



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

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**S T A T E M E N T**

by

**Mr. Abduvokhid KARIMOV,**

**Minister of Environment and Forestry of the Republic of Tajikistan**

at the 12<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on Sustainable Development

Mr. Chairman,

The delegation of Tajikistan believes that under your skillful guidance the 12<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on Sustainable Development has successfully focused its attention on the analysis of the first practical results of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg (WSSD) in the field of water, sanitation and human settlements. Equally important, it took into account, in a balanced manner, the specificities of the countries and groups of countries.

Our view is that the new long-term format of work of the Commission on Sustainable Development has justified itself, and enabled us to get a deeper understanding of the obstacles we encounter on the national and global levels while developing approaches towards the resolution of the problems in the field of water, sanitation and human settlement outlined in Johannesburg. The experience in dealing with problems in this field, which was gained and generously shared by the participants of CSD-12, can be used as a foundation for elaborating effective policies to eliminate existing obstacles, and will make it possible to synchronize the pace of the implementation of the WSSD outcomes with due consideration of national and regional specificities.

The significant and diversified goals and targets to be met address a wide range of direct and indirect factors. In Tajikistan that has recently lived through a civil conflict the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals is not a simple task. However, we pay considerable attention to the items on the agenda under discussion and note that they became part and parcel of the national development strategy, which is being consistently implemented by the Government.

Access to water resources and their rational use have become the issues of crucial importance in 21<sup>st</sup> century and were referred to in the relevant outcomes of WSSD. About 60 % of all freshwater of Central Asia originate in Tajikistan, and the Tajik people highly value this life-sustaining resource. However, only 53 % of the country's population have access to freshwater provided by water supply systems and much less, namely 23 %, have access to adequate sanitation facilities. Water-related diseases are among the most common causes of child mortality. Given the high rate of maternity problems caused by water-related diseases, the situation poses a real threat to the genetic fund and future generations.

Population growth and economic development also considerably increase demand for freshwater. There is a significant loss of freshwater because of inefficient management and outdated technologies. The drought of recent years, which affected more than half of the Tajikistan's territory, also contributes to "water stresses" experienced by human population especially in rural areas.

Tajikistan is not capable of dealing with the above problems single-handedly. We appreciate the assistance rendered to us by the UN DESA, UNDP, donor states and international organizations. Each water project implemented in cooperation with the local authorities in Tajikistan is another step towards the achievement of the goals agreed in Johannesburg. Our hope is that the cooperation in the water field will be gaining momentum. Adequate resources for the implementation of the water policy are urgent for such vulnerable subregions as Central Asia where Tajikistan takes a special place.

We are convinced that water can become a valuable instrument for our economic and social development. Water will help to eliminate poverty and malnutrition. Access to freshwater will be helpful in education, especially in education of girls. Water will enhance women's participation in decision making at the local field. Providing access to freshwater will promote healthcare improvement and environmental sustainability. Water like no other economic sector can influence so many aspects of life of the Tajik society. We in Tajikistan associate water with prosperity and the future of our children. In other words, water resources are playing and will continue to play a key role in sustainable development of the country.

It is impossible to meet the internationally agreed goals in one country without partnerships on the regional and global levels. Central Asia represents an example of the states that are striving to jointly address the regional problems

Water in Central Asia is key to the development of agriculture and industry, and to generating of hydro power. Inequitable distribution of freshwater resources in the region and insufficiency of material resources required for the employment of water treatment and water conservation technologies may bring about further degradation of water and land resources.

The urgent need to jointly address common problems led to the development of an agreed "*Central Asia Initiative for Sustainable Development*". The efforts by Central Asia to achieve the Johannesburg priority goals were supported at the 5<sup>th</sup> Pan-European Conference of Ministers of Environment that was held in Kiev, Ukraine, on 21-23 May, 2003. At the conference a Memorandum of Understanding entitled "*On Partnership for Achieving the Goals of Sustainable Development in Central Asia*" was signed, and the water initiative entitled "*Environment, Water and Security in Central Asia*" was endorsed. The heads of the Central States approved the "*Program-2 for the Aral Sea Basin until 2010*" as well as the *Concept of the Regional Plan of Actions in the Field of Environment* that address the need to deal with priority issues of protecting the human environment within the context of sustainable development of the region.

From times immemorial the nations of Central Asia have had a common history and common water basin ecosystems. About 40 % of the whole population of the region reside along the wide line of transboundary waters. Sustainable management and use of transboundary waters require permanent attention on the part of the governments of all Central Asia states. A profound understanding exists that without consolidated efforts we can hardly count on an effective solution of such issues as use of water resources for economic needs and preservation of water resources health.

The participants of CSD-12 provided examples of successful practices of the effective implementation of the agreements on shared use of the international rivers basins. Such agreements, based on water partnership, ensure equitable and sustainable use of transboundary freshwater resources.

The Government of the Republic of Tajikistan has the intention to hold in April 2005 an international conference on regional water cooperation and improvement of patterns of water resources management in the lower and upper streams of the international rivers. We do hope that this conference will be supported by the UN entities, donor states and international organizations.

It is known that the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Emomali Rakhmonov, initiated the declaration of the International Year of Freshwater, 2003. The Year was enthusiastically welcomed everywhere in the world and inspired a whole range of various actions on water and sanitation throughout our planet. Within the framework of the Year Tajikistan hosted the International Forum of Freshwater in Dushanbe. The Forum summed up the results of its work in the *Dushanbe Water Appeal* that was used as a basis for the UN General Assembly Resolution “*International Decade of Action ”Water for Life”, 2005-2015 (document A/RES/58/217)*.”

The Resolution suggests that the CSD identify possible activities and programs for the Decade within the framework of consideration of water, sanitation and human settlements issues at its 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> sessions. The remarks made by a number of delegations regarding the necessity to start working out a plan of action for the forthcoming Decade in advance are justified. From our viewpoint this is an expedient approach. It would be helpful if the UN regional commissions submitted their proposals in advance, prior to the beginning of CDS-13. It will enable the member states to study the proposals and enrich them with their own ideas and approaches.

The Decade coincides with the period envisaged for achieving the Millennium Development Goals on water and sanitation. The lessons learned from the International Year of Freshwater, 2003, established partnerships and contacts, and accumulated information can be used as a good starting basis for the *Decade “Water for Life”*.

The Decade calls for to the reinforcement of the institutional framework of international cooperation for realization of specific measures that will contribute to the implementation of the decisions made by the international community regarding water and sanitation. It provides another good opportunity to get people involved in developing realistic long-term projects that will allow us to approach closer to the achievement of internationally agreed goals and involve all social strata into efficient protection of our water resources.

Let us act cooperatively in such a way that the Decade “*Water for Life*” would indeed become a decade of concrete actions.

Thank you for attention.