

Co-Chairs,

1. I thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak on behalf of the African Group.
2. I would like also to take this opportunity to thank the Technical Support Team (TST) for the useful issues brief it has prepared.
3. The critical importance of water and sanitation in the well-being of population in both rural and fast-growing urban areas cannot be overemphasized. As recalled in the Rio+20 outcome document, "water is at the core of sustainable development".
4. Despite efforts to achieve target C of MDG 7, about 2.5 billion people still live without improved sanitation, and over 800 million people are without access to an improved water source.
5. Water plays a key role in agriculture and food security, prevention of diseases, climate change adaptation, energy security, etc. In a word, the contribution of adequate water and sanitation in the achievement of other development goals must be underscored.
6. Therefore, the African Group is of the view that, in addition to being a global goal in the SDGs framework, it is important to consider water interlinkages to other goals related to poverty eradication, health, food security and nutrition, agriculture, biodiversity, desertification and drought. Clearly, decisions on water should encompass the three dimensions of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental).
7. The formulation of the SDGs should address the following aspects: water quantity, access to water, water quality, improved governance frameworks, strengthening of institutional capacity, financing, infrastructure construction and maintenance, technology, aid coordination and efficiency.
8. As of today many initiatives have been undertaken in the field of water and sanitation. However, their fragmentation and sometimes their lack of coordination lead to inefficiencies and mixed results. Those issues should be addressed properly.
9. To reach our goal, no effort must be spared to fill the financial gap, including through increased public-private partnerships. Public funding remains necessary but should be complemented by other resources. Therefore, measures should be taken to get the private sector more involved. There is a need to develop financial instruments and markets for investments in the water and sanitation.
10. Unlike water, sanitation often lacks appropriate attention, clearly defined regulations and investments. The SDGs frameworks should rectify this shortcoming.

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11. Political commitment is a key element in this field. In the specific case of Africa, a high level political leadership has been expressed in the Sharm El Sheikh Commitments on water and sanitation by African Heads of States and Governments. Whilst continuing to mobilize our resources and strategies, we still count on international solidarity and partnership to support us in the achievement of those commitments.

I thank you.