

**REMARKS BY H.E. DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER TRAN HONG HA
AT THE PLENARY SESSION OF THE 2023 UN WATER CONFERENCE**

New York, 22 March 2023

- *Mr. President,*

- *Distinguished delegates,*

On behalf of the Government of Viet Nam, I would like to thank the UN for inviting Viet Nam to attend this important event, especially since there has not been a high-level UN conference on water for 46 years.

This is an opportunity for countries to exchange views, evaluations, experiences, and outcomes with regard to the implementation of **the International Decade for Action on Water for Sustainable Development**.

We can arrive at new global initiatives, pledges, and action plans, and bring about fundamental changes in humanity's perspective on the role and significance of water resources for present and future generations.

Distinguished delegates,

Water is the origin of life. Without water, our planet and people would not have existed. History and science have proven that the survival and destruction of numerous major empires and civilizations of mankind were intrinsically linked to water.

At present, nearly a third of the global population are residing in countries that are suffering from water-related challenges and water scarcity. According to the forecast by the World Meteorological Organization, by 2050, there will be over 5 billion people facing hardships when it comes to access to water.

The World Health Organization also put forth a warning that 40% of the world's population will be affected by water scarcity, and that diseases stemming from water pollution will lead to a 7% to 10% decline in global GDP.

Thus, only when we conserve water resources can we protect our planet and its people, as well as many socio-economic achievements and cultural and historical values cultivated by various generations over thousands of years.

At this conference Viet Nam wishes to share its perspectives as follows:

First, it bears necessity to together acknowledge that water resources are coming under unprecedented pressures due to the increasingly extreme impacts of climate change, natural disasters, pollution, and risks of depletion due to unsustainable exploitation and utilization.

Thus, humanity must act before it is too late.

Second, we need to attach due importance to water-related agendas in the efforts to achieve sustainable development, which encompass climate change, socio-economic growth, and environmental protection.

The restoration of water resources needs to be conducted in tandem with global efforts to restore the natural ecosystems, preserve biodiversity, and adapt to climate change.

Third, it is necessary to put in place a global legal framework on the basis of science to guide and coordinate the sustainable exploitation, use, and restoration of water resources.

We should promptly establish scientific and technological hubs on water issues around the world and in different region, and create a network of monitoring systems and databases on water.

Another measure to be taken is to sufficiently plan the exploitation and use of water resources, and improve the quality of such resources in cross-border rivers.

Fourth, we should establish organizations and agencies under the UN, such as a scientific committee on transboundary water, or an international river council. In addition, it is necessary to create a financial fund for transboundary river basins, or expand the financing function for river basins of the Global Environment Fund.

Last but not least, we need to put in place social moral standards for relations and behaviors concerning water resources, particularly transboundary water, in a just, fair, and reasonable manner, taking into account the rights and interests of countries in these basins.

Distinguished delegates,

Viet Nam has long been striving to improve its institutions and policies to ensure that its people can gain access to clean and sanitary water. Viet Nam remains committed to maximizing the interests offered by water, and minimizing water-related detriments. Such efforts shall contribute to economic growth and improve the people's living standards.

In particular, Viet Nam maintains its pledge that *by 2025, 100% of the major river basins will enjoy a harmonious management and distribution of water resources to address water scarcity via proper water resources planning. And by 2030, all households in urban areas will gain access to clean water as per relevant standards.*

Viet Nam remains committed to implementing policies and mobilizing resources for the effective implementation of outlined measures, and stands ready to work with countries in sharing experience and understanding in managing, harnessing and ensuring the sustainable use of water resources. Such endeavors will play a role in fulfilling SDGs pertaining to water.

Viet Nam remains committed to working with other countries in sharing expertise and experience concerning the management, exploitation, and use of water resources. Viet Nam will also continue to participate in action plans and initiatives on water cooperation and water security. In addition, Viet Nam will strengthen collaboration in cross-border information and data sharing, particularly with countries sharing water resources.

Such endeavors will contribute to global efforts toward a sustainable world.

I wish all distinguished delegates good health and happiness.

Thank you.