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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE FEDERAL  
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

866 Second Avenue, 3rd Floor • New York, N.Y. 10017

Statement by

H.E. Dr. Seleshi Bekele, Minister for Water, Irrigation  
and Electricity of Ethiopia

On

High-level event to launch the International Decade for  
Action, “Water for Sustainable Development”

(2018–2028)

22 March 2018,  
New York

**H.E. Mr. Miroslav Lajcac, President of the UN General Assembly,**

**H.E. Mr. Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General of the UN, Honorable Ministers,  
Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates,**

At the outset, let me express my appreciation to the President of the General Assembly for convening this event to launch “the International Decade for Action: Water for Sustainable Development 2018-2028.”

Allow me to thank the President of Tajikistan, the President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General of the UN for their opening statements.

My delegation associates itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and LLDCs, and let me say few points in my national capacity.

**Mr. President,**

When we- Members States- agreed to proclaim the Decade, we 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.” Moreover, we reached consensus to use the Decade to further enhance cooperation and partnerships that contribute to realize water and water related goals and targets, including SDG 6.

It follows therefore that through the Decade, it would be necessary to mobilize financial resources, improve knowledge generation and appropriate technology transfer and capacity building for 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 launching event would be used as a good opportunity to embark on concrete actions at all levels that would contribute to the full implementation water and water related internationally agreed development goals and targets in line with national development priorities. We are also confident that today's discussion would be the beginning of the effort to exchange best practices and to identify challenges to support the realization of the 2030 Agenda, including SDG 6, with particular emphasis on developing countries.

**Mr. President,**

In Ethiopia, we have been implementing SDGs, including Goal 6, according to our national development priorities.

- We are working towards a middle income country vision by 2025 by which time we aspire to achieve universal water supply access and improved sanitation including earlier ending open defecation.
- To support these, we have a number of policy, strategic and programmatic instruments put in place, such as the growth and transformation plan, water sector strategy and one WaSH National Programme
- Ethiopia achieved the MDG promise on water supply and currently access is at 67% and sanitation access is around 30%. Access gap in water and sanitation is a major predicament to advance socio-economic development,

and none-access is becoming a serious question of good governance basic right question

- The One WaSH national programme is unique in Ethiopia, in which some of its major pillars include one-plan, one budget and one report where government, development partners and end users work together
- o Inter sectoral partnership amongst WASH ministries (Water, Health, Education & Finance) and Dev't Partners are important approach to enable water supply and sanitation access at schools, health facilities and other rural institutions including allocation of budgets from multiple sources
- o Gov't public finance plus revolving water fund for urban sector are important instruments is becoming a useful mechanism to catalyze investment at the same time recover cost of investment
- o Alignment of ONEWASH with SDG norms – where we include rural WaSH, Urban WaSH, Institutional WaSH, Capacity Development and a new Innovative Pillar called climate resilient WaSH is being established in the OWNP. The Climate resilient WaSH is designed to overcome the challenges of failing water supply system during drought years that is exacerbated by climate change. It focuses on the water supply access in a resilient way to those who live in most distant and most vulnerable situation
- o As such, overall Ethiopia's policies and strategies are aligned with sector priorities of climate resilient, affordability, sustainability, quality and equity.

## **Excellences**

Ethiopia is also working on the other Goal 6 targets on water quality and pollution, efficient water use across sectors, integrated water resources including transboundary management, restoration of water related ecosystem areas. We also put great value to water as crucial resource, enable and constraint for other SDGs such as on Goal 1 on poverty, Goal 2 of agricultural productivity and nutrition, goal 3 on ensuring healthy lives and promoting wellbeing, and so on. In fact there is no single SDG where water goal does not play pivotal role. Therefore, without investment and securing water for all, achievement of all other SDGs is not possible.

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

**I thank you.**