



Intervention - H.E. The Minister of Sustainable Development
UN 2023 Water Conference
UN Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the
Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action,
'Water for Sustainable Development,'
22nd – 24th March 2023 (Exact Time TBC)

Your excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, and Colleagues.

- Allow me first to thank the United Nations and the co-hosts the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Republic of Tajikistan for organizing this long overdue Water Conference, and for all their efforts in encouraging cooperation, partnerships and capacity development in order to achieve the set goals.
- I would like to also wish my fellow Muslims a Ramadan Kareem. As Muslims across the world observe the holy month of fasting from dawn to sunset, we are reminded daily of the importance of water to humans.
- We are pleased to be taking part in this discussion on water sustainability at the mid-way point of the “Water Action Decade”.
- This is particularly fitting as it also coincides with the mid-way point of the decade of action for the implementation of the SDGs.
- The Kingdom of Bahrain, a small island developing state with limited natural water resources, affirms that sustainable water management is a vital element in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.
- ~~The Kingdom has in fact realized the significance of this decades ago, and in 1982, the Water Resource Council was formed.~~



- ~~• The Council works to set policies and programs that protect and ensure the sustainability of water resources in the Kingdom.~~
- ~~• It is comprised of a number of Ministers and senior officials and is chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister, signifying the importance of sustainable water management to the Kingdom's wide-ranging agenda.~~
- Due to the rapid social development and economic growth in Bahrain, demand for portable water was on the rise, which required more desalination plants to be built and put in-service.
- This demand is expected to continue to grow.
- We recognize this, and are working on ensuring that all elements of the water cycle work together in a sustainable manner.
- The Government of Bahrain approved, in 2018, the National Water Strategy 2030 which aims to ensure effective management of water resources, providing sustainable water supplies of the required quality for the various economic sectors, in order to boost sustainable development.
- The National Water Strategy relies on three main pillars (1) promoting coordination among various water-related bodies, (2) following-up and monitoring of the implementation of activities, programs, and services and (3) increasing awareness.
- On the water supply side, we have diverse water supply resources including seawater desalination, groundwater desalination and groundwater boreholes; with a variety of water desalination technologies.



- The groundwater resource is kept as a reserve, and the water abstraction has been minimized to reserve water for emergency uses only.
- ~~The Kingdom is committed to supplying high quality water, in accordance with the international standards by the WHO and those adopted by the GCC.~~
- In addition to the supply side, the Kingdom also focuses on demand side management through various initiatives including water conservation campaigns and incentives to high consumers who manage to reduce their water consumption.
- In last year's Second High-Level International Conference on the International Decade for Action in Tajikistan, we announced the commencement of a project funded by green climate fund (GCF) to enhance institutional capacity and water knowledge management, with a focus on demand-side management.
- Bahrain has since established the Bahrain Water Resources Database which contains 440 statistical variables and data, ranging from water quality, groundwater levels and water demand management to climate and socioeconomic parameters.
- The Water Resources Management Unit, responsible for the Database, is facilitating the implementation of an Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) concept, adopting a circular water economy approach; considering the water cycle as one connected system, creating interlinkages between the water supply, wastewater, stormwater systems and the utilities that manage them.



- The project relies on “Data and Information” and “Capacity Development”; 2 of the accelerators under the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework.
- The Kingdom will further work on developing projects that support “Financing”, “Innovation” and “Governance” to ensure the Kingdom achieves its sustainability targets.

Distinguished Delegates

- We are honored that Bahrain has been selected by the UN and its custodian agency the FAO to demonstrate how accelerated progress is possible, specifically in SDG target 6.4 on water use and scarcity.
- In the year 2000, Bahrain was withdrawing 195% of its renewable freshwater resources, and thus relying on non-renewable sources that will eventually run dry.
- By 2021, the water stress level had dropped to 156%; meaning Bahrain managed to reduce a **fifth** of its freshwater withdrawals in two decades. In the same period, water-use efficiency increased by 80%.
- This reduction in water stress was possible thanks to a growing supply of non-conventional water resources, mainly desalinated seawater and treated wastewater.
- At the same time, the agricultural sector widely adopted greenhouses, hydroponic systems and modern irrigation technologies, allowing for more efficient use of existing water resources.
- We pride ourselves in achieving the first target of SDG 6, pertaining to equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water with 100% supply



coverage, with the whole population connected to water and wastewater networks.

Closing

- To close, I would like to thank you for hosting the conference and we look forward to continuing our cooperation and exchanging our knowledge and experiences to accelerate the pace towards achieving our common goals. THANK YOU.