

**Statement by Mr.Akan Rakhmetullin
Deputy Permanent Representative
of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the United Nations
on behalf of China, Indonesia and Kazakhstan
at the Third Meeting of the Open Working Group
on Sustainable Development Goals
New York, 24 May 2013**

Distinguished Co-Chairs,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, let me to express my gratitude to the Co-Chairs, for their diligent preparations for this third meeting of the OWG SDGs which takes us one step further towards our objective of defining and addressing the SDGs.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the troika, consisting of China, Indonesia and Kazakhstan, with regard to the issues and challenges of water and sanitation.

At Rio+20, Member States recognized that “water is at the core of social, economic and environmental development as it is closely linked to a number of key global challenges”. Water is essential for human health and well-being, food and energy production, social and economic stability and for protecting and maintaining healthy ecosystems. Therefore, water and sanitation must gain central focus in any post-2015 framework for poverty eradication and global sustainable development.

Today, 783 million people still remain without access to an improved water supply. Many more use water that is unsafe to drink. This is significant considering that **approximately 97.5 %** of the water on earth is saltwater, and only 2.5% is freshwater which is available for human consumption. More than **85 %** of the world’s population lives in the driest half of the planet, of which the majority is women and children.

Our task is to ensure that freshwater resources are not threatened by climate change, urbanization, population growth, pollution and other drivers of change. By 2030, nearly half the global population could be facing water scarcity with demand outstripping supply by 40 percent, due in part to climate change and also the needs of populations growing in size and prosperity. At all costs, the need is to see that the numbers of people living in river basins under severe water stress can be kept at a lower level than the expected more than double, reaching almost 4 billion people.

Therefore, the availability of clean water will have to be managed sustainably in an integrated manner to provide access to water, sanitation and hygiene, food and energy production, disaster risk reduction, industrial development and healthy ecosystems. Water should be addressed adequately to prevent crises by governments playing a key role in securing water for competing demands. The quest for a water-secure world is a joint responsibility and can be achieved through water cooperation and management at the local, national, regional and global levels. Partnerships will have to be forged with a multitude of stakeholders, ranging from the citizens, municipalities, local and state governments to policy makers at the national and regional levels, and also with

international organizations. Timely and appropriate political recognition and policy action are critical, utilizing also the advantages of decentralized cooperation in the areas of financing and implementation.

The challenge will also be to balance agriculture, as the largest user of freshwater, with a growing urgency to reconcile demands from farming with those of drinking water and domestic and industrial uses, especially energy production. This is more relevant, especially with the higher rates of urbanization in the consequent higher water sectors, as well as, water-dependent sectors.

Significant other water-related challenges remain. The international community will consider measures of combating water pollution, which continues to grow, by endeavouring to minimize the more than anticipated 80% of used water that will be discharged to nature untreated. The task will be to not only avert the threat to the environment, economic development and human health, but also prevent a waste of valuable resources. Over 1.7 billion people currently live in river basins where water use exceeds recharge, leading to the desiccation of rivers and depletion of groundwater. We will hence have to address and attempt to diminish the pressures on and pollution of water resources that increasingly more countries are experiencing.

Water is a crucial and cross-cutting factor at the heart of all the MDGs, and will continue to gain priority in post-2015 too. Thus, while recognizing the differentiated responsibilities between developed and developing countries, we must ensure that each Member State takes ultimate actions to meet the MDGs. This will be required to prepare the way for the SDGs, by maintaining and improving the quality and quantity of fresh water for future generations, especially with regard to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.

The other crucial strategy is to set in place the mechanisms right now to ensure efficient water management at the international, regional, national and local levels. Water-related capacity development will be fundamental in the realization and implementation of the post-2015 development agenda. Innovative, inclusive and sustainable financing mechanisms for water need to be conceived from now on for timely implementation.

The next issue of vital concern is that of **sanitation**. We are well aware that the current MDG target on sanitation will be missed by a significant margin as more than 2.5 billion people lack improved sanitation. Open defecation is still practiced by 1.1 billion people. Lack of sanitation is holding back progress in other areas, including child and maternal health, girls' education, nutrition, gender equity and economic growth. The MDG goal related to having the number of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water has been reached, yet millions more need access. The goal related to sanitation falls woefully short. The SDGs should aim to focus on improving hygiene, changing social norms, managing better human waste and waste water, and the eliminating open defecation, which perpetuates the vicious cycle of disease and entrenched poverty. Safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) are fundamental imperatives. This situation demands strengthened attention in the post-2015 development framework so as to also eliminate discrimination and inequalities in access to WASH, which are currently pervasive.

Despite being situated within the goal of environmental sustainability, the MDG target for water and sanitation does not address the wider water agenda, as called for at Rio+20, including water resources and wastewater management and issues of water quality. This calls for special thought to be given to the complexity of hydrological cycles and multiple effects of perturbations, and currently poor, deteriorating and diminishing state of water resources in many parts of the world.

To summarize, the focus thus has to be on:

- 1) Targets for achieving safe drinking water and sanitation
- 2) Targets of water resources management and water use efficiency target
- 3) Targets for water quality
- 4) Devising means of implementation, including financing, technology transfer and capacity building.

We need to pool together the ideas of a Sustainable Development Goal on Water, including sanitation, put forward by key players, such as the African Minister's Council on Water, the UN Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation, the UN Global Compact's CEO Water Mandate and several other countries which propose a stand-alone water goal.

The troika of China, Indonesia and Kazakhstan stands ready to work with the international community in its major task to make meaningful and relevant development goals for water and sanitation to be implemented on the ground for the benefit of people, ecosystems and the biosphere as a whole.

Thank you, Co-Chairs.