



**PRESIDENCY OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA**

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**STATEMENT**

**by**  
**H.E. Mrs. Željka Cvijanović**  
**Chairwoman of the Presidency**  
**of Bosnia and Herzegovina at**  
**the**  
**„UN Water Conference 2023“**

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Your excellencies,

Distinguished colleagues and guests,

It is a privilege to be here today and discuss the topic that is fundamentally important for the whole world, and, one can easily say, for the future of humanity.

I would first like to thank the organizers for the invitation and the opportunity to speak on this occasion.

This is especially because the topic in question, considering its immense importance, can never be given the amount of attention it actually deserves.

The limits of natural resources and their accelerated consumption represent one of the biggest challenges today.

In a world inhabited by more than eight billion people as of the end of last year, the question of resources, their efficient use and equal distribution, emerges as a priority and requires quick responses and sustainable solutions from states, international organizations and other subjects.

The need to find a sustainable solution is all the greater when it comes to a vital, essential and irreplaceable resource such as water—a resource on which human life depends.

To illustrate this, if the entire supply of the world's water were placed in a four liter jug, the drinking water available to us would fit in one spoon.

This additionally points to the obligation of responsible and rational use of water, even in those parts of the world that do not have issues with water shortages.

Water has always been a multidimensional resource, and its utility value has greatly exceeded the role of satisfying basic human needs.

The importance of water for preserving our environment, regulating climate conditions, as well as for sustainable economic development, especially in areas such as agriculture, industry and energy, is immeasurable.

The modernization of the Water Services Sector is a strategic priority of Bosnia and Herzegovina for the environmental sector and an essential step towards the country's EU integration.

Fundamentally, it is helping the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. In addition, modernization needs of the water sector in BiH require extremely heavy investment. That is also the case with poorer countries, which will need substantive international funding support from the richer countries.

In an effort to ensure the long-term sustainability of supporting activities, in particular infrastructure investments in the sector, major international development partners in the country established the Water Alliance BiH in 2020.

These international development partners are committed to use the Water Alliance BiH as a consultation and coordination platform with a goal to support both entities of BiH in the Modernization of the Water Services Sector.

Through this collective approach, the Water Alliance BiH continues to engage with the authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina and support their commitment to implement the necessary reforms and systemic changes in the Water Services Sector in further alignment with the EU water related legislation.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, in particular, hydropower represents a huge development opportunity, and one of the strategic and still underutilized branches of the economy.

In accordance with this, our development plans for the future are largely based on investments in the energy sector, the importance of which in the global framework is greater today than ever before.

Unfortunately, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, short-sighted political interests sometimes take precedence over elementary economic logic.

That is why many important hydropower projects, that we in Republic of Srpska intend to carry out together with Serbia, are subject to pointless obstructions and blockades by certain political actors.

However, this will not impede our determination to use the hydro potentials which are our great development opportunity and a competitive advantage to the maximum extent, for the common good.

Certainly, the use of hydro potential for development purposes also implies a high level of awareness of the necessity for preserving the environment.

On the path of development, we are obliged to strive to preserve natural resources, because if we endanger our planet, damage the climate and the ecosystems, pollute our seas, rivers and lakes, we will endanger our own existence.

The scarcity of water, its pollution and floods in many parts of the world contribute to the fact that water-related risks have been at the top of the list of the biggest global challenges for years.

About one fourth of the world's population still does not have access to safely managed drinking water services, while almost four billion people, or virtually half of our population, do not have safely managed sanitation services.

The data from UNICEF, according to which in 2015 around three hundred thousand children under the age of five died from poor sanitary conditions, poor hygiene and inadequate drinking water. This is devastating and terrible!

We cannot ignore such horrible tragedies that happen throughout the world every day.

This is not a challenge that individual countries can overcome independently.

It is thus necessary to make additional joint efforts so that in the coming years all people have access to drinking water, as well as appropriate sanitary conditions.

It is very important that today, on World Water Day, we also have the opportunity to discuss these challenges, because I am aware that numerous human lives, and in the long term, the fate of our planet, rest on overcoming them.

If there is a goal that should unite us, regardless of all other global challenges, differences and rivalries, it is the provision of a sufficient amount of water, as well as adequate sanitary conditions for all people in the world.

Thank you for your attention and for all you do on this issue!