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**MAKING IT HAPPEN: ENDING INEQUALITIES AND ENSURING SANITATION, WATER AND
HYGIENE FOR ALL AS A BASIS FOR ACHIEVING THE SDGs
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What the inter-connectedness of the SDGs means

Your Excellences, Distinguished Guests,

First of all, let me say that it is an honour and a great pleasure to address the issue of water and sanitation within the Sustainable Development Framework.

As we all know without water there is no life. Without water there is no human civilization and we could add to this message that without suitable amount of healthy water there is no sustainable development. Water is fundamental for sustainability. Water is everybody's business. No section or actor of society is an outsider when it comes to water for it connects.

Water has been instrumental in our past development. It is equally the key to our future development, and safeguarding our life support on Earth, which is increasingly under pressure from global changes. It unites people among and across generations, nations and cultures and is a source of cooperation.

All basic planetary and ecosystem functions will be endangered if water is not governed properly, jeopardizing the human right to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation. The sustainability and quality of drinking water and sanitation services must be improved for all while giving priority to the most vulnerable, pursuing non-discrimination, affordability, addressing inequalities and increasing equity.

Through the adoption of the sustainable development goals, especially those related to water, we need approaches that take water, sanitation and hygiene as a human right into account and integrate issues of equality, accessibility and affordability.

At the same time, the significance of the water-SDG lies in its novel comprehensive approach that goes way beyond the narrower goals of WASH. The goal about water comprises – apart from access to water, sanitation and hygiene – also the adequate water management regarding the whole water-cycle and sustainable water usage taking into account every – urban, industrial and agricultural – type of needs.

Tapping the power of water for our era to meet the water challenge requires new, innovative policy approaches, both within the water sector and in concert with other social and economic sectors, especially, health, food and energy. Human-centered development, based on human rights approaches, and environmental stewardship, including preserving the function of ecosystems and protecting biodiversity must reinforce any modern paradigm of water management.

For Hungary water is an exceptionally valuable natural resource. Therefore, sustainable integrated water management (including climate adaptive management of hydrological extremes), access to healthy drinking water and wastewater treatment as well as proper ecosystem management are of critical importance. It also includes recharge, water-related environment-protection, and prevention, reducing the risk of disaster as well as transboundary cooperation. The latter is of particular importance for Hungary

Hence, we are of the view that it is critically important to increase international cooperation, environmental and mainly water-related investments as well as development assistance while simultaneously strictly taking into account sustainability requirements.

Response to question on next steps

I was also asked to give some thoughts regarding the next steps on how we can move forward, how we can make a more sustainable world, a more water-secure world.

Ten years from now, a decade that is not so far away, close to 2 billion people will be living in water-stressed areas. Already 40 per cent of the population get their daily amount of water from transboundary river basins and aquifers, and we've already seen how the competition has started for water. With 60% of the population and only 36% of the water resources of the world, Asia will certainly face critical water issues very soon, if not already now in certain parts, such as for example, in Central-Asia.

The adoption of the new sustainable development framework creates a new situation as planning gives place to implementation where global regular monitoring and reporting are critical elements. To be able to complete the water SDG it is indispensable to involve international institutions and financial organisations, and to coordinate their support-activities. Yet, there is no responsible international institution set up for the overview of the implementation process of the comprehensive water SDG.

Of course, we have to look into the future and see how we can go forward based on the lessons and achievements learned from the water decade. Here I just would like to repeat what János Áder, President of Hungary said during the last World Water Forum in Daegu few months ago, that it is perhaps time to create within the auspices of the United Nations a more efficient solution to manage ongoing processes, to establish an intergovernmental panel on water and sanitation, an intergovernmental mechanism already proposed by the Budapest Water Summit in 2013.

Coming from a country which is both upstream and downstream, and 96% of its waters come from abroad, we Hungarians all recognize that water is an exceptionally valuable natural resource. During his speech in the Budapest Water Summit, the Secretary General of the UN said that "this great river – the Danube – connects past to present, country to country." To face the challenges and based on the proposal of the Government of Hungary the European Union adopted and endorsed the Danube Region Strategy in 2011, under the Hungarian Presidency of the EU.

Last, but not least and just referring back to the inter-connectedness of the SDGs related to water the words of Leonardo Da Vinci are still valid for our world of the 21st century, emphasizing that "water is the driving force of all nature".

Thank you for your attention!