

Interactive Dialogue 4 "Water for Cooperation: Transboundary and International Water
Cooperation"
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MAIN SPEECH

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to recall a United Nations General Assembly Resolution of 1970. It remarked that water is of growing importance to humanity, that water is limited, and that preservation and protection of this resource is of great concern to all nations.

Today, 5 decades later, this claim continues to be true, especially when taking into account the concept of sustainable development, which helps us shape the purpose for which we shall preserve the wealth of natural resources, and tells us *how* we ought to go about doing so.

South America is very rich in natural resources, and most of these resources are shared between 2 or more states. In such a case, cooperation is *the* core mandate to ensure reasonable and equitable utilization of transboundary natural resources, and to ensure that we do so without causing significant harm.

The two global UN conventions on water, the Watercourses and Water Conventions of 1997 and 1992, respectively, incorporated these principles into the very foundations of governing the utilization of international watercourses.

It is exactly these principles that allow us to develop sustainably. For the very concept of sustainable development means "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

The commitment to achieve this involves more than one type of actor; it involves public and private actors, states and non-states. International cooperation and the UN agenda 2030 help such diverse actors to act sustainably, by allowing and fostering strategic alignment to good practices and implementation of actions concerning all 17 SDGs.

South America should strive to continue with these principles as its guiding light, and further strengthen their integration. For the scarcer a resource is, the more difficult it will be to meet the growing demands for it. The principles inscribed in the two UN water conventions, and reflecting customary international law, help us do this.

Thus, we should be proud of our region, as it is an example of successful transboundary water cooperation in line with these principles despite facing increasingly adverse conditions.

In 2020 and 2021, South America was hit by one of the worst hydrological crisis in its history. This of course brought about tensions among riparian states, each wanting to secure their use of an international river to satisfy their respective demands.

States and key actors opted for a dialogue. They cooperated through the exchange of data and information, and in the end managed to achieve a solution that balanced the multiple uses of their international rivers, satisfying their needs without negatively affecting anyone.

It was called the special operation Water Windows, and was the first operation of its kind.

This successful example of transboundary water cooperation should be our shining example that drives us to continue working on alliances, to do justice to the interests of all sectors, and remember that the key, especially when more than one country is involved, is international cooperation to achieve regional integration in the utilization of transboundary water resources.

It is only by working together that we shall achieve the optimal management of our resources, and render and share benefits for all.

Thank you very much.