

**2023 Conference for the Midterm Comprehensive Review of
Implementation of the UN Decade for Action on Water and
Sanitation**

(2018-2028)

United Nations Headquarters in New York,

22-24 March 2023

Statement

Salutation

Mr President,

Guyana is an Indigenous word that means ‘land of many waters.’ We are blessed with an abundance of water sources. And as a country, we stand ready to contribute to the search for solutions to achieve SDG 6 – ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

We commend the leadership of Tajikistan and the Netherlands for the organisation of this year’s United Nations Water Conference - the first full-fledged one since the inaugural 1977 Conference held in Argentina.

We welcome the opportunity to deliberate on strategies and actions to address the multiple challenges that bedevil the world's water resources. We also welcome the participation of the stakeholders, as the challenges before us require a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach, as well as enhanced cooperation at all levels.

Mr. President,

Water is life, and thus the timely achievement of the SDGs is essential to our survival. According to the World Health Organisation 2022, a staggering two billion people still live in water-stressed countries, which is exacerbated in some regions as result of climate change and manmade crises. At the same time, the over-exploitation of water resources causes dire risks to the environment, including biodiversity loss and habitat fragmentation.

Recognizing the need to have a balance between these competing concerns, the Government of Guyana has adopted the Low Carbon Development Strategy 2030, which includes more

Integrated Water Resources Management in tandem with other national priorities such as energy and food security. The Strategy also embodies Guyana's contribution to combat climate change through the preservation of our country's forest resources and a shift to clean and renewable energy sources.

Indeed, climate change represents a foremost threat to water resources on our planet with deleterious impacts on the availability of freshwater resources and the increased frequency of extreme weather events. These phenomena are critical drivers of rising food insecurity. Against this background, Guyana wishes to highlight the value of nature-based solutions in integrated water resources management strategies to address these challenges.

Mr President,

Guyana has taken a series of steps to boost access to water, increase the efficiency of water use and mitigate threats to water quality and availability. We continue to improve the infrastructure for providing equitable access to safe drinking

water especially for women and children, Indigenous communities, persons with disabilities, and migrants.

As part of the Amazon Basin, Guyana remains committed to regional transboundary cooperation. The Amazon provides a plethora of eco-system services, which includes a rich endowment of biodiversity; it plays a crucial role in global climate regulation and cycles twenty percent of the world's freshwater. Guyana, in collaboration with the other Member States of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organisation (ACTO), continues to work on transboundary initiatives to monitor the quality and quantity of water while promoting the harmonious use of its vast resource in keeping with the rights of its Inhabitants.

At the global level, Guyana calls for the acceleration of the development of “A Cooperative Global Water Information System” to strengthen policy development, promote evidence-based decision-making to support climate smart water management, and promote investments in sustainable and resilient water infrastructure. Guyana further calls for the

exchange of technology and innovation between developed countries and Small Island Developing States, Landlocked and Least Developed Countries. Financing for water reuse, desalination, and wastewater treatment remains a major challenge for Small States which must be a high priority to promote equitable access to clean drinking water for all.

Mr President, it is clear that more concerted action must be taken to restore, manage and preserve the integrity of our water resources. We must combine all of our knowledge and best practices to find urgent solutions to our water woes. We believe this Forum provides a most welcome opportunity to move this conversation to action.

Guyana reiterates its commitment to, and calls for the acceleration of multilateral and national efforts to accomplish the targets under SDG 6 and other water related SDGs as we advance towards the achievement of the 2030 agenda.

I thank you.