

The General Assembly on World Water Day
High Level Event for the Formal Launch of the International Decade for Action:
"Water for Sustainable Development 2018-2028
UN Headquarters, New York, 22 March 2018

Honorable President of the General Assembly, Your Excellences, and esteemed participants,

I would like to convey to you H.E's The Prime Minister of Jordan, Dr. Hani Al - Mulki Greetings and wishes for a very successful event and his regret that he could not attend this important gathering for pressing circumstances.

Water Security for Sustainable Growth means focusing on communities' daily life requirements while providing equitable water services. It means enhancing our understanding and appreciation to linkages between water and security, growth in food security, energy and economic growth. It means also building trust and promotion for collaboration on the development and management of shared water resources which can help building mutual respect, understanding among countries and promote peace, security and sustainable economic growth.

Since its foundation, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has achieved economic growth and social prosperity despite numerous hardships including four waves of refugees the latest of which 1.3 million Syrian refugees. Jordan has given credibility to progress through evolution, and has set a regional example for pluralism, freedom, democracy and the respect of human rights despite deepening political crisis in neighbouring countries.

In Jordan, water has been at the centre of the development targets. Demand grew by 300% during the past 15 years in parallel to economic and social development achievements. It has acquired more attention recently because of its limited resource availability with the continuous drop of the yearly per capita share of

water to reach 80 m³/year for all purposes, which makes Jordan the third most water scarce country in the world.

Transboundary issues and climate change aggravates the situation where some models predict a sharp increase in the water deficit by additional 30% in the next 15 years. We call among different parties for implementing Regional Scheme which targeting the enhancing of regional cooperation.

The socio-political unrest and war in the region aggravates the pressures on Jordan and the region as well as increasing the strains on our limited resources. To cope up with the impact of Syrian refugees, an integrated Response Plan has been developed in full collaboration and participation of concerned active UN agencies, donor communities and other organization in Jordan, the plan aims at responding to refugees needs and to build resilience of hosting communities in all sectors affected by the crisis including water and wastewater. Supporting this plan is very crucial to the Jordan water sector sustainability and the stranded refugees.

We are putting reasonable efforts to enhance water governance at all levels, this include enforcement of a suitable legal framework and regulatory tools; enhancing efficient institutional capacities supporting dynamic management plans that tailor the concepts of participation and decentralizations.

Our region encounters developmental and environmental challenges including acute scarcity, uneven distribution of water resources and the economic crisis. Water in our part of the world is at breaking point which will lead to more systematic unrest simply because of the water and food linkages, i.e. water scarcity is food insufficiency.

We think that time is approaching for redefining water terminology and introduce a new water culture both on national, regional and international levels. This work should accompany the SDG development, implementation and monitoring to meet water-related challenges in the region and internationally.

As member of the High- level panel on water and its outcome document “Making Every Drop Count”, Jordan would like from this forum to thank the Secretary General of the United Nations and the World Bank President for their leadership and support on the critical issue of Water. We will continue to play an active role in leveraging the UN Water Action Decade as a platform for policy dialogue, exchanges of best practice and building partnerships at national, regional and international levels.

Honorable President of the General Assembly, excellences, and esteemed participants, I would like to express my appreciation for bringing the world together to Launch the International Decade for Action: "Water for Sustainable Development 2018-2028, when it is the time to gather and focus efforts on water as the main driver for sustainable growth and development; this focus should also help triggering peace and conflict resolution.

With my sincere wishes for a successful event,

I thank you all for your attention,

Ali Al- Ghezawi

Minister of Water and Irrigation of Jordan