



Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Tonga to the United Nations

United Nations Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018–2028 United Nations Headquarters, New York

25th March 2023

Interactive Dialogue 5: Water Action Decade: Accelerating the Implementation of the Objectives of the Decade, including through the UN Secretary-General’s Action Plan

Intervention by Chief Executive Officer – Tonga Water Board Mr. Sione Tutulu Finau

It is an honour to address you all today on behalf of the Kingdom of Tonga regarding the critical issue of water and the Water Action Decade. As a small island developing state in the South Pacific, we are acutely aware of the importance of water for sustainable development, climate resilience, and disaster risk reduction. We recognize that accelerating the implementation of the objectives of the Decade is essential for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Water Action Decade presents a unique opportunity to mobilize efforts at all levels and promote the sustainable management of water resources for the benefit of all. As Tonga seeks to develop sustainably, water security remains a key priority for our people. In this regard, we welcome the UN Secretary-General's Action Plan, which provides a framework for accelerating the implementation of the objectives of the Decade.

The Action Plan emphasizes the need to improve water governance, increase investment in water infrastructure, enhance water data and monitoring, strengthen capacity development, and promote innovation and technology transfer. These actions are crucial for achieving sustainable development and building resilience to climate change and other natural disasters.

Tonga has already taken steps towards achieving the objectives of the Decade, including through the development of our National Water Policy, which promotes integrated water resources management, water conservation, and the protection of water quality. We have also established a national water committee to oversee the implementation of the policy, and we are exploring innovative approaches to improve water access and management.

However, as a small island developing state, we face numerous challenges, including limited financial resources, capacity constraints, and vulnerability to climate change and natural disasters. We, therefore, call upon the international community to support us in our efforts to achieve the objectives of the Decade.

Transboundary and international water cooperation is crucial for achieving the objectives of the Decade. Water knows no boundaries, and many of our water resources are shared. We, therefore, must work together to promote the sustainable management of water resources, enhance data sharing, and develop joint projects and programs.

Cross-sectoral cooperation is also essential for achieving the objectives of the Decade. Water is closely linked to energy and food security, and the Water-Energy-Food Nexus provides an important framework for promoting integrated and sustainable management of these resources. We, therefore, call upon all stakeholders to work together to promote cross-sectoral cooperation and achieve the objectives of the Decade.

In conclusion, Tonga reaffirms its commitment to achieving the objectives of the Water Action Decade and promoting sustainable development, climate resilience, and disaster risk reduction. We call upon the international community to support us in our efforts, including through the UN Secretary-General's Action Plan. We believe that together, we can accelerate the implementation of the objectives of the Decade and build a sustainable future for all.

Thank you.