



## Summary of the World Water Day Special Event “Priority Actions for Water and Disasters in the next Decade” was held on 22 March, 2017 at the UN Headquarters in New York

H.E. Dr. Han Seung-soo, the Special Envoy for Disaster Risk Reduction and Water, organized the World Water Day Special Event “Priority Actions for Water and Disasters in the next Decade” on 22 March 2017, jointly organised by the High Level Experts and Leaders Panel on Water and Disasters (HELP), UN Water and UN mission of Japan, Mauritius, Mexico, the Republic of Korea, Switzerland and Tajikistan.

The objective of the event was to commence discussion on priority actions to address water and disasters for the next decade, which the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted as a resolution in December 2016 to proclaim the period from 2018 to 2028 the International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development”. In the resolution, the UNGA also expressed that it was deeply concerned about water-related disasters would be further exacerbated by urbanization, population growth, desertification, drought and other extreme weather events and climate change, as well as lack of capacity to ensure integrated water resource management.

H.E. Mr. Juan José Gómez-Camacho, in his capacity as Sherpas to the Co-Chairs of High Level Panel on Water (HLPW) and Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations, stressed the water paradox as the source of both development and disaster risks. He introduced the possibility of the next HLPW Panel meeting in the margins of the Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction to be held in Cancun, May 2017.

H.E. Dr. Han Seung-soo, highlighted the water and disaster risk reduction as priority in the HLPW Action Plan adopted in September 2016, as a Special Advisor of the Panel. He also stressed that the event was the first stage joined by three panels: HLPW, High Level Experts and Leaders Panel on Water and Disasters (HELP), and Global High Level Panel on Water and Peace. He invited all the partners to the Third UN Special Thematic Session on Water and Disasters, which will be organized in the UN Headquarters, New York in July 2017.

H.E. Mr. Peter Thomson, President of 71<sup>st</sup> session of United Nations General Assembly, expressed the strong emphasis on water and disasters in the interlinkage among the 2030 Development Agenda, such as the connection with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 13, climate change and SDG 14, Ocean. He informed that the Ocean Conference would be organized in June 2017.

H.E. Mr. Aslov Sirodjidin Muhridinovich, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tajikistan, outlines the next Water Decade 2018-2028, as the step forward to the implementation following the former decade 2005-2015, and reaffirmed the active interaction with the disaster risk reduction through capacity development and cooperation in research and information exchange.

H.E. Mr. Teru Fukui, Member of the House of Representatives of Japan, presented some numerical evidence to indicate that the development can only be based on resilient society, citing from the experience of Japan. Referring the World Tsunami Awareness Day, adopted in December 2015, he informed that the dissemination of the lessons learned in disaster risk reduction could be one of the Japan’s most valuable contributions to the world.

Following the keynotes from the Guest of Honour, the second part of the event focused on the priority actions on water and disasters in the Decade for Actions under the suggested questions from the moderator, “What priority actions on water and disasters do you like to see in the Decade for Actions -Water for Sustainable Development-?”

Dr. Oyun Sanjaasuren, Chair, Global Water Partnerships (GWP), former Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mongolia, presented the GWP/WMO joint initiative for flood and drought: the Associated Programme on Flood Management and Integrated Drought Management Plan, toward the implementation for building resilience.

Dr. Masafumi Mori, Vice Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, Japan, suggested the financing in water and disaster and sharing best practices including policy making based on science and technology.

Dr. Jerome Delli Priscoli, Chair of Technical Committee, GWP, highlighted ten aspects for water and disasters and introduced the three products of the GWP Technical Committee regarding model collaboration, cost benefit analysis and disaster insurance.

Prof. Alvaro Umana, Vice-Chair of the Global High Level Panel on Water and Peace and former Minister of Energy and Environment, Costa Rica, emphasized the links between water disaster risk management (DRM) and water, peace and security through water data for evidence-based policy and decision-making.

The discussion and comments from the participants took place on expressing their views and share experiences such as the Delta Coalition, Flash Flood Guidance System and Small Island Development, and discuss priority actions countries and international communities should take to address the issue in the margins between water diplomacy and human rights.

After the summary of the panel discussion by the moderator, H.E. Mr. Jagdish Koonjul, Co-Chair of Sherpas, High Level Panel on Water (HLPW) and Permanent Representative of Mauritius to the United Nations, welcomed the first joint action by three panels; High Level Panel on Water, High Level Experts and Leaders Panel on Water and Disasters, and Global High Level Panel on Water and Peace, towards more collaboration in the future for the implementation of the relevant actions in the HLPW Action Plan. He also highlighted the involvement of major groups, including youth and gender, together with the importance of investment and access to the technology. The HLPW joint statement in the occasion of World Water Day was also introduced.

The meeting was very successful with the presence of the active Member States reiterating speakers and panellists and expressing their wish to work together. It was also important for those working for water and disasters that we had organized this meeting on the same day of the first working level dialogue for the next Water Decade convened by the President of the General Assembly where Member States shared their views of how to address water-related SDGs in the framework of the Decade. By sharing several key speakers with the dialogue, including the President of the General Assembly and the Foreign Minister of Tajikistan, co-moderator of the dialogue, we could have delivered strong message to the Member States that water and disasters is a key to the achievement of water-related SDGs as well as other relevant SDGs.