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**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

Launch event

International Decade for Action Water for Sustainable Development 2018-2028, 22 March 2018, UN General Assembly

**Statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the UN,
H.E. Ambassador Kornelios Korneliou**

Mr. President,

Allow me first to congratulate you for the High-level event taking place on such an important day, The World Water Day.

Water scarcity, pollution, lack of access to safe drinking water and sanitation, and water-related disasters constitute serious global water challenges. A water crisis is fast approaching - for some of us it is already here - and will disproportionately affect the poorest and the most vulnerable.

Mr. President,

The International Decade for Action Water for Sustainable Development 2018-2028 is a timely and significant step in supporting efforts to address today's water challenges. The Decade, together with a number of global frameworks agreed in recent years, notably Agenda 2030 and the SDG 6 on water and sanitation, the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction are crucial in supporting the implementation of water related targets and goals. In this endeavor, the significant contribution of the High-Level Panel on Water is also welcomed. Furthermore, we support the efforts to promote the better coordination and work of the UN system in order to address effectively water related challenges around the world.

Mr. President,

The importance of water is evident to my country, Cyprus, which has been facing for decades water scarcity, frequent droughts and lately the decrease in rainfall. Climate change is set to exacerbate further the situation in the future. Mainstreaming in the public opinion what is called "conscience on water", namely advocating for the use of water in a wise manner, has been a central aspect of our water policies for decades.

My country has traditionally implemented policies of sound water management. In recent years, state of the art technologies were put in place to increase the

availability of water resources, through desalination and recycled water. Strongly supporting international and regional cooperation, we have also established bilateral and trilateral cooperation on issues of sustainable and integrated water management with neighboring countries and organisations and we are committed to continue working in this area.

Finally, let me underline Mr. President, that in the framework of our longstanding commitment to water related issues, Cyprus fully supports the Decade and is ready to actively participate in its activities. We believe that it provides an important opportunity to promote dialogue, –increase partnerships and the sharing of experiences and best practices between relevant stakeholders, thus helping in building peaceful, sustainable and prosperous societies.

I thank you Mr. President.