

Statement
by the Minister of ecology and natural resources
of the Republic of Kazakhstan
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at Interactive Dialogue 5 “International Decade of Action
Water for Sustainable Development: accelerating the
achievement of the goals of the Decade of Action including
through the UN Secretary-General's Action Plan”
(10:00-13:00, March 24, 2023, New York)

Dear Chairman,

Excellencies,

Distinguished participants,

We say that water is a blue gold. It is difficult to underestimate its importance for the people. It is intrinsic part of our lives, our cultures, our civilization.

Achieving the sustainable development goals is impossible without putting water at its core. As such, water is a provider of ecosystem services that allow eradicating poverty and achieving global food security, providing for people’s livelihoods, and allowing life in dignity.

While water is basically an enabler of life, it is endangered. The pressure on water and water-related ecosystems is increasing, the climate change is posing itself as a risk multiplier.

These conditions dictate the need to take concerted and bold actions both at national and transboundary levels to protect and preserve finite water resources and their ecosystems. We are confident that the Water Decade Action Plan is one of the tools to accelerate the achievement of our common goals in water resources.

Kazakhstan is a large country with ecosystems spanning from steppes to glaciers with uneven distribution of water over its territory. Out of 8 basins in our country, 7 are transboundary. As such, we pay special attention both to effective management of water resources at the national level, but also working with our neighbors to ensure the use and protection of water in mutually beneficial manner respecting at the same time the needs of ecosystems to maintain their stability in the interests of current and future generations.

We believe that the joint utilization of water resources should be based on the principles of international water law, that include equitable use, causing no harm and responsibility to cooperate. In this spirit, we would like to call the States, who are not yet members, to join the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes.

Water is not a resource, water is right. And it is our responsibility to work in the spirit that would allow us meeting fundamental rights of the people and the planet. We believe that it is time to commission the position of Special Envoy on Water Action.

Dear colleagues,

We are the country who has experienced the tragedy of the Aral Sea. Once fourth biggest Sea, is now no more there. People were forced to leave their houses.

Kazakhstan is taking all the actions to return the water to its northern part. With the efforts that we are consistently taking, the Sea returned, and so did people who see their future at the shore of the Aral Sea.

But here I would like to say another thing – the history should not repeat itself. We should ensure that water is used and managed in integrated and sustainable way to achieve environmental, social and economic objectives. And this task become even more pressing with the climate change.

Dear delegates,

We should unite in our common aspiration to protect and preserve water resources and water-related ecosystems for the good of the people and the planet. I hope that plans we are setting for ourselves and the partnerships we are forming would help us achieving our common goal and the sustainable development agenda.

Thank you.