



REPUBLIC OF POLAND

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UN WATER CONFERENCE

**United Nations Conference for the Midterm Comprehensive
Review of Implementation of the UN Decade for Action on Water
and Sanitation (2018-2028)**

**Statement by Mr. Marek Gróbarczyk, Secretary of State,
Ministry of Infrastructure of the Republic of Poland**

New York, 22-24 March 2023

Secretary General, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Water is an inseparable factor of life and, like living organisms, is subject to constant change. The development of the world continues to create new pressures that shape the direction of water management. Given this constant dynamic, it is necessary to adapt actions for water resources and to go beyond the current approach.

The most important task of water management is to provide access to water for the needs of society, the environment and the economy, at the affordable prices. This task is becoming increasingly difficult due to droughts and water scarcity.

Drought affects more and more areas around the world and has become also a serious problem in Europe. Persistent drought is leading to water shortages in agriculture and the need to irrigate crops, resulting in higher food prices. This increases the importance of rational water use, its conservation, treatment and reuse through a circular economy.

The need to retain water in the environment is also growing. Without increasing the level of water retention, it will not be possible to meet the necessities of all water users. There is a need for planning, legislative and programmatic measures that will contribute to the development of retention. Programmes should increase water retention and its resources in a comprehensive way. We have a whole catalogue of natural and artificial methods to implement. We already focus on every type of retention, investing in dual-use water reservoirs, restoring wetlands, forest, soil and landscape retention, developing urban retention. In Poland, a programme has been created which, thanks to the synergistic measures, will ensure a doubling of the water retention rate in the perspective of 20-30 years.

However, today, if we wish to seize the opportunity for a watershed moment created by the UN Water Conference and its Water Action Agenda, we need to go one step further. Man should cooperate with nature and make use of its potential. The eco-hydrological approach to water management opens up such a perspective for us.

Ecohydrology combines traditional hydroengineering with nature-based solutions, which is a hybrid and systemic approach to improve the efficiency of river basin management. By integrating hydrological and ecological processes, actions can simultaneously increase the quantity and quality of water, increase the bio-productivity and biodiversity and ecosystem services to society, as well as improve resilience to climate change. The eco-hydrological approach to water management reduces various forms of anthropogenic impacts and enhances the potential of river systems, coastal zones and whole river basins at affordable costs. Ecohydrology is recognized by the United Nations and the European Union as an important scientific discipline for accelerating the achievement of the sustainable development goals.

Ladies and Gentlemen, taking this opportunity, I would like to announce *“Development, dissemination and implementation of advanced nature-based solutions based on transdisciplinary Ecohydrology”* as the Polish contribution to the Water Action Agenda.

Thank you for your attention.