend on achieving SDG 6**.
- Hungary welcomes the “**Water Decade**”, **which offers** a distinct opportunity to **showcase the challenges** present in the water sector and **think of solutions together**. I would like to **congratulate** Tajikistan wholeheartedly for this initiative!
- The main obstacles the international community is currently facing is the **lack of funds and the political commitment to link implementation** of programs at the **local level to the regional and global levels** in a **more efficient** way.
- **Involving the local actors** in identifying and managing problems is **crucial**. They are the ones who are facing water challenges directly on the ground; therefore, their accumulated experience is of great use on the regional and global level as well.
- According to estimates by the World Bank, **an investment of at least 150 billion USD per year** would be needed to safeguard the human right to clean drinking water and safely managed sanitation, and to ensure sustainable development. **Mobilizing such a massive amount of investment is only realistic however, if the public and private sectors work hand in hand**, including through **blending** grants and loans.

- **Sources of funding should be broadened and investments must be increased**, while both **the amounts and the direction of distribution of resources** need to be brought in line with the implementation of SDG 6 and Agenda 2030.
- It is of utmost importance to **encourage the private sector** to enter the market, which can be motivated for instance by pricing. Supporting **research and development**, establishing **knowledge centers** and **institutions for data collection and analysis**, and **economic incentives** also contribute to increase investments.
- **Private stakeholders** are the **motors of innovation**; they play an important role in water management. **As water resources are finite**, continuous **innovation** and the increasing efficiency of water management practices are essential.
- **Multilateral financing institutions are aware of the local market conditions and the enabling environment**, which is of great value for the private sector. That is why Hungary is proud that at the **second Budapest Water Summit in 2016**, leading representatives of the multilateral financial institutions **committed themselves to double their investments** in the water sector in the coming 15 years.
- As Hungary finds it important to **include women and youth**, our water summits in Budapest involved dedicated sections for their participation, and I was happy to take part in the **Women's Forum**, as well as to attend the **Youth Forum!**
- Since we are at the UN, I think it is opportune to talk about the **institutional setup for the global water arena**. My country is of the view that the **Voluntary National Reviews on the implementation of SDGs at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF)** is an **excellent practice**, as the reports allow sharing good practices and policy measures. **However, the HLPF can only discuss water-related topics once every three years (and within a strict, predefined timeframe and scope)**; and as such, **it does not provide an ideal platform to address global water challenges regularly, on an international level, nor in an integrated way**.
- When it comes to **guidance for the implementation of SDG 6**, **one of the most outstanding shortfalls the UN currently faces is the institutional deficit**, whereby **Member States do not have any intergovernmental forum to discuss water** in an integrated and comprehensive manner.
- The 2016 report on strategic alignment of future sessions of the General Assembly with the 2030 Agenda stated that **SDG 6 is one of the goals the targets of which remain largely uncovered under the GA and ECOSOC agendas** and the report gives some options for further discussions.

- In a similar vein, the two **reports of the Secretary General on the UN Development System reform** have identified SDG 6 among other areas as **clearly lagging behind in terms of coordination mechanisms.**
- **This means that we are utilizing neither our current financial, nor human resources to their full capacity**, as tasks and scopes related to water are fragmented between the 31 UN institutions and committees.
- Noting that the expert base provided by **UNESCO’s International Hydrological Program** contributes to identifying and solving problems to a large extent, we still think **there is a need to do more.**
- **Governance for water cooperation** should be strengthened at the global level. Such a structure should **provide governments and other stakeholders with coherent policy guidance, oversee monitoring and follow-up on the implementation of SDG 6** on a regular basis.
- We see the **“International Decade (2018–2028) for Action”** as a **vehicle** that shall be **complementary** with these efforts, including via linkages to the ongoing reform of the UN development system. We wish Member States the best for the successful implementation thereof!
- Ladies and Gentlemen, I thank you for your kind attention!