

Csaba Kőrösi, President of the 77th session of the General Assembly

Closing of the 2023 UN Water Conference

24 March 2023

[As delivered]

[Ramadan greetings].

Your Excellency President Emomali Rahmon,

Your Excellency Prime Minister Evelyn Wever-Croes,

Secretary-General,

Water friends,

It took us almost two generations to stop neglecting our most precious resource.

In those 47 years, we could have walked back and forth between New York and Mar del Plata eight times.

But what matters is that we are here. In New York, at the watershed Moment for water, our planet and people.

Your Excellency President Emomali Rahmon, Your Excellency Prime Minister Evelyn Wever-Croes, thank you and the excellent teams of Tajikistan and the Netherlands for guiding us to this historic Moment.

Ovid, 68 generations ago, said: everything changes, nothing perishes.

He could not have found better words to remind us that the global water cycle is a common good.

The ever changing, never stopping cycle that unites us all and transcends cultures, borders and jurisdiction.

Yesterday and today, you have laid the foundations to acknowledge that future generations can value water and benefit from its bounty.

You amazed me over the past three days.

I am inspired by the determination that unites us all in the quest to stop wasting water.

To support sustainable development and human well-being instead.

I commend all of you who reaffirmed that the hydrological cycle that links us all through space and time is finally considered as a global common good.

And, consequently, we all have our share of responsibility for it.

I am amazed by the ambition and solidarity you show in devising a water-secure future for all.

Moving away from irresponsibly squeezing out ever more water from our aquifers, lakes and rivers.

Moving away from trying to quench the thirst of our economies and our ecosystems at unbearable costs and with catastrophic impact.

Towards an inspiring, cooperative, transboundary, transformative Water Action Agenda for sustainable development and resilience.

An Agenda for which you have pledged more than 300 billion US dollars at this conference, with the potential of unlocking at least one trillion dollars of socioeconomic and ecosystem gains.

The outcome of this conference is not a legally binding document, but it still turns the page of history.

You have reconfirmed the promise to implement the human right to water and sanitation for all.

That also means reaching the millions who are not even aware that we are meeting here today.

We heard the voice of science.

Sobering but solution oriented.

We will keep our ears and minds open to scientific evidence as we move forward to realize the transformation discussed at the UN 2023 Water Conference.

Civil society and the private sector are at the heart of this transformation.

They are here, in New York, at this Moment. They are key to our success and must be part of more inclusive partnerships and solutions.

Today, we hold the pieces of a water-secure and more peaceful world in our hands.

What does it take to put them together?

We need to live up to our commitments in the Water Action Agenda.

And we need transformative and determined action.

Game changers.

The Secretary-General has just highlighted key gamechangers in his address.

Let me highlight and summarize again what has been prominently visible throughout the last days. We can live up to the promise of sustainable water future by implementing:

1. Integrated water and climate policy at national and global levels by 2030.
2. The Global Water Information System to support water, climate and land management for socioeconomic resilience, ecological sustainability and social inclusion.
3. Early Warnings for All to help people safeguard their lives and property.
4. Overcoming the deadly dependence on ever rising water consumption for providing nutrition and power.
5. Re-defined financial principles to make our economies water, climate, land, ecosystem smart and people centric. In other words: we will develop the new economics of water for a sustainable world.
6. The Global Water Education Network to build capacity of institutions and people, especially to support developing countries.
7. Inclusive, comprehensive transboundary agreements on the basis of the UNECE Water Convention to support countries of all continents.
8. You called upon the Secretary-General to create the institutional architecture for the support of transformation – a board of UN agencies and member states, under his leadership,

managed by a UN envoy for water, supported by the reformed UN Water and an independent scientific and practice panel.

9. You have indicated the necessity for an intergovernmental meeting in 2025 to evaluate the implementation of the above undertakings and the national and stakeholders' commitment.

I am ready to start working with you on all the above transformative actions.

Together, we can launch the transformation for a water-secure world, and these gamechangers can take us there.

If we roll up our sleeves now, these transformative efforts will greatly support the success of the Sustainable Development Summit and the Summit of the Future.

Secretary-General, your leadership and the determination of your teams will advance the vision of this Conference.

President Rahmon, Prime Minister Wever-Croes, your guidance has led us to this Moment.

Government representatives, thank you for your dedicated work.

Can I count on you to start this new chapter of transformation, and go forward with determination, together, leaving no one behind?

Excellencies, I hold the start button here in my hand. Can I push this button on your behalf and that of Member States? Do I have your support?

Thank you. It has been my honour to share this watershed New York Moment with you.