

Excellencies, distinguished participants

Firstly I want to thank the United Nations, the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Republic of Tajikistan for hosting this important conference.

Because of its Mediterranean semi-arid climate, the availability of sufficient water resources has historically been a constant challenge to Malta and its social and economic development.

Malta however responded to this water challenge and today has achieved a reliable and secure supply of water and sanitation services. Our approach adopts the conjunctive use of water demand management and water supply augmentation measures, ensuring that progressively water supply security is achieved whilst protecting the status of the natural water environment.

Malta commits to continue investing in measures that ensure the security and sustainability of its water services supply with the longer term aim of achieving a net-zero impact on the water environment.

Working together is key. Malta builds on sharing experiences and best practices in our Mediterranean region as we believe that this is key to overcome the challenges being faced.

Within the Union for the Mediterranean, Malta is proudly co-leading with Egypt the development of the elements of the Mediterranean Strategy on Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) – an important element towards the achievement of SDG 6. Under the 5+5 Process, Malta is working closely with Spain in developing a capacity building initiative to develop

the future professionals needed to enhance optimization of the regional water sector.

Malta commits to continue actively working at the Mediterranean region, developing water management solutions with key regional partners to ensure that our region, as a heavily water stressed region, continues to improve water services security and sustainability within the broader context of ensuring peace and stability in the region.

Malta also recognizes and emphasises the peculiar water management challenges faced by small islands through their insularity and because of the high impact of Climate Change. Facilitating effective adaptation measures in small islands is essential to ensure the continued availability and sustainability of water services.

Malta has also launched, and is also committed to continue supporting, the “Islands for Islands” initiative to cooperate with other small island states in addressing common water management challenges, building on Malta’s water management experience to identify effective solutions. Under this initiative cooperative action with the Government of Antigua and Barbuda was developed that has true potential to lead to the betterment of water management in both islands.

Finally we must recognize that water is a global problem that requires a global approach that also supports local solutions. We owe it to our world and our future generations to work together, actively seeking and implementing sustainable and long-term solutions towards global delivery of SDG 6 objectives. Thank you.