

AUSTRIA: MINISTER NORBERT TOTSCHNIG - INTERAKTIV DIALOG 4, LEAD DISCUSSANT

**Distinguished Co- Chairs,
Excellencies, dear colleagues
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

- Thank you,
- **I would like to thank the Co-chairs - Switzerland and Senegal –** for leading this important Interactive Dialogue and for the excellent preparation in cooperation with the UN partners.
- Let me start by simply saying a three-letter word: **Yes.**
- **Yes to cooperation, because I am fully convinced that cross-sectoral cooperation will help solving the global water crisis.**
- Yes, because it is essential that **we work together horizontally across borders and vertically across sectors.**
- Let me give you an example. Austria is a landlocked country with many fresh water sources, Alpine rivers and lakes – also across political borders.
- **We have created a mutually beneficial environment by establishing transboundary institutions and frameworks of**

cooperation and by bringing together specialists in the field of water supply and wastewater treatment.

- In close cooperation with the World Bank and the IAWD, the International Association of Water Service Companies in the Danube River Catchment Area, we have implemented the **Danube Water Program 10 years ago.**
- This close cooperation guarantees
 - **smart policies, strong utilities and sustainable water and wastewater services** in all partnering countries of the Danube region.
- Ladies and Gentlemen,
- There is no doubt: our number one priority remains to **provide clean drinking water** and adequate sanitation for all.
- **At the same time, we are also looking into ways to optimize the indirect use of water**, taking into account the **water-food-energy-ecosystem nexus.**
- Water is indeed essential for food production and in my country, some 60% of our electricity is produced by hydropower.

- To facilitate a **cross-sectoral dialogue** we have **established our own national platform – a “platform for the future,”** as we call it – in order to engage all stakeholders from various sectors.
- With regards to the water-food-energy-ecosystem nexus, the **European Union Water Framework Directive provides clear regulations for** resource protection while taking into account the demands of individual sectors.
- However, the water and sanitation crisis cannot be solved without the **commitment of individuals.**
- Each and every one of us has to make their own contribution.
- This is why Austria also **invests into awareness raising campaigns for civil society.**
- So let me come to an end and reiterate that **water cooperation has to be cross-sectoral,** on every level.
- It has to be action-oriented and inclusive. And it would thus be an important step to establish a **Global Envoy on Water Issues** to even better coordinate amongst UN member states and to give billions of people a voice.
- Finally, we have to **include all parts of society, not least the younger generations.** They are the Ambassadors of change and

the drivers that **push our societies to take the bold actions we need.**

- Thank you.