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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Written statement* submitted by Global Institute for Water, Environment and Health, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[28 May 2020]

* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.

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Sustainable water management for humans and nature: Smart solutions for integrated water management

The Korea International Water Week, the annual gathering of global water experts led by the government of the Republic of Korea and Korea Water Forum, has launched the high-level initiative aiming for having solutions to water challenges for humans and nature with the process of discussion between the heads of ministries, local authorities, international organizations, corporations, academia, civil society, and high-level representatives in the global water community. This gathering, Water Leader Roundtable (WLRT) has made its results of discussion by adaptation of the Water Leaders' Action Declaration.

The Water Leaders' Action Declaration has recalled the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 71/222 of 21 December 2016, which proclaimed 2018 to 2028 as the International Decade for Action and the Resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, entitled "Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development," as the core value on further water cooperation between multi-stakeholders gathered in the WLRT.

As the essence of seeking sustainability in water has originated from concern over the remaining gaps between the ambitions to deliver internationally agreed upon post-2015 water-related goals included in the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development, and the increasing threats to water security, such as climate change, natural disasters, and increased rates of urbanization and population growth. In addition, vital role of paradigm shifts from 'time for gathering solutions' to 'seeking implementation' has to be recognized, which has to be more balanced, sound and well-functioning accountability mechanisms of local and water management.

It is very significant to highlight and ruminate following recommendation of the process of the global water leaders' discussion in order to approach to sustainability in water sector with smart and wise solutions for implementation.

In order to have universal and equitable access to safe drinking water, the government is recommended to assign high priority to water and sanitation in national agendas and allocate proper resources to the water and sanitation sector and commit to reducing inequalities in access to water and sanitation and ensure affordability of safe drinking water and sanitation services, which are basic human rights and essential to the well-being of all segments of the population in order to avoid any kind of discrimination or inequality in terms of access to water and sanitation.

It is essential to consider the nature-based solutions in promoting sustainable lifecycle for water resource management, while considering basic human rights of safe drinking water, preservation of ecosystems and urban, industrial and agriculture water uses. Thus the government and non-governmental stakeholders including civilians should carry out efforts to preserve water-related ecosystems and promote sustainable integrated water resource management in the development agenda including, wastewater management, reuse, green infrastructure and nature-based solutions for disaster risk reduction and restoration of water ecosystems.

As the pillars of the sustainable development, the social, economic, and ecological resilience assures the enhancement of incorporating integrated water resources planning and management within the framework of national and regional and socio-economic development planning processes, while supporting eco-friendly good practices. In this process, it should be highlighted to promote actions to address water-related disasters by significantly decreasing costs attributed to loss of life and damage as a percentage of gross domestic products, treating investment in disaster risk reduction as an integral part of expanding capacity for socioeconomic development, integrating science into policy, substantially increasing investment in disaster risk reduction and sustainable finance and investment.

The Smart water management for sustainable communities and natural habitat has been addressed as the future method of water management, which has been adopted in order to increase access to technology, enhance capacity development and knowledge sharing to promote various uses of water and reduce adverse impacts from water-related risks and

disasters on livelihoods and environments. The approach has made many cases of promoting sustainable consumption and production patterns by individuals and across all economic sectors by raising awareness through different means. One that all global water community should make its best efforts for better and smarter management of water is to strengthen the interface between science, technology and policy, and provide inter-sectoral bridge between water-energy-food-land-health, etc. to local and regional water actors to improve their water management, adopting a comprehensive integrated water management approach. In addition, the policy and regulations ensuring all water service providers, whether private or public, include human rights sensitive standards will be underlined in the smart water management.

Investing in long-term financing maintenances and necessary measures for climate change adaptation as well as soft measures, including governance and management capacities will be the basis of the implementation of above solutions to global water challenges. In the process of mobilizing the finances, it is very important to link between different sectors, especially urban development, food, energy, land, health and education as to promote sustainable consumption and production for the efficient allocation and use of water resources that will eventually lead the adoption of circular economy as a tool for sustainable water management.

Indeed, in all above process and consideration for implementation of sustainable solutions to water challenges, water partnership and cooperation at all levels will be the key. It has been highlighted to catalyze partnerships at all levels among different stakeholders, including public authorities, the private sector, civil society organizations and academia, with the engagement of women, youth, and local and indigenous communities to develop and implement actions that address problems related to water and sanitation, and to promote all societal engagement necessary to achieve the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development. In order to realize a good governance with those stakeholders, we should all consider to make better management of roles and responsibilities for water policymaking and implementation, operational management and regulation, and foster coordination amongst the responsible authorities at the different levels. This will ensure the adoption and implementation of innovative water governance practices across relevant agencies, levels of government and relevant stakeholders for the future water challenges and sustainability of balanced governance contributing to the water related Sustainable Development Goals.

KWF and GIWEH with the 30 leaders gathered at the Korea International Water Week, agreed to the above mentioned targets and recommendations to make every efforts towards achieving ‘Sustainable Water Management for Humans and Nature’. We support our collective voice and shared vision discussed during the Water Leaders’ Round Table and encourage the global water community to join our efforts to realize our vision with implementation.
