

**Launch event of the International Decade for Action
“Water for Sustainable Development” 2018-2028**

Plenary meeting

22 March 2018, 11:00 am

Remarks by H.E. Ambassador Katalin Annamária Bogyay, Permanent Representative of Hungary to the United Nations:

- **Excellences, let me first allow expressing the regrets of H.E. Mr Péter Szijjártó, Hungary’s Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, who was committed to take part in this important event today, however the weather conditions unfortunately did not make his visit possible this time. I will convey Hungary’s key messages for the discussions in his place with pleasure, as my country had been a frontrunner in promoting the themes of water and sanitation for a long time.**
- **Water resources management and WASH are linked to all areas of sustainable development, and therefore will be crucial for the years and decades to come. The implementation of the Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals will largely depend on achieving SDG 6.**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen, water is not only the most critical natural asset, but also an enabler for development. Water is widely present in history, science, arts and in all aspects of everyday life. Many of our poets and composers got inspired by rivers, lakes and the sea.**

- Hungarian Nobel-prize winner Mr Albert Szent-Gyorgyi said that *“Water is life's mater and matrix, mother and medium. There is no life without water”*.
- If the world continues on its current path, projections suggest that we may face a **40% shortfall in water availability**, affecting at least 1.8 billion people by 2030 and 4.8 billion by the middle of the century. There is a wide recognition that **climate variability** will make water extremes even worse.
- Understanding the link **between the global water context and migration** will be essential to address the issue of migration flows in the future effectively. By 2030, **severe water scarcity may drive 700 million people to leave their homes**.
- Water security is not only a **push factor for migration**, but it may increase the probability for the outbreak of **conflicts**, and contribute to **food insecurity**. This would place existing water resources as well as water infrastructure and supply under even greater **stress**, triggering huge **financial burdens**.
- Hungary launched various initiatives and programmes aiming at ensuring that our partner countries have safe and affordable drinking water supplies. Our **tied aid credit programmes** have paved the way for modernizing water-related infrastructure of **Bosnia-Hercegovina, Vietnam, Sri Lanka and Indonesia**. In the framework of **development cooperation**, Hungary has provided **mobile water purification systems** to those in need in **Asia, South America and Europe**.

- We are well aware however that **the efforts of countries will not be sufficient alone** if we are to avert the imminent “Global Day Zero” and to **provide humanity with safe, affordable drinking water and sanitation systems.**
- **Member States and the whole international community should work together, undertake coordinated efforts and adopt both urgent and long-term measures.** The case is particularly relevant for **waters shared among sectors as well as surface and groundwater shared between communities and countries.** With the rise of water scarcity, it is time now more than ever before to ensure that **cooperative frameworks for efficient water management** are being put in place.
- Challenges are outstanding, therefore it is truer now than ever before that **“Water connects”, it does not divide.**
- **Our President, H.E. Mr. János Áder, the patron of the two Budapest Water Summits** has participated in the **High Level Panel on Water (HLPW)** and presented the panel’s outcome at the opening of the **World Water Forum in Brasilia** on behalf of the panel members just this Monday, 19 March.
- Under the leadership of Hungary the panel members elaborated **recommendations** in the five topics:
 - **institutional considerations,**
 - **sustainable cities,**
 - **transboundary water governance,**
 - **water infrastructure and investment, and**

- **the link between water, peace and forced displacement.**
- Hungary promotes a greater emphasis on **preventive** measures, including the development of **integrated urban water solutions** and **financing** schemes for **high quality water infrastructure**.
- We know by now that the **Budapest Water Summit in 2013** contributed to awareness raising about the global water problems through its role in the formulation of a **stand-alone SDG in the 2030 Agenda**. In **2016**, the second Summit – attended by over 2,200 participants from 117 countries – represented a milestone in the implementation of SDG 6. **The Summit identified the crucial water-related tasks that the international community needs to carry out in the coming fifteen years ahead**. The Summit likewise **connected those individuals** who are best-placed to discharge these tasks most effectively. **Leading representatives of the multilateral financial institutions agreed to double their investments in the sector**.
- We hope that the **next Budapest Water Summit to be held in 2019** will provide all **stakeholders** with an opportunity to **redefine the scope of managing the world's water resources**.
- Hungary remains committed to these strategic discussions. Both the experience from the High Level Panel on Water and my own experience as co-facilitator of the **working level**

dialogues on improving the integration and coordination of the work of the UN on water related SDGs brought us to the conclusion to strengthen governance and the framework for water cooperation at the global level. Such a structure could provide governments and other stakeholders with coherent policy guidance, oversee monitoring and follow-up of the implementation of SDG 6.

- We welcome and see the *“International Decade (2018–2028) for Action – Water for Sustainable Development”* as a complementary initiative that shall be mutually reinforcing with these efforts, including via linkages to the ongoing reform of the UN development system through synergies.
- With regards to international legal frameworks applicable at international level, as the current presidency until 2018, Hungary supports the universalization of the UNECE Water Convention, which is now open to all UN Member States. We welcome the recent ratification by Thad and the preparatory steps underway by Tunisia, Senegal, Cote d’Ivoire, Togo, Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon to join the convention.
- Hungary hopes that the in-depth review of SDG 6 by the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) in July will be a timely opportunity for overcoming the pressing challenges in the water arena. We will present a National Voluntary Review on SDG6 with a high-level delegation.