

UN General Assembly
Launch of
Water Action Decade 2018-2028
Water for Sustainable Development
22 March 2018

INDIA STATEMENT

Mr. President,

- Water sustains life on earth. Ancient philosophical traditions, including those in India, recognize the centrality of water to human existence.
- The availability of water was a critical factor in the early flowering of farming and fishing communities along river valleys and coasts.
- With the evolution of human civilization, the uses of water have also diversified. From the basic requirement of drinking for people and livestock, to sanitation, to irrigation and now to more industrial uses.
- Floods, droughts, changes in river flow or tsunamis have continued to deeply impact societies across continents, often leading to rise and fall of civilizations. Some of these are deeply imprinted in mythologies across the world.
- Cycles of rain-bearing monsoon winds have shaped agriculture and trade and thereby peace and prosperity of large societies.
- The importance of sustaining the availability of water has also been keenly understood by our ancestors. Traditional knowledge of farming practices, rainwater harvesting, step wells combined with the concepts of harmony with nature and sustainable lifestyles have helped sustain societies through periods of irregular availability of water.
- Today, the exponential growth in population, inadequately planned development of industry and urban centres, uncontrolled pollution and changing climate are all putting increasing stress on the availability of water. This, of course, has very serious implications affecting food and energy and health among others.
- At the same time, there are also growing instances of innovative practices and technology development that are leading to more efficient recycle and reuse in areas that are deficient in water.

Mr. President,

- We welcome the initiative of the President of the General Assembly to launch the International Decade for Action on Water for Sustainable Development today on the World Water Day.
- The international community at the UN has focused on water, especially in the debates that have evolved on the question of sustainable development over the past several decades. These have included the Agenda 21 of 1992 and the more recent 2030 Agenda and SDG 6.
- Considerable work needs to be done globally to implement SDG 6. In addition to strong national multi-stakeholder action, this would also require genuine international cooperation through facilitation of relevant technological inputs and financial partnerships.
- In India, large scale efforts are underway to improve the availability of clean water for drinking and sanitation. These involve extensive measures both by government and other stakeholders.
- Cleaning of rivers is being undertaken at an unprecedented scale. Conservation and management of water is being pursued through practices of integrated watershed management and rainwater harvesting.
- Yesterday, we hosted a special event at the UN that focused on an ongoing mass movement at the grassroots level on rejuvenating our rivers.

Mr. President,

- We are hopeful that through concerted national action and international collaboration, the international community can collectively meet the challenge of ensuring sustainable solutions to the requirement of clean water.
- May I conclude by reiterating our support and appreciation for this initiative. We hope that this will contribute significantly in facilitating international collaboration in improving the accessibility of clean water for health, wellbeing and sustainable development.

Thank you.