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### **Statement**

Excellencies, distinguished guests, and fellow stakeholders. My name is Vivek Dsouza from the Water Youth Network, and I am honored to speak on behalf of the Major Group for Children and Youth.

At the UN2023 Water Conference, the youth constituency played a **critical role simply beyond participation** - we mobilized **meaningful, evidence-based, and action-oriented contributions** that demonstrated our role as solution providers, advocates, and partners in addressing the global water crisis. The launch of the Youth Water Action Agenda was a milestone - uniting over 150 youth-led organizations in committing to concrete actions. Additionally, the integration of youth priorities into national dialogues - such as in Indonesia, Brazil, and Kenya - was a step towards meaningful intergenerational collaboration. Since then, young people have continued to drive implementation and accountability efforts at global, regional and national level.

Now, as we prepare for 2026, we commit to elevating the voices of children and young people and have three key recommendations for the process:

**Firstly, we call for meaningful engagement and co-design with young people.** Youth constituencies and networks have established platforms for collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and grassroots mobilization. We are ready to **co-organize regional consultations, contribute to agenda setting, and support capacity-building and commitment to mobilizing initiatives** leading up to 2026. We also request youth representation and leadership in any organizing structures for the conference and would be happy to facilitate this process.

Secondly, the themes should focus and reinforce the importance of intergenerational collaboration and meaningful youth engagement - building on the outcomes of the previous conference. This includes **ensuring youth leadership in decision making bodies and funding mechanisms**, enabling young leaders to co-develop and influence water governance strategies, **scaling youth-driven climate adaptation projects in vulnerable regions**, and recognizing the role of young people in building community resilience.

Additionally, integrating **local and Indigenous knowledge into youth-led water management strategies** is essential to ensure holistic and culturally inclusive solutions while **enhancing access to open-source water data** will empower youth advocates with the information needed to drive evidence-based action. Finally, **strengthening youth advocacy on water rights** will help elevate voices from marginalized communities, ensuring that equitable access to water remains at the heart of global commitments.

**Finally, we highlight the importance of youth-led monitoring & accountability:** Building on the framework provided by the Youth Water Action Agenda, we can support data collection, progress tracking, and impact assessments, ensuring commitments made at the UN-Water Conferences are upheld. MGCY intends to organize decentralized youth consultations in the lead-up to the next UN Water Conference, as well as a dedicated youth forum in Dubai, to provide space for capacity building, collective youth-led priority setting, and sharing strategies for implementation and accountability. We request support from the UN, member states, and all stakeholders to make this a reality.

As we move towards 2026, we are not just asking for a seat at the table—we are ready to **co-organize, co-implement, and co-deliver results**. The **UN 2026 Water Conference must not be another moment—it must be a movement**.

Let's work together to **turn commitments into action**.