



IRELAND

**National Statement at the launch event for
the International Decade of Action for Water
for Sustainable Development**

New York, 23 March 2018

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President,

Thank you for organising this High Level Event to mark World Water Day and to launch the International Decade of Action for Water for Sustainable Development. Ireland supports international and national efforts to improve global governance of water and sanitation, most critically in the context where scarce and precious resources are adversely affected by climate change.

Progress can be attained in many ways, from global efforts to adapt to climate change, including in the area of water resources management, to local efforts to protect current and future water sources from contamination. Water is the essence of life on our planet and we have a responsibility to ensure access to safe water not only for every person alive today, but also to preserve and protect this precious resource for the wellbeing of future generations.

Ireland supports the UN's Global Environment Monitoring System for freshwater (GEMS/Water). The Irish Government's five year €3 million support programme helps build the capacity of developing countries to accurately monitor and report on water quality at national level. University College Cork has been subcontracted by UN GEMs to provide capacity training and will deliver a web based postgraduate diploma course in freshwater quality monitoring and assessment,

aimed particularly at giving relevant professionals the skills to report on progress towards achieving SDG 6: ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

The promotion of Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) is another global initiative which Ireland has supported over a number of years. CLTS is aimed at protecting local water sources among the world's poorest communities, in line with our commitment to reaching the furthest behind first. Among the significant benefits of this approach is the empowerment of communities to develop their own responses to combat open defecation and the resulting the contamination of their local environment including water sources.

We know that until we reach SDG6 and ensure available of water and sanitation for all, the negative impacts will be disproportionately felt by women and girls. We know the primary burden of securing drinking water for their household or family falls on them. We know that their safety and dignity are disproportionately at risk in the absence of safe sanitation. We know that if we guarantee their human rights to water and sanitation, we enable girls to go to school and we enable older girls to stay in education much longer. Ireland has the privilege this year to chair the Commission on the Status of Women and we have been encouraged by the efforts of many delegations to highlight issues around water, particularly as they relate to the empowerment of rural women and girls, and their determination to

stress the importance of investing in accessible and sustainable infrastructure including the provision of safe drinking water, and water for sanitation and irrigation. We hope that the discussions at CSW will encourage states and other stakeholders to strengthen efforts to improve rural women's access to water and irrigation among other issues.

By delivering on our commitments on water and sanitation, we are also driving forward our commitments on gender equality, health, education, poverty eradication and a whole host of other goals. I look forward to the International Decade of Action for Water for Sustainable Development help us deliver on these goals for this and for future generations.

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