

**Preparatory Meeting
UN2023 Water Conference
25 October 2022
Statement by the Cross Regional Group on Water**

Mr president,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Cross Regional Group on Water: Argentina, Austria, Brazil, Costa Rica, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Lebanon, Malaysia, Pakistan, Peru, Portugal, Senegal, Slovenia, South Africa, Switzerland and my own country Egypt.

In the lead up to the UN2023 Water Conference, we came together as a Cross-Regional Group to emphasize water action that enjoys broad consensus among the General Membership, based on goals and targets of Agenda 2030, especially SDG6. This was materialized in launching the Cross Regional Statement on Water of 2021 supported by 168 countries and 11 organizations, and convening the “One Year Mark” event attended by more than 100 delegations in 2022.

In our view, the proposed five themes serve as a good framework for the dialogues. We reiterate the importance to reflect on the contributions of the preparatory conferences, the Regional Economic Commissions’ preparatory meetings, as well as the stakeholder consultations in the interactive dialogues, as required in resolution A/RES/75/212. We would like to emphasize some key topics that need to be captured under each theme to ensure the dialogues lead to concrete action and change.

Firstly: on Water for Health:

- Water is a matter of life and source of existence for all living, thus, access to safe water, hygiene and sanitation is essential.
- Water scarcity, pollution and extreme weather events are threatening lives and livelihoods all over the world; We need to ensure that human rights to water and sanitation are protected, promoted and fulfilled at all times, especially to the underserved and unserved, including water scarce countries, and people in vulnerable situations, as children, women, persons with disabilities, refugees and host communities, and indigenous

peoples. Gender-mainstreaming in water policy can help reduce the disproportionate impact of water-related issues on women and girls.

- COVID 19 pandemic proved that access to safe and affordable water, sanitation and hygiene are amongst the first lines of defence to preserve health systems and reduce populations' vulnerabilities, in particular in developing countries. We need to step up our collective efforts and adopt an inclusive and transformative approach to ensure safe WASH for all.

Secondly: on Water for Development:

- As Agenda 2030 is universal, the Water-Energy-Food and Ecosystem nexus need to be addressed, in order to ensure a sustainable supply of water for life, agriculture and food production, ecosystem services, as well as other economic, social and environmental benefits.
- New investment models and technologies are needed to increase knowledge about available water resources, including river basins and aquifers /groundwater, and enhance environmentally sustainable water related infrastructures and sanitation systems
- Addressing the accessibility and affordability of water technologies and innovations is pertinent.
- We have to strengthen dialogue with other sectors and find common levers to accelerate progress and protect, restore, conserve and sustainably use the ecosystem. Multi-stakeholder partnerships should be enhanced, through combined efforts to achieve 2030 Agenda, especially SDG6.

Thirdly: on Water for Climate, Resilience and Environment:

- A holistic approach is needed from Source to Sea, taking into account the interlinkages of water to relevant multilateral frameworks, including UNFCCC, Paris Agreement, Sendai Framework, CBD, and UNCCD, and bearing in mind their respective mandates.
- The interlinkages between the water and climate agenda are clear. The IPCC 6th assessment report identifies that water-related climate hazards, such as water-scarcity, floods and droughts are already affecting billions of people worldwide. The report also proposes a number of solutions that require immediate action on climate

mitigation, adaptation, and means of implementation. We need to work on building actions on water adaptation and resilience during COP27, the UN2023 Water Conference and Sendai midterm review.

- In line with the relevant Secretary General's initiative, enhancing early warning systems including for water related disasters is a priority action in the coming years, especially in disaster-prone developing countries, Africa and small island developing states. We need to enhance water information services and monitoring, so that we have data about the hydrological cycle, including water quantity, quality, distribution, access, risks, and use for effective decision-making.

Fourthly: on Water for Cooperation:

- Transboundary and International Water Cooperation are critical, thus, water diplomacy, strong leadership, political will and action oriented mechanisms are required to ensure fair solutions in line with international law.
- The international community needs to do more to address the root challenges to transboundary cooperation.
- Cross-sectoral cooperation and coordination is vital in securing water supplies and managing water better. Water availability and quality are not principally the result of local water use but increasingly the effect of global economic processes and political choices.
- Integrated water resources management is required, at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation and agreements. Effective water cooperation would promote peace and regional stability. On the other hand, lack of effective cooperation aggravates the potential risk of disputes, especially in case of limited water availability, and degradation of resources and associated ecosystem services.
- Capacity building, training programs and financial support as well as sharing experience and best practice are needed. We hope to see the conference generating actions to promote capacities and relevant frameworks for international water negotiations.

Fifthly: on Water Action Decade:

- The world is not on track to achieve SDG6. This constitutes a major threat to the entire 2030 agenda, thus, accelerating the implementation

of all water related Goals and targets of Agenda 2030 and the Water Decade is required, including through the SDG6 Global accelerating framework.

- The UN plays an important role on promoting Water Action, thus, UN system wide approach towards achieving SDG6 as well as effective multi-level governance with strong policies, institutions, and frameworks is vital.
- Therefore, we call for strengthening the relevant UN activities, including through a high-level voice to advocate for SDG6 from the UN 2023 Water Conference towards 2030 and beyond.

Mr. President,

Indeed, the UN 2023 water conference marks a critical juncture that cannot be missed.

After 46 years, we need a conference that can deliver high-impact solutions, promote tangible change and set a roadmap towards securing water and sanitation for all.

Finally, Our Group appreciates the efforts of the Co-hosts, the Netherlands and Tajikistan, the PGA and the Secretary General of the Conference, as well as the work of the relevant UN agencies, including UN Water.

Rest assured that the Cross Regional Group on Water will continue its work to support an inclusive, comprehensive, cross-cutting and action oriented UN2023 Water Conference where all water-related SDGs and especially SDG6 will be discussed to support further action, initiatives and success, and enhance means of implementation and partnerships.

I thank you.
