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Letter dated 16 June 2022 from the Permanent Representative of Tajikistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the declaration of the second High-level International Conference on the International Decade for Action “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018–2028, held from 6 to 9 June 2022 in Dushanbe (see annex).

I would be grateful if you could kindly circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 20.

(Signed) Jonibek **Hikmat**



Annex to the letter dated 16 June 2022 from the Permanent Representative of Tajikistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Second High-level International Conference on the International Decade for Action “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018–2028, held in Dushanbe on 6–9 June 2022

Declaration: from Dushanbe 2022 to New York 2023

We, the Heads of Delegation, high-level representatives of the states, organizations, major groups and other stakeholders having met in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, from 6 to 9 June 2022, contributing to the Dushanbe Water Process in our different roles and responsibilities,

Reaffirming our commitment to pursue the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)¹ and the vital role of water in achieving all SDGs,

Recognizing water as essential for resilient and sustainable development, the eradication of poverty and hunger, health, combating desertification and biodiversity loss and to promote a socially, economically and environmentally sustainable, resilient, equitable, peaceful and inclusive future, as we navigate the present and aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis, including for the empowerment of women and indigenous peoples and the prosperity of children and youth, as well as for persons with disabilities and those in vulnerable situations,

Acknowledging that water, sanitation, health, ecosystems, ocean, energy, food systems and nutrition are interlinked and that the rising trend of losses caused by water-related disasters, such as droughts, floods, cyclones, flash floods, coastal surge, sea level rise, salinity intrusion, mudslides and avalanches, including from changing climate patterns and extreme weather events, must be reversed, paying particular attention to people in vulnerable situations,

Emphasizing that climate change affects the world’s water in complex ways, including through water scarcity, and *noting* the Water and Climate Coalition Leaders’ call recognizing the role of water for informed decision-making in climate change mitigation and adaptation action,² as well as the Action Plan on Hydrology, adopted by the WMO, and the Ninth Phase of the Intergovernmental Hydrological Program of UNESCO “Science for a Water-Secure World in a Changing Environment”,

Recognizing the United Nations General Assembly Resolution proclaiming the period from 2018 to 2028 as the International Decade for Action “Water for Sustainable Development”, the Resolutions specifying the process for the midterm comprehensive review of the Decade and describing modalities and expectations of the United Nations Conference on the Midterm Review of the Water Action Decade in March 2023 (further the UN 2023 Water Conference) and the Resolution proclaiming the period from 2020 to 2030 as the International Decade for Action to deliver the Global Goals,³

Emphasizing that the Second Dushanbe Water Decade Conference supports the effective preparation of the United Nations 2023 Water Conference co-hosted by the Governments of Tajikistan and the Netherlands to be held in New York,

¹ Resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015.

² Leaders for Integrated Water and Climate Action, www.water-climate-coalition.org.

³ Resolutions 71/222 of 21 December 2016, 73/226 of 20 December 2018 and 75/212 of 29 December 2020.

Noting the outcomes of the First Dushanbe Water Decade Conference in 2018, the President of the General Assembly's High-Level Meeting, the High-Level Political Forum, the Bonn Water Dialogues for Results, the 9th World Water Forum in Dakar, the 4th Asia-Pacific Water Summit in Kumamoto and the meetings organized by other Member States, as well as *looking forward* to the contribution from the upcoming High-Level Symposium on Water during the United Nations Ocean Conference in Lisbon, of the other events mentioned in Resolution 75/212 of 29 December 2020, COP-27 and of other relevant events,

Hereby *reiterate* our determination to achieve the objectives of the Water Action Decade and declare our commitment to the following actions, according to our respective capabilities:

A. Ensuring universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water and sanitation, including relevant services, and hygiene for all, as essential for human development and health

Prioritize universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water and adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene as critical for the progressive realization of the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation, as reflected in United Nations General Assembly Resolutions⁴ and to adequate food;⁵

Support robust institutions, policies, regulations, sufficient investments, human resources and tailored approaches to deliver improved water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services, with immediate attention to expanding access to WASH services in underserved communities, as far as possible, including refugees, hard-to-reach and rural areas, areas experiencing natural disasters and armed conflict, following the principle of "leaving no one behind";

Prioritize access to safe and sustainable water, sanitation and hygiene, including relevant services, in all schools, childcare and healthcare facilities as vital for child, maternal and patient health and staff well-being;

Build longer-term strategies for increasing pandemic prevention, preparedness and response, including the COVID-19 crisis, by investing in water supply and sanitation infrastructure, wastewater and waste management, consistently promoting good WASH practices, in particular scaling up a culture of hand hygiene in all settings, to serve as essential barriers to the transmission of pathogens from a OneHealth perspective, and establishing effective systems of drinking-water and wastewater surveillance;

B. Recognizing the importance of water for livelihoods, equity, inclusive economic growth and sustainable development

Strive for transformative water policy based on a better understanding and valuing of water by promoting transparent cross-sectoral cooperation and management, through institutions and investments in environmentally sustainable and climate-resilient infrastructure, information, data, water accounting, education, training, capacity development, research and innovation, particularly in the context of moving towards a circular economy;

Promote robust institutions, policies, regulations, sufficient investments, human resources and tailored approaches for the implementation of Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) at all levels, as a process to ensure more equitable, efficient, sustainable and resilient management

⁴ Resolution 64/292 of 28 July 2010 and Resolution 70/169 of 18 November 2015.

⁵ Article 11 of the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

and use of water, land and related resources and protection at the basin and aquifer level from source to sea, without compromising the sustainability of life-support systems, aiming at a sound water cycle management;

Strengthen transboundary and regional cooperation and sustainable water management including disaster risk reduction through suitable institutional, technical and economic arrangements, which may include promoting and establishing arrangements, agreements, adequate funding and financing mechanisms, at different levels, means of sharing data on water flows and exchanging information on water-related development plans in a timely manner to build confidence and trust among riparian countries, as appropriate;

Promote the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystem Nexus approach taking into account the cascading and cross-sectoral impact of stresses and shocks at all levels, including COVID-19, armed conflict, disruption of economic ties and supply chains, climate change, natural disasters and unsustainable production and consumption practices, on the increasingly integrated water, energy and food sectors and possible implications to meet basic needs, for economies and for communities;

C. Building synergies between water, environment and climate change and disaster risk reduction

Develop and implement resilient institutions and policies, including national adaptation plans and measures, as well as infrastructure, technologies and management approaches at the appropriate level of government and service providers, improving coordination and addressing water-related disasters and other risks, considering the impacts of climate change, biodiversity loss on overall global water resources;

Recognize and translate into practice the major role that promoting the health of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, forests and soils can play as nature-based solutions or ecosystem-based approaches to promote a circular and green economy and as cost-effective complement to grey infrastructure in enhancing the environmentally sustainable management of land and water resources, in reducing risks and in supporting local livelihoods, water, ecosystems, energy, health, food security and nutrition;

Support the provision and mobilization of financial resources, including climate finance, as well as voluntary technology development and transfer on mutually agreed terms, capacity building and technical assistance towards building water-related resilience to protect economies, ecosystems, infrastructure and communities, paying attention to the specific needs of developing countries, especially Least Developed Countries, Land-Locked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States;

Recognize that systematic and robust knowledge base is required to understand disaster risk drivers and their potential implications for the achievement of SDG 6 and other water-related SDGs, to strengthen forecasting and multi-hazard risk management, to invest in disaster risk prevention and reduction, early warning systems and enhanced resilience of infrastructure and to build long-term strategies for increased preparedness and effective response and to “build forward better” in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction, providing suitable coping mechanisms;

D. Enhance collaboration across sectors, improve knowledge and education and develop instruments and technologies

Support enhanced collaboration and partnerships between different stakeholders at all levels, including local authorities, civil society organizations, river basin organizations, scientific organizations, investors and donors, where possible, and

reinforce coordination and interlinkages within the SDG 6 domains and across all the SDGs by considering accountability and exchange of information, knowledge, experience and best practices, as appropriate, moving data to action by bridging science, innovation and decision-making;

Demonstrate and scale-up solutions that lead to action underpinned by science and technology innovations, including open and citizen science, women-led, youth-led initiatives, as well as traditional and indigenous knowledge, to achieve more effective and climate-resilient water and sanitation management in line with national priorities and circumstances;

Support and facilitate collaboration among different types of users in all sectors of the economy “out of the Water Box” and promoting integration at all appropriate levels to create an enabling environment for sustainable development and a more water-smart society, by understanding different sectors and the water needs of stakeholders;

Provide quality and accessible education, from childhood to higher education, training and capacity development on water-related issues for all generations;

* * *

We call for consistent application of the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework bearing in mind national circumstances and approaches and therefore reaffirm the urgency to address the challenge of financing, as a means to provide better and more sustainable water services, of ensuring quality, disaggregation and access of data, information and knowledge targeting resources and measuring progress, of enhancing capacity of the water sector to attract and retain young and qualified professionals, as well as of promoting and scaling innovations and ensuring collaboration across boundaries and sectors to create an enabling environment for sustainable development at all levels;

We consider the use of legal instruments and guidelines that can offer inter alia frameworks for multi-sectoral cooperation, setting national targets and advancing agendas towards reaching SDG 6;

We uphold that the role of women, youth, indigenous peoples, local communities and other recognized major groups in water governance and management at all levels is critical especially in a changing climate for ensuring universal access to water and sanitation for all;

We commit to apply broad and inclusive participatory approaches and technical solutions to ensure sustainable, equitable and non-discriminatory access to water and sanitation, with corresponding capacity development and knowledge-sharing activities and mechanisms;

We support the meaningful participation of women at all levels of decision-making in the water sector, which is essential for the development and sustainability of durable and equitable water governance and management.

Key messages for the United Nations 2023 Water Conference in New York

We stress that the commitment to water sustainability, inclusive of drinking water and sanitation and disaster risk reduction, needs to be reaffirmed in the light of how the challenges of climate change, loss of biodiversity, environmental degradation, water scarcity and pollution from inter alia agriculture, waste treatment, chemicals, organic pollutants, endocrine disrupting chemicals, heavy metals and microplastics impact the lives and prosperity of countless people every day and threaten the effective enjoyment of the abovementioned human rights and the vital needs of future generations;

We recall that, to achieve SDG 6 and the other water-related SDGs by 2030, accelerated action is needed by all countries and stakeholders, particularly in countries that are currently not “on track”, through financial and technological assistance, policy reforms and prioritization of adequate additional international support for developing countries. The United Nations 2023 Water Conference should provide impetus, as well as institutional and financial support, for countries to face this challenge together;

We commit to accelerating our efforts for coherent implementation of water-related goals and achievement of targets of the 2030 Agenda and aim at strengthening political and technical dialogue on water, including at the highest level, as appropriate, in the context of the United Nations, and to improve the United Nations system-wide approach to water, enhancing the participation of Member States;

We emphasize the need to strengthen water-related transboundary and regional cooperation, inter alia to build resilience to water-related disasters, climate change, promote the sustainable, equitable, transparent and sound management of water, making use also of relevant regional organizations, mechanisms, regional agreements and arrangements, such as river basin organizations, as appropriate;

We reiterate the need for strong, coherent and explicit integration and prioritization of water into national economic policies and investment programs to raise awareness of why and how water and sanitation are necessary for achieving national development objectives at all levels, such as through the voluntary development by 2025 and strengthening of National Water Roadmaps or strategies to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and all water-related SDGs, as well as the need to implement IWRM, including for non-conventional water resources, by means of robust institutions, financing, policies and regulations, also for utilities and service providers;

We emphasize the need to pre-invest in critical enablers, such as education, science, knowledge, innovation and data on water quantity, quality, access, availability, risk drivers and use patterns, as well as other evidence-based approaches, for informed decision-making and improved planning capacity;

We advocate for planning and implementation needs to be supported by financial resources and for the development of revenue-raising mechanisms for water management, services, data and knowledge development and prioritizing those most affected by water-related challenges;

We note with appreciation the initiative of the Water and Climate Coalition’s Leaders to establish a set of global water and climate information services;

We encourage the use of adequate monitoring tools for SDG implementation, including all water-related targets, and the UN-Water Integrated Monitoring Initiative and Capacity Development Initiative for SDG 6;

We acknowledge the need to address gaps in gender data and *agree* to strengthen reporting on sex-disaggregated data in the water domain and to strive to make this data available and accessible to all for evidence-based decision-making to promote gender equality in water-related domains and we *note favorably* the multi-stakeholder “Call for Action to Accelerate Gender Equality in the Water Domain”;

We support and encourage the participation of young people to play an important role in the United Nations 2023 Water Conference and further *note* with interest the development of a “Water and Climate Youth Development Plan Agenda”;

We support Tajikistan’s initiative on declaring an International Year of Glaciers Preservation in 2025 and *note* with appreciation the intention to strengthen

international mechanisms to facilitate access to accurate and timely information on the cryosphere;

We envision the development of a Water Action Agenda mechanism as an outcome of the United Nations 2023 Water Conference, building on existing mechanisms, that brings together all voluntary commitments – small and big, from Member States, stakeholders and coalitions across the world from within and beyond the water sector – that accelerate and scale water actions across the 2030 Agenda and support, track and deliver on the 2030 Agenda and beyond 2030;

We recommend registering the actions and partnerships proposed during the Dushanbe Water Action Decade Conferences, as well as during all other relevant conferences and events, as voluntary commitments on the United Nations Partnership Platform, and providing updates on their progress;

We express our sincere appreciation for the hospitality extended by the Government and People of Tajikistan and the support of the United Nations and of all the partners who contributed to this important conference.
