

Statement of Bangladesh delivered by Hon'ble State Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Md. Shahriar Alam, MP on launching of the International Decade for Action: Water for Sustainable Development (2018-2028)

22 March 2018, General Assembly Hall, UNHQs [time limit: 4 minutes]

Thank you, Mr. President.

Water is a critical element in our pursuit of eradication of poverty and realization of sustainable development goals. Bangladesh values water as a right, and as a tool to ensure human dignity. A considerable section of humankind is still denied access to safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene, and this situation is being compounded by several factors including climate change and pollution.

We are confident that the "International Decade for Action: water for sustainable development: 2018-2028-", that we have launched today, will provide us with the opportunity to put our acts together to change this scenario.

Water and environment remains at the center of the development priorities of our Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Under her visionary leadership, Bangladesh has earned global recognition as a champion for ensuring safe drinking water and sanitation for all. We always emphasized that proper management of rivers and water resources is closely linked to all sorts of development of Bangladesh. In a country of more than 160 million people, nearly everyone can access safe drinking water. Now, our target is to ensure direct access to safe drinking water for all by 2020.

As for sanitation, 99% people of the country have been brought under sanitation coverage. Of them, 61% people have been brought under cent percent healthy sanitation. The rate of open defecation has dropped drastically below 1% during the last 9 years.

Bangladesh attaches much importance to the implementation of the SDG 6. Our government has initiated a 100-year exemplary plan titled 'Bangladesh Delta Plan-2100' for the coordinated water resources

management. The government has allocated huge amount for implementing massive water related projects including for desalination, rainwater harvesting, and dredging.

Regrettably, the investment gap is large and growing in water infrastructure. Resilient water infrastructure is necessary for managing water resources and providing water services. Moreover, smart and climate change resilient advanced technology must be applied in building water infrastructure.

Financing the water actions under SDG 6 would be challenging. Governments alone cannot fulfill this task, given the wider breadth and width of the scope of SDG 6. Thus, realizing this SDG is a shared responsibility. Private sector must be incentivized to come forward to complement the efforts of the Government.

Similarly, we must make sincere efforts to strengthen cooperation at the regional and the global level for action-oriented results in water sector.

Before I conclude, I would also like to recall the very pertinent and timely recommendations made by the recently concluded High Level Panel on Water. These would provide the governments and all stakeholders guidance to carry out meaningful water actions to implement the SDGs, to make international water decade a success, and to create a water-secure world for all.

I thank you.

(454 words)