

**Draft Statement of the countries of the
Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the
Gulf at the United Nations Water Conference**

Delivered by

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Mr. President,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

May the peace, blessings, and mercy of God be upon you,

I have the honor to make this Statement on behalf of the Member States of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, namely: the United Arab Emirates, the Kingdom of Bahrain, the State of Kuwait, the State of Qatar, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and my own country, the Sultanate of Oman.

At the outset, I would like to express our support for the Statement delivered by the Representative of Cuba, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and also welcome convening of the United Nations Water Conference, as part of the mid-term comprehensive review of the implementation of goals of the International Decade for Action, while expressing our appreciation for the efforts made by all other Member States, in particular the Republic of Tajikistan and the Kingdom of Netherlands for the facilitating the preparatory process that preceded the conference.

I cannot fail to emphasize the willingness of the GCC States to work with other delegates of participating Member States, the Conference Secretariat, and other stakeholders, with the aim of reaching agreed unanimous outputs that meet the expectations.

Mr. President,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

According to international statistics, a quarter of the world's population cannot access safe clean water, and half of them do not have sanitation services: one (1) out of every (3) persons around the world does not have access to hand-washing facilities. And that three-quarters of natural disasters are related to water, let alone human and material losses, which leads us to the fact that water is extremely vital and, without it, life on our planet would not exist. Hence, we believe that this Conference represents an opportunity for the international community to take practical and tangible measures to ensure the preservation of water resources in safe, sound, and sustainable ways.

For us in the Gulf, which is among the driest and most water-stressed regions of the world; we are proud of the achievements made to provide water in a sustainable manner, and at the lowest feasible costs that meets the needs of present and future generations, and in line with the steady population growth, rapid urbanization, and the comprehensive development in the GCC States.

In addition, it is worth mentioning that the GCC States account for 40% of the global desalination capacity. Therefore, they are classified among the highest in the world in terms of providing water supplies, specifically safe and clean drinking water, and sanitation services. Which emphasizes that the GCC States have been able to achieve 100% of the sustainable development goal, related to access of all residents to drinking water and sanitation services.

Mr. President,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Based on the significance that the GCC States attach to water resources, I would like to refer to the initiatives created by these countries to strengthen environmental ecosystems, meet the growing demand for water, achieve efficient water supply and use, water recycling and reuse, and reducing water networks leak and increasing societal awareness of the importance of water, including, but not limited to, the Water Strategy of the GCC States: the feasibility study for the Gulf Water Interconnection Network, the Saudi Initiatives: Green Saudi Arabia and the Green Middle East, the Middle East Desalination Center, the King Abdul Aziz City for Science and Technology Initiative of using solar energy to desalinate sea water, the “Masdar” Initiative for Water Desalination using Renewable Energy, the “Nasser Wells’ Water Project in Aden. funded by the State of Kuwait, the “Kahramaa” Initiatives in the State of Qatar regarding sustainable development, and the “Water Valorization” and “Mulhamoon” Initiatives in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Therefore, the GCC States support the ideas and initiatives aimed at enhancing cooperation, scientific and technical exchange in the water field, including the Call of Secretary-General of the United Nations to intensify and boost international cooperation in providing water technologies to developing countries, without restrictions and at preferential prices, since they are associated with life necessities.

We also call on countries and research institutions to invest in the water and sanitation sectors, thereby enhancing national capabilities in countries, especially in technical and vocational training, operation and maintenance, rehabilitation of plants, manufacturing of spare parts, and upgrading the national workforce to preserve groundwater resources and strategic reserves, reuse treated wastewater and integrate the potential full use of such accumulating water within the comprehensive water resources management plans.

The GCC countries also support the proposals and views submitted to discuss the risks and threats to water resources, as a result of various activities, as well as natural disasters (such as hurricanes, seawater floods), and security risks (such as piracy of information systems, and cyber-hacking) of the facilities of water storage and desalination systems.

Finally, I would like to reiterate the support of the GCC States for this Conference, and their support for reaching practical outputs that meet the aspirations of countries.

Thank you,