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Statement by

**H.E. Dr. Rabun Ouk**

**Minister of Rural Development of the Kingdom of Cambodia**

**at the**

**United Nations Conference on the Mid-term Comprehensive Review  
of the Implementation of the Objective of International Decade for Action on  
Water for Sustainable Development, 2018-2028**

New York, 22-24 March 2023

*Excellency, Madam President*  
*Excellencies Heads of States and Governments,*  
*Excellency Secretary General of the United Nations,*  
*Distinguished delegates,*

It is my great honor to represent the Royal Government of Cambodia at this crucial High-Level Conference of the United Nation, along with distinguished delegates from other parts of the world for the **Mid-term Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action on Water for Sustainable Development, 2018-2028**. *Cambodia highly appreciates the timely convening of this very important event.*

Cambodia is blessed with abundant water bodies and can be considered as a “water wealthy” nation. Yet, there is still a significant gap in our capacity to harness them efficiently and in ways that support equitable and sustainable growth and human development. Thus, water including access to clean water remains as one of the four fundamental priorities of Cambodia’s socio-economic development policies and strategies. Our water policy not only emphasizes on ensuring access for all to clean water for consumption and sufficient water for agricultural production, but also for water resources conservation, prevention, and mitigation of damage to life and livelihood from the forces of nature including drought, floods and rising sea-level. Furthermore, my government is making efforts to draw greater benefit from our water resources - we refer to as “white gold” by linking their use to boost tourism which we refer to as “green gold” such as through holding River Festival and Sea Festival annually to promote responsible and efficient use of water resources to serve our tourism industry and sustainable development.

Strengthening our cooperation, enhancing joint efforts and partnerships, consultation with wider stakeholders and sharing and exchange of information, knowledge and best practices, both at the national, regional and international levels is the only best way to ensure that the responsibility to preserve water resources and gains it are equitably shared, so that we can all move forward in our strive to achieve SDG, in particular Goal 6 of the 2030 UN Agenda on “Ensure Availability and Sustainable Management of Water and Sanitation for All”.

Over the past 10 years, we've made faster progress toward our goal of providing water and sanitation services to everyone in Cambodia, thanks to the leadership of the government and the strong work of our partners. Based on JMP report, in 2010, only 65.9% of Cambodia's population had access to basic water service and only 38% had access to basic sanitation service. But as of 2022, access to basic water service has increased to 78%, and to basic sanitation service has more than double to almost 77%.

### *Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen*

Effective implementation of the integrated water resources and river basin management at the country level and in the transboundary nature need not only legal and institutional framework, but also stronger coordination mechanisms and participatory, responsible, and collaborative actions. In this sense, may I reiterate my government's call for reaffirmed commitment to work together to manage our water resources sustainably for now and in the future, through:

1. Continuing to promote the development and integration of infrastructure networks to support water resource management at country, regional and global levels.
2. Continuing to promote the development of responsible socio-economic activities and to support green development, especially for agriculture which requires great amount of water.
3. Promoting and enhancing our digital cooperation to leverage the progress of digital technology development for the use and management of water resource in efficient and effective manners.
4. Continuing to support programs, initiatives and activities that promote social sustainability in the use and management of water resource to ensure that all people around the world have access to water as needed.

Finally, I am confident that with our shared high-level political will, we can make a big step forward in achieving of "Water for the Sustainable Development Objective". Cambodia will do its best in this drive for the wellbeing of our people and nature at present and in the future.

**Thank you.**