

Good afternoon, dear esteemed guests!

My name is Lyazzat Syrlybayeva, I am from Kazakhstan, Central Asia.

I will be delivering a statement on behalf of the International Secretariat for Water, Central Asia Youth for Water Network, and Global Youth Movement for Water.

Transboundary water cooperation is an underutilised tool for peace and resilience, and it is key for sustainable water management.

We all are aware that the cost of non-cooperation is high. Taking into consideration – the costs of inaction versus the benefits of action – we should be mindful of indirect economic costs, as well as social, environmental, and political costs. I would like to stress that as a cross-cutting issue, water cooperation demands attention at all levels and across sectors. Involving all stakeholders who are directly affected by decisions of negotiations is essential, and stakeholders such as youth, women and indigenous communities should be included in decision-making over shared waters.

Youth all around the globe have come together and put forward the following statement: “By 2030, youth below 30 years old must represent at least 30% of stakeholders engaged in water management and governance mechanisms, consultation and decision-making processes at the local, regional and global levels.”

With this aspiration, in collaboration with the International Secretariat for Water, Central Asia Youth for Water Network managed to approve the youth access to the meetings of river basin councils from the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan. Have conducted a series of youth basin dialogues, connecting the young water professionals, who share a common river basin.

To wrap up, I would like to say that we insist that young people be included in water-related mechanisms, along with negotiations and decisions so that they can be part of the solution. Water is an instrument of peace, and cooperation is needed to guarantee peaceful societies.