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Statement

by

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Speaking on behalf of UN-Water

at

UN-Water event

Deep dive: Water and climate change

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of UN-Water, I am pleased to address you today on the occasion of our event “Deep dive: Water and climate change”.

UN-Water is the UN’s coordination mechanism representing over 30 United Nations organizations and over 40 international partners. The role of UN-Water is to coordinate work in a way that the UN family jointly supports Member States to sustainably manage water and sanitation. This is achieved through informing policies, monitoring and reporting and inspiring action.

Addressing climate change is one of the daunting challenges of human mankind. Most climate change impacts are transmitted through the water cycle – 90% of all disasters are water-related. Floods, droughts and storms have caused around 6,000 deaths in 2018 and 1,3 trillion USD of economic losses since 1992. This threatens sustainable development, peace, economic growth, environmental protection and human health.

Numerous United Nations entities and partners are therefore supporting Member States in addressing climate change impacts on water resources. In the spirit of the “UN Delivering as one”, to ensure consistency and coherence, it is crucial that we all speak with one voice and put forward common messages. For this reason, I am pleased to launch here today the new **UN-Water Policy Brief on**

Climate Change and Water. This brief was prepared in the last six months by the UN-Water expert group on water and climate, co-coordinated by UNECE, UNESCO and WMO. More than 30 UN entities and partners contributed to the brief.

The Policy Brief illustrates how climate change impacts on water resources and the links of these impacts to such water-dependent areas such as sanitation, health, agriculture, energy and ecosystems. The Policy Brief also provides an overview of possible mitigation and adaptation strategies in water management under climate change, including in the transboundary context. It could serve as a roadmap for climate and water practitioners and policymakers on how to address water and climate change in an integrated way.

This Brief is an update to the one we published on water and climate nine years ago. Since 2010, we see new challenges emerging, such as the nexus between water, climate change and other sectors including energy, food, and urban systems. The international community has adopted new policy frameworks: the Paris Agreement, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sendai framework for disaster risk reduction – all of them are relevant for climate and water. But why are we launching this Policy Brief now?

2019 offers an unprecedented opportunity to address both climate change ambition and the 2030 Agenda. The Climate goal SDG 13 has just been reviewed at the HLPF and discussed in the session this morning. Water was mentioned in numerous statements. The Secretary-General's Climate Action Summit in September aims to raise ambition for climate action. The Global Commission on Adaptation is presenting its report and will launch a year of action. Next year, in 2020, World Water Day and World Meteorological Day are focused on water and climate. Finally, in 2020, the Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement will be reviewed. **If the climate and water communities do not jointly recognize the crucial role of water in all these, we will fail.**

Water is not only crucial for adaptation, as already stressed, but also for mitigation. Growing demand for water increases the need for energy-intensive water pumping, transportation, and treatment, and has contributed to the degradation of critical water-dependent carbon sinks. Furthermore, some climate change mitigation measures, such as the expanded use of biofuels, can have significant impacts on water availability and quality.

For these reasons, national and regional climate policy and planning must take an integrated approach to climate change and water management. There are significant co-benefits to managing

climate and water in a more coordinated and sustainable manner. Examples of solutions for addressing these integrated challenges include solar pumping, restoring wetlands and increasing energy efficiency. They are being implemented by a growing number of countries and basins.

286 river basins and 592 aquifers cross borders. Transboundary basins account for an estimated 60 per cent of global freshwater flow, and are home to more than 40 per cent of the world's population. Therefore, transboundary cooperation in adaptation and mitigation is crucial to address climate impacts that cross national boundaries. It can help to reduce uncertainty through the exchange of data and to share costs and benefits. It can also help to prevent conflict, promote peace and regional integration, as well as wider economic development.

At the national level, water has already been included in 80% of the Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement. I hope that this number will even increase in the new round of NDCs, but also that water will be increasingly mainstreamed in other national policy documents and that national-level coordination will be improved.

I call upon all of you to raise the importance of water in the global climate change agenda at every relevant occasion. Next

opportunities will be the Global Climate Action Summit in September and the COP 25 in Chile in December 2019.

The United Nations system stands ready to support Member States in addressing climate change and water – together.

Thank you.