



Side Event on Water Cooperation

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Full Statement

Your Excellency, Mr. Emomali Ramon, President of Tajikistan, Your Excellency, Mr Janos Ader, President of Hungary, Excellencies, Distinguished Participants,

It is a real honor and pleasure for me to be here at this side event as the Chair of the Global Water Partnership. I am gratified by the fact that over the past 15 years, our collective action has contributed to elevate water as a global communal concern and I would like to reaffirm GWP's commitment to supporting cooperation initiatives that promote effective actions toward achieving water security.

I know that much thought and work has gone into preparing this event and beyond. The excellent concept note and the recommendations that came out of the Dushanbe conference are truly valuable perspectives and analyses and should not be lost. Congratulations to all involved in producing them.

This subject of water cooperation is close to all our hearts in GWP – it has to be, since our mission is to support the sustainable development and management of water resources at all levels.

The world is far from being water secure. Water security is under severe pressure from many sources. This is an urgent issue to be addressed. Unfortunately, I feel that this sense of urgency is not owned by all here in Rio. Yet, WATER is at the heart of all the other global risks being addressed at this conference. We cannot afford to continue to mismanage it.

Cooperation on water management is needed at all levels, among sectors, among stakeholders and among countries.

I would suggest that cooperation among sectors is in some ways a bigger challenge than getting stakeholders from different societal groups to come together in dialogue. As the preparatory conference last year stated, water is a cross-cutting issue and synergies should not be lost due to narrow sectoral approaches. The conference went on to recommend (and I quote) “that its conclusions should be communicated to decision-makers and outside the water domain with a view to achieving broad endorsement and consensus on a common aim that requires an integrated and well coordinated approach. Decisions in other sectors and those related to development, growth, security and livelihoods, including responses to climate change, food and energy challenges and disaster management, need to incorporate water as an integral component”

UN Water just released the review of progress on integrated water resources management (IWRM). The report assessed progress in preparation and implementation of IWRM plans which each country committed to preparing in Johannesburg. I would suggest that the IWRM plans that have had full engagement of all the relevant development sectors will be much more effective tools for sustainable

development, to help countries achieve and maintain water security for future generations, than those in which there is no cross-sectoral ownership.

We are all such dedicated professionals that we often find it challenging to think about the implications of our decisions on the other sectors - to look at water management in an integrated way, as a tool for the common good (making tradeoffs and choices that benefit all). Decisions taken in one sector, should not have a negative impact on another. Unfortunately, governments and aid agencies are generally not organized for cooperation on water, and where they are, (eg sustainable development departments), it is like pulling teeth to break through silos within those departments.

I would like to call for governments and the development community to be innovative in 2013 –in the spirit of water cooperation and find better ways for sectors to cooperate in arriving at and taking decisions on water resources management, (acknowledging that implementation would always have to be the responsibility of each sector).

We need new thinking and new actions and we need them yesterday! The time is now for leaders to help the world find better ways forward. That is why it is so encouraging to see leaders like you, Excellencies, (Presidents of Hungary and Tajikistan), demonstrating ownership of this agenda and setting an example for those leaders who have yet to own this issue. The world would be in a different situation, if more high level decision-makers followed your example. Thank you.

I would like to end by recommending that a way be found in 2013 for the excellent messages coming out of Dushanbe to be summarized and

put in an acceptable form for you and other convinced leaders to share with your colleague Heads of State - to alert them to the actions that they must take for humanity now and for the future.

I assure you that GWP as a Partner to UNWater and other organizations, will be an active contributor to the 2013 International Year of Water Cooperation through our over 2550 individual Partner Organizations around the world, our 80 Country and 13 Regional Water Partnerships each contributing in their own way, as well as at global level. We sincerely hope for a year that will mark a new way of working together on water for sustainable development

Thank you.