



**Statement of the United Arab Emirates during the High-Level Meeting
to Launch “The International Decade for Action, Water for Sustainable
Development 2018-2028”**

**Delivered by His Excellency Dr. Matar Al Neyadi, Undersecretary of
the Ministry of Energy of the United Arab Emirates**

Thursday, March 22, 2018

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Mr. President,

At the outset, we would like to thank you for holding this important meeting, and we would also like to express our gratitude to the President of Tajikistan, His Excellency Emomali Rahmon, for his efforts, in addition to the Member States and UN agencies that are actively promoting the profile of water in the multilateral context.

I would also like to align our statement with the Group of 77 and China.

Mr. President,

The government of the United Arab Emirates assigns great importance to the building of foundations for a decent life for its people, in which water represents one of the pillars of development. The issue of water is



specifically imperative considering the United Arab Emirates' extreme water scarcity and limited rainfall. To illustrate this point, yesterday, New York City in a single day witnessed a snowfall of 300 millimeters. By contrast, the average rainfall in the UAE in all of 2017 totaled to only about 100 millimeters.

In order to address this situation, my government has invested in desalination plants as an alternative source of drinking water for the population of the United Arab Emirates. However, as the population has increased, so has the need for water sources. Therefore, the UAE has become the second largest producer of desalinated water in the world. But while desalination is a presently successful solution, it does not solve the fundamental problem of water scarcity.

Mr. President,

The water issue is one of the priorities of my government, not only for provision to the people of the UAE, but also for those in need globally. Therefore, I would like to take this opportunity to highlight four key areas my country has explored in dealing with the water issue:

First, Looking to the Future

In January of this year, my government adopted the 2036 Water Security Strategy, based on a number of initiatives to sustain the water supply



during ordinary and extraordinary times, through an integrated system based on management of demand, supply, production and distribution. The strategy further comprises four means of implementation that include capacity building, national and legislative policies, research and development and consumer awareness. The strategy also includes a number of performance indicators for the monitoring of its implementation.

Second: Innovation

The UAE believes in applying innovative and modern technologies in addressing water scarcity. We have notably invested in a national cloud-seeding program to encourage research and development in this area. In 2015, an annual \$5 million Cloud-seeding Research Award was launched to contribute to scientific progress in the field around the world.

Third: The Water, Energy, Food and Climate Change Nexus

The water file cannot be addressed in isolation from energy, food and climate change files, and this nexus requires the government to adopt integrated resource planning to achieve a balance between them. As two examples, the UAE has promoted hydroponics as a means of reducing energy and water consumption, and has also adopted reverse osmosis techniques in desalination to try to delink water production from energy production.



Fourth: Development and humanitarian aid

The UAE is committed to integrating water concerns within humanitarian action. In this spirit, the Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Global Initiatives Foundation has launched the \$1 million UAE-based Suqia initiative, also known as UAE Water Aid, to provide drinking water to those desperately in need around the globe.

Mr. President,

These measures are intended to support the achievement of SDG6, and we look forward to advancing our discussions with Member States on the "the International Decade for Action, Water for Sustainable Development 2018-2028", as well as supporting the Secretary-General's efforts in this regard.

Thank you.