



COUNTRY STATEMENT

by

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CLIMATE CHANGE**

FOR THE UN 2023 WATER CONFERENCE

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Mr. President,

Malaysia's Support of the Water Action Decade

1. I bring you greetings from our new Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim.
2. Malaysia recognises the importance of water as a critical resource for sustainable development, economic growth, and poverty reduction. Malaysia welcomes the Water Action Decade (2018 - 2028) and seeks to play an active role globally to achieve the SDGs and support other UN work.

The Global Perspective on the Water Crisis: Climate and SDG 6

3. In November 2022, the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) reported that "*large areas of the globe recorded drier than normal conditions in 2021*" and people with inadequate access to water for a month in a year is estimated to reach 5 billion by 2050. This report also highlighted that more than two-thirds of all natural disasters are water-related.
4. We need to acknowledge that **the climate crisis is a water crisis**. The world is facing water scarcity, inadequate provision for sanitation, as well as more intense and frequent disasters and extreme weather events. The world saw devastating disasters in 2022, the costliest being Hurricane Ian in the United States and Cuba with more

than \$100b of damages while the Pakistan flood killed 1,739 and displaced 7 million people.

5. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in their Sixth Assessment Report has highlighted that **the most vulnerable people are often disproportionately affected and we are pushed beyond our adaptation limits**. This poses significant challenges for the developing global south. Climate change aggravates and widens the existing development gap. Water is central to addressing this issue.

6. **We need a framework for resilience and it has to start with water, where climate, environment and development merge**. The world needs to shift how development is approached in the age of crises where climate and disaster risks, and economic growth have to be planned together.

7. The Sustainable Development Goal 6 Synthesis Report on Water and Sanitation 2018 highlights the importance for equitable access for safe water and sanitation especially for the marginalised, the role of water and sanitation for public health and ensuring that we must keep water sources clean from pollution. Addressing pollution and implementing measures to protect and restore ecological integrity are important for water conservation.

8. Every development plan must consider the water element and its impacts. **We cannot afford to forgo our environment for the sake**

of growth, neither can actions for water be made a lesser priority compared to climate change and vice versa.

Balancing Resilience with Development

9. Navigating economic recovery post-pandemic and mitigating the impacts of climate change are highly dependent on the resilience of the water sector. A lot of countries are still grappling with economic recovery, whilst mitigation of disaster risks and adaptation efforts require billions of development budget.

10. Malaysia would like to take this opportunity to also highlight that like other natural resources, water from the developing countries has benefitted the global economic growth and was unfairly exploited.

11. The global initiative for water security needs to acknowledge the connection between resilience and the investment needed, particularly addressing the global development inequity.

12. On this note, I would like to share Malaysia's experience. For example, the SMART Tunnel that not only serves to mitigate flood risks, but is also effective in easing traffic congestion in Kuala Lumpur. In addition, a creative financing mechanism has been introduced to encourage greater private investment in the water sector as well as the creation of an endowment to fund off-grid water supply projects.

13. Malaysia manages waste water services under a state-owned enterprise to manage all public sewage treatment assets in the country. We are today able to share to the world our expertise in the development of policies, human capital and circular economy initiatives i.e. water recycling and reusing our treated sludge as soil nourishment. Our experiences span across Asia.
14. We have adopted a circular economy in waste and waste water management to support the nation's Net Zero earliest by 2050 target.
15. We also would like to express our appreciation to the Kingdom of the Netherlands from our cooperation through the Malaysia-Netherlands Water Dialogue since 2018 focusing on water-related disasters and climate change resiliency.
16. We have also embedded more nature-based solutions that embody our long history of managing the abundance of water as a long-term strategy to adapt to climate change.
17. Malaysia manages to achieve 97% water supply access and sewerage services has reached 85.4% particularly in main cities. By the end of 2025, we aim to reach 98% coverage of clean water for rural areas and 90% for sewerage coverage.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

The Water Sector Transformation

18. To further advance sustainability in our development, Malaysia has introduced the Water Sector Transformation 2040 Agenda. We envision the water sector to be an economic enabler and a dynamic growth engine to ensure water security for all.

19. These strategies align with the aim of the Water Action Decade. We want to empower people to ensure its implementation, strengthening governance at all levels whilst we enhance our financial capacity and infrastructure.

20. The Water Action Decade has called for a global adoption of the Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) in ensuring the achievement of SDG 6. We have already made significant progress in this and look forward to learning best practices from other countries especially in addressing the gaps.

Our Call for Action

21. The Water Action Agenda needs a **framework that asserts water's role as the pillar that connects social, environmental, economic and cultural outcomes and be made a permanent agenda in the UN frameworks.** For this purpose, **a dedicated UN agency for water should be established.**

22. The UN must continue to help **establish mechanisms to enable the developed countries** to provide financial and technical assistance, and capacity development to accelerate the achievement of SDG 6.

Closing Remarks

23. I wish to conclude by reaffirming Malaysia's commitment to water security and access of reliable, sufficient, clean, and quality water supply and sanitation services for the world. We need to translate "Water for All, All for Water" into action.

I thank you.

23 March 2023