

Dear Mr. President, distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

When the International Decade for Action “Water for Sustainable Development” was announced, Ukraine joined it with enthusiasm. For 5 years, we have been consistently achieving the goals of the Declaration.

We implemented sustainable management of water resources, worked on creating river basin management plans. We adopted Ukraine's Water Strategy 2050, and established transboundary cooperation with neighboring countries in the field of water resources management.

**However, where are we standing on the equator of this International Decade for Action?**

Today we need to highlight the fact that the aggressor country, Russia, is trying to destroy not only Ukraine's aspirations towards sustainable development, but also those of the whole world.

**In October 2022, Russia destroyed and opened the locks of the dam of the Kakhovka hydro power plant in the cascade of Dnipro, the largest river in Ukraine.** As a result, every day Ukraine loses thousands of cubic meters of freshwater. And this can lead to catastrophic consequences.

**As of now, 5 million Ukrainians do not have access to safe drinking water. And because of Russia's actions, 70% of my country's population might be deprived of water.**

Due to the discharge of water from the Kakhovka reservoir, there is a risk of failure of the cooling systems of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant - the largest in Europe. This would mean a Fukushima scenario in the middle of the European continent.

The Kakhovka reservoir also provides irrigation for the fields of southern Ukraine.

We will not be able to irrigate the fields, harvest the crop, and fulfill our obligations under the Black Sea Grain Initiative.

**88% of Ukraine's irrigated territories are under Russian occupation. 35% of those in the government controlled area have suffered from hostilities.**

Precisely these territories are crucial for global food security.

**Every day, Russian missiles destroy Ukraine's water infrastructure, water supply facilities, drainage, heat supply, and waste management systems.**

**Ukrainians in dozens of cities, towns, and villages live without access to drinking water and sanitation due to constant shelling by Russia.**

**Imagine that in the 21st century, the country's capital in the very center of Europe has been deprived of access to drinking water for a week after another terrorist attack by Russia.**

The monetary value of the damage to Ukraine's water resources caused by Russian aggression amounts to **over 2.5 billion US dollars.**

Military actions cause surface and underground water pollution. Every day, we record **exceeding concentrations of mercury, copper, zinc, and manganese in the Dnister, Dnipro, and Siverskyi Donets rivers.** Heavy metals, oil products, toxic and hazardous compounds pollute water as a result of explosions, missile strikes, and fires at oil depots.

**The Russian Navy causes harm to the Black and Azov Seas.** Maritime mammals suffer injuries from underwater explosions. **We have documented about 120 cases of dolphin deaths** in the locations where we have access to the coast and can conduct monitoring. But we know that there could be thousands more cases.

Using satellite images, we record significant oil pollution of the sea. In some places, **oil spills stretch for hundreds of kilometers.**

Today, **over 3,000 km of our state border are under shelling from Russian forces.** And due to Russia's actions, we cannot ensure sustainable management of transboundary water resources.

**However, despite all of this, Ukraine, together with UN member states, continues to work towards achieving sustainable development goals.** Despite Russian aggression, we have not given up on our international commitments for even a day. For example, to achieve the Global Goal number 6 "Clean Water and Sanitation", Ukraine, along with its European partners, is implementing sustainable water resource management, even during the war.

In the global media we often hear definitions such as "the war in Ukraine" or "due to what is happening in Ukraine". Firstly, we kindly ask to add a clarification: "due to what Russia is doing in Ukraine." And secondly, I would like to remind everyone that the environment

knows no borders. War knows no borders. The Russians came with weapons into our shared home. They are destroying everything alive on the only planet we have.

Ukraine today faces serious challenges in documenting Russian crimes on our land. We must hold the aggressor state accountable. On top of that, we need to rebuild what has been destroyed based on sustainability standards. And we need the assistance of international partners in this effort.

Thank you for your kind attention!