



Government of Nepal

Statement

By

Honorable Abdul Khan

Minister for Water Supply of Nepal

During

2023 UN Water Conference

23 March 2023

General Assembly Hall

**His Majesty, King Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands,
His Excellency, Emomali Rahmon, President of the Republic of Tajikistan
Distinguished head of delegations,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

At the outset, I would like to join the previous speakers in congratulating the Co-hosts -Tajikistan and Netherlands for being elected as the Presidents of the Conference.

Let me also take this opportunity to commend the leading role of co-hosts for convening this conference.

Mr. Presidents,

Water is our life force without which the existence of life is not possible. It is integral to all the pillars of sustainable development and is inextricably linked with the environment, health and hygiene, food security, energy, poverty, and gender equality.

However, water has never got enough attention it deserves. But we no longer have that luxury. Water-related Sustainable Development Goals and targets are already in peril.

There is a need for bold actions on the utilization and conservation of water resources to rescue the sustainable development agenda.

Mr. Presidents,

Billions of people worldwide still live without safely managed drinking water and sanitation, even though access to both services has long been defined as a human right.

The Constitution of Nepal guarantees access to safe water and a clean environment as fundamental human rights.

In Nepal, access to basic water supply has reached 95% but the safely managed water supply is only 19%. Similarly, access to basic sanitation services is 100%, but access to safely managed sanitation services is only 61 %.

The Government of Nepal has committed to preparing the WASH plan for all 753 local levels by 2023, as a planning and financing tool for accelerating SDGs achievement.

For smooth coordination, the Ministry of Water Supply has developed a dynamic portal for WASH data management.

Though Nepal is rich in water resources, there are many challenges to achieving SDGs by 2030. It is mainly due to the drying up of spring sources in the hilly region, the shrinking of glaciers in the Himalayas, depletion of groundwater in the plain region and changes in rainfall patterns.

For us, to a large extent, the climate crisis is a water crisis. Despite our negligible share in greenhouse gas emissions, we bear the disproportionate burden of climate related disaster. Nepal is ranked as one of the most vulnerable countries in terms of risk imposed by climate change.

Therefore, we call for a robust climate action by all stakeholders, particularly developed countries. Developed countries have an obligation to ensure easy climate financing, to address loss and damage while giving equal emphasis to mitigation and adaptation.

Mr. Presidents,

Despite several impediments, Nepal is tirelessly working to safeguard water-related fundamental rights of our people and achieve water-related goals and targets by 2030.

We are in need of stronger collaboration from our development partners, UN system, IFIs, including private sectors.

In conclusion, **Mr. Presidents**, as the world is striving to tackle the crosscutting multiple crises, the Conference is the ray of hope to create momentum and accelerate progress on the internationally agreed water-related goals and targets.

Let us work together to preserve water resources for today and future generations giving particular attention to those who are furthest behind in the development stage.

I thank you.