

Time Limit: 5 minutes
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Statement for Interactive Dialogue 4: Water for cooperation: transboundary and international water cooperation, cross-sectoral cooperation, including scientific cooperation, and water across the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

**Excellencies,
Colleagues,**

It is an honour and a privilege for me to join you today to speak on Interactive Dialogue 4: Water for Cooperation. I thank the co-chairs, Switzerland and Senegal, for their excellent work so far in conducting this dialogue.

Excellencies,

2. The global pressures on the quality and quantity of water have increased since the 1980s due to a number of factors. Estimates suggest that 2.3 billion people currently live in water-stressed countries.
3. Pakistan is no exception to the above-mentioned trend. With a rapidly growing population, we are likely to transition from a water stressed to a water scarce country by 2025.
4. Additionally, across the globe, climate change is placing additional pressures both on the quantity and the quality of the world's water resources.
5. Again, Pakistan is no stranger to this phenomenon. As one of the top ten most vulnerable countries in the world to climate change, we face immense challenges, with the devastating floods in 2022 being just the most recent example.
6. The Indus River Basin, Pakistan's chief water source, is highly sensitive to climate change, due to its dependency on glacial and snowmelt and precipitation.
7. The impacts of climate change will inevitably result in landslides, heavy flooding, dam bursts and soil erosion initially and drought and famine in the long-run.

Excellencies,

8. There is clear evidence that water cooperation between communities, sectors and countries can deliver a package of shared economic, social and environmental benefits, as well as promote peace and regional integration.

9. I would focus my intervention on 3 elements of water cooperation, cooperation across borders, across sectors and in science.

10. **First**, at the international and national levels, arrangements for transboundary water cooperation, based on established principles of international law, are essential.

11. Pakistan, as a lower riparian country, attaches great importance to such trans-boundary arrangements.

12. We share our surface and groundwater resources with two of neighboring countries. The water originating from outside of Pakistan accounts for over three-fourths (78 percent) of total water resources of the country.

13. Moreover, within South Asia, population growth and increasing water demand, coupled with climate change impacts and ecosystem degradation, has made trans-boundary water cooperation imperative.

14. The Indus Waters Treaty, which governs sharing of the Indus basin's waters, is one example of such successful cooperation. Its effective functioning is key to maintaining regional peace and stability.

15. **Second**, at the sectoral level, it is essential to improve linkages across communities and sectors. For example, the water-energy-food-ecosystems nexus, offers potential to accelerate progress across multiple Goals.

16. It is for this reason, that our National Water Policy, formulated in 2018, is based on the principle of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM). Similarly, the principle of valuing water, though its management and conservation, is also at the heart of our National Climate Change Policy (2021) and our National Food Security Policy (2018).

17. We look forward to learning from other participants today on how they have enhanced sectoral cooperation.

18. **Third**, international scientific collaborations can play a crucial role in facilitating and identifying innovative solutions to water resources challenges.

19. Pakistan, through our National Water Policy, has ambitious plans to reduce water wastage and enhance our efficiency including:

- Increasing the efficiency of water use by producing “more crop per drop”.
- Gradual replacement and refurbishing of decades old irrigation infrastructure.
- Increasing water storage capacity of existing dams
- Real-time monitoring of river flows and development of a standardized and uniform mechanism for data collection of various parameters of water resources.

20. We also plan on significant actions for climate change adaptation, such as through the Living Indus initiative.

21. Enhanced scientific collaboration would aid in the achievement of the above-mentioned initiatives.

Excellencies,

22. In conclusion, I would highlight five elements I believe are essential for enhancing international cooperation on water:

23. **One, the provision and mobilization of adequate finance** to bridge the \$6.7 trillion financing gap for SDG 6 required by 2030

24. **Two, Technology Transfer**, including flood- and drought-early warning systems, desalination technologies etc.

25. **Three, Capacity Building** and training programmes, especially in developing countries, to build capacities in water negotiation and mediation.

26. **Four, enhanced investments in transboundary water infrastructure** using innovative financing tools, such as blended finance.

27. **Five, strengthened political dialogue and water diplomacy,** including in the framework of conflict prevention and ensuring regional stability.

I thank you
