



Permanent Mission of the Republic of Namibia to the United Nations

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**Statement by
Linda Scott, Deputy Permanent Representative,
on the occasion of
the High-Level to launch the International Decade for Action, “Water for
Sustainable Development”, 2018-2028**

New York, 22 March 2018

Mr Miroslav Lajcak, President of the General Assembly,

1. Your decision to launch the High-Level Event of the official launching ceremony of the *International Decade for Action “Water for Sustainable Development”*, for the period 2018-2028 is most welcome. For most countries, developing or otherwise, water remains at the root of sustainable development. Whether you have too much or too little, any community would be short sighted if it were to ignore the importance of water as central to their development.
2. It was Leonardo Davinci who said that “Water is the driving force of all nature”.
3. Certainly in Namibia, a land of two deserts, one of them the oldest on the planet, access to water is very often a case of survival and determines the quality of life of our citizens.

Mr President,

4. My delegation welcomes the Outcome Report from the High Level Panel on Water entitled: “Making Every Drop Count: An Agenda for Water Action” which highlights concerns about a water crisis and its related multidimensional consequences. The Report emphasizes the urgent need to strengthen water governance mechanisms to ensure effective management of water resources.
5. The statements on behalf of the African Group, as well as by the distinguished Representative of Botswana on behalf of the Group of Friends on Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought (DLDD) aptly express Namibia’s views on the importance of water as we work to implement

sustainable development goals as they pertain to water in our region and country.

Mr. President,

4. Being a largely desert country, our rainfall variability and the serious risk we face in the light of climate change, was highlighted as we emerged last year from the worst drought in 30 years. Not only were we impacted by the loss of our livestock and crops, we were put at serious risk of losing the economic progress we had made prior to that since our independence in 1990. Indeed we also saw some downward curves in our development achievements.
5. To address these challenges, which stretch back to long before Namibia's independence, Windhoek, the Namibian capital city, was arguably the first city to recycle and reuse sewage water. More recently, the fifth Namibian National Development Plan commits Namibia to upgrade existing water infrastructure, construct bulk water supply infrastructure, improve management of existing water sources, and enhance transboundary water cooperation with our neighboring and other riparian states. Our strategies are focused on SDG 6, amongst others, to ensure inclusive water availability and management, including through the measures outlined in the Water Resources Management Act of 2004.

Mr. President,

7. In the spirit of Leonardo Da Vinci's statement that water is nature's driving force, we emphasise interlinkages between ending poverty and hunger and access to safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene. These are inextricably associated with restoring degraded land and preventing further land

degradation. It is of great concern that land degradation remains the greatest policy blind spot in most domestic and global responses to water management.

8. In this light, my delegation believes that the Report of the High Level Panel sends a clear message: “the world can no longer take water for granted”.
9. To address water and sanitation challenges and related consequences, including migration, we must promote a multilateralism that is respectful of human lives, especially those in vulnerable countries.
10. In this spirit, Namibia looks forward to Namibia remains committed to the work of the United Nations, which is the suitable platform to pursue our common goals. This implies the adoption of a global and multidimensional approach that enables universal access to safe water and sanitation in our cities, towns and villages.

I thank you for your attention.