

Statement for the Opening Ceremony of the High-Level Symposium on SDG 6 and Targets: ensuring that no one is left behind in access to water and sanitation

Drs. Alice M. Bouman-Dentener, Vice-Chair Global Water Partnership Steering Committee
Dushanbe August 9, 2016

Your excellences,

Mr. **Emomamili Rachmon**, President of the Republic of Tajikistan

Mr. **Gyan, Chandra Acharya**, UN USG and High Representative for LDCs, SIDS
and LLDC

Mr. **Kai Sauer**, Permanent Representative of Finland to the UN

Mr. **Jagdish Koonjul**, Permanent Representative of Mauritius to the UN

Mr. **Rashid Alimov**, Secretary-General of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization

Mr. **Halil Ibrahim Akca**, Secretary-General Economic Cooperation Organization

Mrs. Jennifer Sara, Global Water Director of the World Bank

Esteemed participants, dear water colleagues and friends,

On behalf of the Global Water Partnership I wish to congratulate the
government of Tajikistan for your leadership in promoting water cooperation,
integrated water resources management and inclusive and participatory water
governance.

Without your vision and your continued commitment over the past decades,
we would not stand where we are today:

- on the brink of this new era for sustainable development
- united to achieve universal and sustainable access to water and sanitation
- and determined to leave no one behind through working in partnerships.

IWRM: from Principles to practice

Global Water Partnership celebrates its 20th anniversary this year. And what better birthday present could we wish for than being an active partner in this exciting process, which is so important for the future of mankind and for the integrity of the environment that life depends on.

The conceptual IWRM thinking that the global water community has promoted and further developed since the Dublin Principles for IWRM were first adopted, has changed the mindset of world leaders, decision makers, practitioners and beneficiaries alike; and it has strengthened the notion that water security and sound water management are the foundation and glue for sustainable development.

Just the other day, I was reading an interesting article by Cook and Bakker on the relationship of Water Security and IWRM as the dominant water management paradigm, emphasizing that **we need robust governance processes to mediate the trade-offs between different stakeholders, scales and uses of water.**

And this is where we stand to date:

We have a water goal – SDG#6, that addresses all aspects and dimensions of water security and includes the IWRM objective to integrate water across sectors, uses and boundaries.

But do we have the robust governance process that allows for fair and sound trade-offs?

An inclusive multi-stakeholder network and neutral platform for multi-stakeholder dialogue at different levels

GWP has strategically worked to create an enabling environment for IWRM implementation, based on the Dublin Principles that the Friends of Water, including the founding fathers and mothers of GWP have helped to shape:

- cementing a foundation for participatory and inclusive water governance (Dublin Principle 2);
- and that includes actively promoting the full inclusion of women that have a central role in the provision, management and safeguarding of water in many societies (Dublin Principle 3).

Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships (MSPs) will be addressed in Thematic Session 1, so let me not go into that now.

Let me just say that we still have lots of work to do in order to effectively link bottom-up with top-down processes; and to bridge the often-existing gap between State and non-State actors.

Multi-stakeholder partnerships are a key element of SDG17; and indispensable for a robust governance process to mediate trade-offs. This is also reflected in the Principles on Water Governance that were developed by the OECD Water Governance Initiative, undersigned by 65 leading organizations from the public, private and non-profit sectors and major stakeholder groups at the 7th World Water Forum in Daegu, and that were endorsed by the OECD Ministerial Council in 2015.

Dear Water and Sustainable Development Colleagues,

We stand on the brink of a new development era, with a promising agenda for sustainable and equitable development that was agreed by the UN member states last year.

And with the road towards implementation still largely open.

I am confident that Global Water Partnership can help to pave that road by ensuring pre-investments in stakeholder strengthening, especially of those stakeholders that are often and easily forgotten but that are part and parcel of our Multi Stakeholder Partnerships and essential to create an all-of-society engagement and partnership.

And I am convinced that the GWP family has to double if not triple its efforts if we want to achieve the all-of-society engagement and partnership that UN

member states have committed to for the achievements of all SDGs and first and foremost for achieving SDG6 and targets.

We look forward to do so in partnership with all of you, guided by the wisdom and leadership of the High Level Panel on Water, and, if the UN Member States should so decide, through a structured and continuous process that follows up on the achievements of the Water for Life Decade, an important initiative that also was borne here in Tajikistan.

Thank you