



PHILIPPINE STATEMENT

**Ms. Kira Christianne D. Azucena
Deputy Permanent Representative
Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Philippines to the United Nations**

**High-level event to launch the International Decade for Action,
“Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018-2028
22 March 2018, 11:00 am – 1:00 pm
General Assembly Hall**

Thank you, Mr. President.

The Philippines aligns itself with the statement of Egypt on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

As a co-sponsor of General Assembly resolution A/RES/71/222, which established the decade “Water for Sustainable Development” 2018-2028, we thank you for this launch event.

Mr. President,

For the Philippines, the environment and natural resources sector plays a critical role in the country’s development. The protection and preservation of the ecological balance is a complex challenge that interacts with many other determinants of national security and people’s wellbeing.

While our archipelagic country is surrounded by water and blessed with abundant water resources, we continue to face challenges on universal access to water supply, sewerage and sanitation, water pollution, water-related disasters, climate change, urbanization and desertification.

Mr. President,

The Philippines supports the focus of this new decade on sustainable development and integrated management of water resources, and cooperation and partnership at all levels. These help us achieve internationally agreed water-related goals and targets, including those contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Sustainable Development Goal 6 to “ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all” calls on governments to mainstream and integrate this cross-cutting goal into their national programs and strategic plans and enhance coordination mechanisms to ensure that we achieve our 2030 targets on it.

Mr. President,

Addressing water issues and water security is high in our national agenda. It is an integral element of both our Philippine Development Plan 2017-2022 and our National Security Policy 2017-2022.

The Philippine Development Plan outlines a master plan for water sector issues and the creation of an apex body to oversee its implementation. These issues include developing strategic infrastructure in the water resources sector; sustaining biodiversity and functioning of ecosystem services through adopting a ridge-to-reef approach and intensifying sustainable integrated area development; and mainstreaming ecosystem values into national and local development planning through the institutionalization of an ecosystem valuation and natural resource monitoring system and the development of a policy for Payments for Ecosystem Services.

In our National Security Policy, “Food and Water Security” is one component of the 12-Point National Security Agenda. The government aims to “safeguard access to quality water to preserve ecosystems, sustain livelihoods, health, food and nutrition, and achieve socio-economic development.”

Mr. President,

On water and disasters, the Philippines is at the forefront of the “new normal” of increasing frequency and intensity of typhoons, due in part to the effects of climate change. We are also confronted by storm surges, floods, and slow onset disasters such as El Niño, La Niña and desertification. To address these, the Philippines has adopted a “whole-of-society” approach, led by our National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council comprised of government agencies, the academe, civil society organizations and the private sector. Our Disaster Risk Reduction Management Framework is anchored on four pillars, namely: prevention and mitigation; preparedness; response; and recovery and rehabilitation.

Mr. President,

We see water as an essential element of national, regional and global sustainability. We believe that protecting the planet’s bodies of water for the benefit of future generations is our shared responsibility in order to achieve the “future we want”.

Thank you.