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STATEMENT

TO BE DELIVERED BY

H.E. MRS. MARTHA A. A. POBEE,

AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE

OF GHANA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

DURING THE LAUNCH OF THE

INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR ACTION,

“WATER FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT”

(2018-2028), 22ND MARCH, 2018 – UN HEADQUARTERS

Mr. President,

I join previous speakers in commending you for convening this High-Level event to launch the International Decade for Action on the theme “Water for Sustainable Development (2018-2028)”. We also commend the High-Level Panel on Water for its work and for providing leadership in tackling the looming global water crisis. The findings and recommendations of the Panel, as contained in the outcome document titled, “Making every drop count: An Agenda for Water Action” provide an excellent basis to accelerate collaborative efforts, foster cooperation and partnerships in water governance systems as well as develop capacity to better manage water resources towards the achievement of all the relevant targets of the Sustainable Development Goals.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by Egypt on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and wishes to make the following comments in its national capacity.

Mr. President,

Ghana joins in the call for a fundamental shift in how the world views and manages water. Water is life. It is a critical natural resource and its availability is at the very core of human health, survival and to sustainable development. In many parts of our world today, it is very much a security matter and critical for sustaining peace.

There is no denying that implementing SDG 6, “Clean water and Sanitation”, is a prerequisite for many of the other SDGs, and the prospect for achieving sustainable development will be seriously undermined if we fail to urgently address pressures on water arising from gaps in water supply and sanitation, growing populations, increasing rainfall variability, pollution and other threats to the health of water bodies and ecosystems.

Already In Africa, Asia and other parts of the world, water bodies are drying up and their destabilizing effects are already been felt. In Ghana, which is blessed with five major river basins and underground water, we are grappling with challenges in the sustainability and management of these resources brought on as a result of activities of illegal miners, sand winning, waste and chemical pollution; improper agricultural activities and climate change. These challenges are being addressed through a number of policy measures including various water conservation measures, renewable energy resource for mitigating climate change, investment in waste-water treatment, enforcing the ban on illegal mining, education and public awareness.

Mr. President,

Safeguarding water for an increasing global population has never been more critical. While urgent national programs and actions are urgently called for, the international community must also pursue actions that go to support national and regional solutions. The Decade is a unique opportunity to identify and to pursue an integrated agenda at the local, country and regional levels. We agree that such integrated approaches must include sustainable and universal access to safe water and sanitation, building more resilient societies and economies, including disaster risk reduction, investing more and more effectively in water-related infrastructure, appreciating the centrality of environmental issues, and building sustainable cities and human settlements.

Adequate financing efforts for programs in the course of the decade will be critical to their success. Effective partnerships between governments, the private sector, local communities and researchers, are essential. A global integrated approach in the management of water resources will necessarily involve international cooperation and provision of institutional support, particularly for developing countries to ensure that no region or country is left behind.

Mr. President,

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the 2015-2030 Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the 2015 Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, and the 2015 Paris Agreement within the UN Convention Framework on Climate Change, together, should continue to serve as a framework for the work to be done in the course of this important Decade. Ghana is of the view that member states must live up to our commitments under these agreements.

The HLPW has provided a good summary of what is ahead of us in this common effort - to Understand Water, Value Water, Manage Water, Ensure Universal Access to Safe Water and Sanitation, Build Resilient Societies and Economies reducing Disaster Risk, Increase water Infrastructure, Develop Sustainable Cities, Promote Innovation, Strengthen Partnerships and Increase Global Water Cooperation.

In conclusion, I wish to assure you of Ghana's commitment to playing its part in the global effort towards the success of the Decade. We are optimistic that with global collaboration and partnership, we can look forward to addressing one of the most critical challenges facing our world today.

I thank you.