



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY H.E. AMBASSADOR ABDULLAH M. ALSAIDI, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF YEMEN TO THE UNITED NATIONS, CHAIRMAN OF THE GROUP OF 77, AT THE HIGH-LEVEL INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE ON WORLD WATER DAY (New York, 22 March 2010)

Your Excellency Mr. President of the General Assembly,
Your Excellency Mr. Secretary-General of the United Nations,
Your Excellency Mr. Prime Minister of Republic of Tajikistan,
Your Excellency Mr. Under Secretary-General of the United Nations,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

1. It is a privilege and pleasure to address the High-level Interactive Dialogue on World Water Day on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. At the same time, allow me first to thank the President of the General Assembly and his office for organizing this important event.
2. The Group welcomes the generous offer of the Government of Tajikistan to host, in June 2010, a high-level international conference on the mid-term comprehensive review of the implementation of the International Decade for Action, "Water for Life", 2005-2015.
3. No single human being or any other form of life can exist without water. Access to drinking water should be a human birthright, as much a birthright as access to clean air. Since about one billion people in the South lacks access to safe water supplies and two billion do not have access to adequate sanitation, it is vital that the international community increase its efforts in order to facilitate access to drinkable water and better sanitation services for their populations.
4. For that reason, provision of water is critical for poverty eradication. The challenges facing developing countries in this area include improving the quality of drinking water, addressing causes of pollution and contamination of water, water leakages, natural disasters, and drought. Efforts of developing countries are constrained by the unavailability of appropriate technologies. Furthermore due to the lack of financial resources developing countries find it difficult to increase investment in water.
5. The Group wishes to reiterate that the provision of safe drinking water is a critical element of poverty eradication. The lack of safe water, sanitation and hygiene remains one of the world's most urgent health issues. According to the World Health Organization, 1.4 million child deaths result from diarrhea; 500,000 deaths from malaria; 860,000 child deaths from malnutrition; and in addition, 5 million people can be protected from being seriously incapacitated from lymphatic filariasis and another 5 million from trachoma. In improving the provision of safe drinking water, however, developing countries have limited financial and technological capacity to respond to the growing demand for water for agriculture, industrial and potable water. The adequate wastewater treatment facilities in developing countries are very limited, and the public health problems caused by the lack of these facilities strangle our economic and social process. Thus developing countries need the support of the international community to improve the infrastructure for the provision of water, including for water supply networks in the cities and their repair. Access by people living in rural and remote areas in the developing countries to safe drinking water continues to be a major problem due to the huge investment and capacity needed. Natural disasters also have devastating

impacts on the ability of developing countries to provide water. Technology transfer and provision of financial resources are crucial for conservation, efficient, equitable, optimal and sustainable use of waters in order to satisfy the human, ecological needs and the demand generated by the productive processes of countries and to guarantee the access to this fundamental resource to all, the urban, rural and indigenous communities. In this regard, the Group will actively participate in the upcoming CSD-18 cycle. The outcome of the CSD regional meetings stress that sound waste management is a key aspect that is often not given the necessary priority it deserves.

6. According to the FAO, one in five developing countries will face water shortages by 2030. The Near East, North Africa and parts of Asia are subject to water scarcity and stress. Taking into consideration also that agriculture is by far the biggest water use, accounting for some 70% of all water withdrawals (industries 20%, domestic 10% while daily drinking water needs of human are very small - four liters per person), it is necessary that the high-level dialogue take into consideration these important issues.

7. I would like to reiterate that the Group of 77 and China believes that the Millennium Declaration targets on poverty eradication and access to freshwater should be supported by targets on the means of implementation.

8. I wish this High-level Interactive Dialogue on World Water Day the success it merits.

I thank you.