

TALKING POINTS
ON WATER AND SANITATION

Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals
(on behalf of Bulgaria and Croatia)

- Co-chairs, thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to share with you the perspective of Bulgaria and Croatia on some aspects related to water and sanitation.

- Our two countries believe water and sanitation are among the essential elements when talking about promoting sustainable development. This is why Bulgaria and Croatia stand ready to engage in an open and interactive way with the other members and stakeholders of this Open Working Group to find the appropriate way to include these issues as a part of the future SDGs.

- Bulgaria and Croatia would like to comment on the multidimensionality of these two issues as a reason to consider them as an important element of the post-2015 overarching framework for poverty eradication and sustainable development. Water and sanitation have several dimensions.

- First on the social dimension: let me give you some statistics. According to the latest estimates of the WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Program for Water Supply and Sanitation 36% of the world population or 2.5 bln people lack improved sanitation facilities, 768 mln people use unsafe drinking water sources. Improving access to water and sanitation is a precondition for health, including reproductive health, education, poverty alleviation, and combating hunger and gender inequality.

- Second on the economic dimension: water resource management, wastewater management and water quality are all indispensable elements for inclusive and sustainable growth. It is essential for proper functioning of many economic sectors as agriculture, industry, energy, etc. Water also has an immediate impact on food security and energy production.

- Third on environmental dimension: higher rates of urbanization, growing population, respectively growing need of food and energy, determine growing need of water supply. On the other hand it affects the quality of water. The pollution of water continues to grow and more than 80% of used water is discharged in nature untreated. In addition, the problems caused by the climate change put the natural resources under stress and demand changes in consumption patterns as well as elaboration of an integrated approach in order to enhance resilience and to tackle extreme events such as floods and droughts.

- Last but not least I would like to comment on another aspect of the issue of water – water as an element of peaceful cooperation between countries. Enhanced cooperation on an international level over the water issues can lead to a more efficient management of water with positive impact on quantity and quality and may reduce the potential for conflicts.

- In conclusion, co-chairs, let me say that water and sanitation are key determinants in all aspects of social, economic and environmental development. Inadequate access to safe water and sanitation services leads to impoverishment and diminished opportunities for thousands.

- Bulgaria and Croatia stand committed to work towards elaboration of integrated approach on water issues, including universal access to safe drinking water and sanitation, better resource management on the basis of respecting ecosystems requirements, pollution prevention and reuse.

Thank you