



STATEMENT

BY

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MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENT

**AT THE GENERAL DEBATE OF
THE UN 2023 WATER CONFERENCE ON THE
MIDTERM COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OBJECTIVES OF THE
INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR ACTION
“WATER FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT,”
2018-2028**

22 MARCH 2023

**Your Excellencies, The co-hosts of the UN 2023 Water Conference, the Governments of Tajikistan, and the Kingdom of the Netherlands,
Excellencies,
Distinguished participants,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

On behalf of the Ugandan Government, I wish to convey my appreciation to the co-hosts of this conference, for organizing this **‘Once in a generation’ Conference.**

This conference is coming almost after 50 years since the last one was held in Argentina in 1977. It therefore provides us an opportunity to share knowledge and experiences; identify new and emerging issues; exchange best practices; create partnerships and collaboration, and showcase our voluntary commitments for the Water Action Agenda. We request this meeting to consider creating a forum at UN level where issues of water are regularly discussed. Surely, the importance of water to human survival and the socio-economic development of our countries merits giving this valuable resources more attention than we have given it.

Excellencies,

Water plays a critical role in employment and wealth creation, enhancement of competitiveness, and in fostering socio-economic

transformation of Uganda. These resources are however under intense pressure from high population growth rate, environmental degradation, urbanization, and climate change among others. These resources are also transboundary and shared with other 10 countries in the Nile Basin. Their management and development therefore require cross-border and cross-sectoral coordination and collaboration amongst the basin states and water-related sectors.

Excellencies,

In recognition of the role of water in the development of Uganda, the country integrated SDG 6 and other SDGs in its National Development Plan whose implementation is under way. Uganda is therefore making good progressing in achieving the SDGs by 2030, with an overall score of 54.9% compared to the regional average of 52.7% making it the 18th out of 52 African countries.

Despite the good progress being made, the country has faced several challenges namely flooding, rising water levels, COVID-19 Pandemic, Ebola, and refugee influx. Uganda requires USD1.7 billion annually to implement water and related programs but only USD 0.4 Billion has been mobilized constituting only 25% of the required funds. The low funding coupled with other challenges have resulted in slow progression in the achievement of the SDGs. We therefore call upon the international community to support Uganda to address the above challenges.

Excellencies,

As I conclude, I wish to reiterate Uganda's commitment to the Water Action Agenda and our resolve to do the following as part of our voluntary commitments;

- a) Accelerate inclusive access to safely managed water and sanitation services in both rural and urban areas in order to reach out to the underserved population;
- b) Ensure availability of adequate and good quality water for domestic use and for productive purposes through transformational initiatives with a focus on marginalized groups so that no one is left behind;
- c) Accede to the UN Convention on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses and the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes as a means of promoting transboundary water cooperation;
- d) Scale up partnerships and collaboration through ongoing initiatives under the National Development Plan 3 such as the Program-based approach to planning and implementation; the catchment-based planning, development and management of water and related resources; the annual Uganda Water and Environment Week, and other water related programs;
- e) Implement the updated Nationally Determined Contributions with special focus on ensuring resilient water supply systems

for domestic and productive uses, promoting sustainable water harvesting and storage, increasing sanitation and waste water treatment infrastructure and services, scaling up integrated water resources management approaches and water use efficiency, and protection of ecosystems, and;

- f) Scale up Uganda's response to conflict and climate change induced migration and displacement through improved water services and water security.

I thank you.