

**STATEMENT TO THE 16TH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES (COP 16) TO THE
UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE**

Cancún, Mexico, November 29 to December 10, 2010

When world leaders speak about climate, they invariably speak of water – of floods, droughts and failed harvests – and express their alarm. They are right to do so: because climate change is primarily about water. The UNFCCC's response is adaptation and mitigation. Adaptation seeks to secure water and food supplies, and protect against floods and droughts. Equally, water, as a resource, is a cross-cutting concern for the achievement of mitigation objectives around forestry, agriculture, and energy, many of which rely on its availability.

Several times this week we have been told that sectoral issues complicate the discussion of adaptation to, and the mitigation of, climate change. Agreed! The water supply and sanitation sector, agriculture or any other sector should not be singled out for sectoral discussion. But the world's water resources and their management should be singled out because the potential impact of climate change on society will, in many cases, be transmitted through the medium of water. If we are to live in a water secure world, water management is critical to adaptation. By highlighting the crucial role that water resources management plays in resilient development, low carbon growth, and the green economy, we are not trying to complicate the discussion; rather, we are calling for clarity and realism about the choices being made.

As was so clearly stated by Sudan, in the closing plenary of the SBTSA, in support of the statement by Ecuador, “water is everywhere, but nowhere in our work.”

Just as the UNFCCC has taken leadership in other areas, we urge it to bind sustainable water resources management to the global response to climate change. The consequences of inaction will be:

- Insufficient water to deliver sustainable water supply and sanitation services to a growing world population.
- Insufficient water to underpin economic growth – both energy production and water supply for businesses and industries.
- Insufficient water to grow the crops needed to feed the world's people with even more drought resistant seeds.
- Inability to mitigate the effects of floods and droughts, particularly in lower income countries, among indigenous groups and for those in extreme poverty.
- Inability to protect and enhance the world's flora and fauna.
- Strained relations, even war, between neighbouring states which depend on shared water resources.
- Insufficient water for mitigation objectives including renewable energy options, sustainable forest management and rehabilitation of drylands.

In summary, the global response to climate change is inextricably linked to the sustainable management of water resources. Our economic growth and social welfare depend on it.

The Global Water Partnership, a network of more than 2,000 partner organizations in some 80 countries, works in collaboration with many strategic allies and partners (including multilateral and bilateral External Support Agencies, and entities such as CONAGUA, AMCOW and the Water and Climate Coalition). GWP, together with its partners, urges the Parties to the UNFCCC, as initial steps, to (1) introduce water resources management onto the agenda of the next Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA), and (2) to make sustainable water resources management and disaster risk management an integral part of the global response to climate change.

Our vision: a water secure world.

Our mission is to support the sustainable development and management of water resources at all levels.

GWPO is an admitted observer to the UNFCCC as an IGO.