

Remarks
By
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Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia
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“Preventing Water Crises”
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- ***Excellency János Áder, President of Hungary and Chairman of the Summit;***
- ***Your Majesty, Excellencies Heads of States, Heads of Governments;***
- ***Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!***

Today, I am delighted and honoured to join you all in this **3rd Water Summit** under the theme **Preventing Water Crises**, in this beautiful city of Budapest, Hungary. Taking this opportunity, on behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia and myself, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to and highly appreciate the Government of Hungary as host country for its excellent arrangements and warm hospitality extended to our delegation.

I am of the view that this summit is indeed important, providing an opportunity for us all present here to share experiences and exchange views on common solutions to water issue that has become a current global challenge, in order to ensure inclusive and sustainable development while preventing a water crisis from happening. In addition, this summit is also a rare opportunity for the global leaders to reaffirm their determination, particularly with strengthened and increased engagements in resolving water related issues.

Excellency Chairman, Your Majesty, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!

In the current global context of global warming, climate change, population growth, urbanization, growing industrial development, increasing demand for water, decline in water quality and quantity, conflict over trans-boundary water, low access to clean water and sanitation, limited awareness and insufficient public investment in water, the water issue has been worsening that might lead to a crisis in the future.

Water is a key and essential resource for supporting the lives of human beings, animals and natural plants, for sustainable economic and social development, as well as for environmental sustainability, as defined by the

Sustainable Development Goal 6 of the **2030 Agenda** for sustainable development of the United Nations. Hence, we should have adopted a joint approach and implementation mechanism on water resources management through promoting cooperation on water security at both regional and global level in order to work together to prevent water crises, which could affect the socio-economic development, the well-being of the people and the environment.

In fact, in ASEAN region, with strong growth and rapid economic transformation, especially the steady growth of industrialization, urban migration and urbanization, the pressure on demand for water either for livelihood or industrial uses have become a major public issue requiring a joint solution at regional level, as water is a trans-boundary problem, in which every country must unconditionally and willingly engage with. Moreover, the issue of water security has been a threat due to the lack of policy mechanisms for water resource management including that of solid and chemical wastes discharged by industries. In addition, limited awareness by the public has caused pollution to water sources such as rivers, lakes, river streams and underground water. Along with increasing impacts of climate change and deforestation, the insufficient water resource management and public investment in its infrastructure have caused not only the loss of natural water resources, but also water shortage or even drought in some areas.

With the aforementioned context, every country in the world, including the national, regional and international organizations, has been striving together to ensure the sustainability of water assets and environment in order to support the livelihood of people and sustainable development of each nation.

Going forward, in order to address these challenges and associated risks in a holistic and effective way, especially under the **Framework of 2030 Sustainable Development Goals**, to ensure sustainable and smart utilization of water resources for everyone and for younger generation with the prevention of disputes between countries; I would like to highlight some priorities related to the approach for management, governance and financing as follows:

1st. Continue with the initiatives to create a new global political architecture for water resources management so as to mobilize support from all stakeholders, nurture water-saving spirit as well as avoid water-polluting activities, and develop strong institutional governance and water policy with harmony and transparency.

2nd. Enhance coordination, cooperation and accountability on water issue under the global framework, with the United Nations as an effective guide in addressing universal issue and in implementing the 2030 Global

Agenda as well as the Paris Agreement.

3rd. Strengthen coordination and cooperation at both technical and policy levels on the issues of water, energy, climate change, food, health and biodiversity conservation aiming to promote and strengthen the governance and joint management of water resources through inter-ministerial coordination at all levels as well as engaging all relevant actors and all water users.

4th. Enhance commitment at national level to eliminate the source of contamination of water by enhancing wastewater treatment capacity, increasing storage capacity of contaminated water and strengthening mechanisms to prevent all forms of water pollution.

5th. Create an inter-linkage of water-related policies by strengthening the design of institutional mechanisms, tightening regulations and legal frameworks.

6th. Encourage the development of new approaches on the sharing of benefits and responsibilities to maintain water sources, as well as planning and operation of infrastructure on transboundary water in order to prevent eventual conflicts and ensure sustainability of shared water usage.

7th. Increase public investment in water management and access to clean water and sanitation in line with the goals set in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

8th. Engage in the building of supportive environment for innovative business models that provides incentive to sustainable financing for providing clean water service by ensuring affordable prices with high hygiene standards in line with prevention and improvement for sustainable water and soil ecosystem. And

9th. Strengthen capacity in monitoring water-related issues under the framework of Sustainable Development Goals, as well as encourage the effort to collect water-related data and analysis at all levels with a commitment on political and financial support.

Excellency Chairman, Your Majesty, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!

With its geographical position, Cambodia is abundant in freshwater resources, originating from the Mekong River (flowing through Cambodia for around 480 kilometres), canals and streams around the Tonle Sap Lake (the largest freshwater lake in Southeast Asia), tributaries as well as other river basins, and potentially underground water. Cambodia considers water as “**white gold**”, which is a strategic driver for sustainable economic development.

In fact, water is an indispensable source of support for citizens’ livelihoods, agriculture, fisheries, biodiversity, navigation, hydropower,

ecotourism, culture, education and many other fields in not only the past but also the present and the future. The availability of water in each country depends on geographical and climatic conditions that change seasonally and annually. At the same time, the management of local reservoirs, the construction of water infrastructure and efficient water management are also essential.

The Royal Government of Cambodia recognizes the strategic importance of water and pays high attention to the water resource. We have laid out a series of Rectangular Strategies (we are in Phase 4 now) according to the Legislature of the National Assembly, with four priority areas: **People, Water, Electricity and Road**. In the area of water resources, we have established **Law on Water Resources Management** in 2007 and laid out policies as well as clear working programs for effective and sustainable water resource management and development. At the same time, the Royal Government of Cambodia has also set up a **River Basin Management Committee** with the aim of ensuring effective and sustainable management, conservation and development of water resources to serve all sectors. In addition, Cambodia is actively involved, in both regional and international framework, in water resource management and environmental protection activities as well as the prevention of water crises.

Although Cambodia remains a lower middle-income country, we have strived to mobilize financing from all sources, inside and outside the country, for the development of water resources. We have also cooperated with development partners, financial institutions and regional and international organizations, namely, the Mekong River Commission (**MRC**), Lancang-Mekong Cooperation (**MLC**), Greater Mekong Subregion (**GMS**), Mekong-Japan, Mekong-Korea and Mekong-Ganga Cooperations, Lower Mekong Initiative (**LMI**), Food and Agriculture Organization (**FAO**), United Nations Development Programme (**UNDP**), World Meteorological Organization (**WMO**), International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage (**ICID**), International Network for Water and Ecosystem in Paddy Fields (**INWEPF**), Office International De L'eau, International Water Management Institute (**IWMI**), International Water Association, and Global Water Partnership (**GWP**).

Furthermore, I would like to inform the summit that Cambodia is firmly committed in the protection and prevention of water crises through the implementation of strategic plans and actions highlighted as follows:

1st. Continue strengthening effective enforcement of laws, regulations, policies, and master plan on water resources management.

2nd. Establish and strengthen mechanism on water resource management along rivers, streams and basins at both national and sub-

national levels, by formulating and implementing management plans on water resources and river basins; managing water resources for all relevant sectors in a balance and equitable manner; developing map on floods and underground water, constructing reservoirs, dam and water discharging system; and gradually implementing comprehensive modernization.

3rd. Build technical foundation, human resource and data management centre to collect data on both water and climate for analysing, commercializing, and disseminating for national and international relevant sectors, specifically for the development and management of water resources and the evaluation of water resource potential and demand in both quality and quantity in response to the development.

4th. Promote and encourage private sectors to engage in water resources development as well as increase national budget and mobilize aids from international financial institutions and partner countries aiming to develop water resources sector, to ensure an effective and sustainable water supply in all relevant sectors.

Excellency Chairman, Your Majesty, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!

Cambodia recognizes and attaches high priority to the management of water, while confronting with various challenges including population growth, rapid development, and rising demand on water, energy, and food security. Furthermore, the impact of climate change is getting more severe year-after-year. This trend will further threaten the water resource system in terms of ensuring sustainability and benefits for the younger generations. In this regard, the Royal Government of Cambodia will enhance active cooperation regionally and globally in new and existing mechanisms and initiatives in the spirit of joint effort and partnership, in order to address the transboundary water issues at both regional and international level, for our common interests in the present and in the future.

Before concluding, I would like to reaffirm the commitment of the Royal Government of Cambodia to engage in an effective and sustainable water resource management and to prevent water crises. In this spirit, together, we will work hand-in-hand through the exchange of experiences, better cooperation and partnership aimed to avert water crises and ensure water security for our world. I firmly believe that after this **3rd Water Summit** in Budapest, we will have gain experiences and knowledge on the effective and sustainable water resource management as well as on measures to prevent water crises, in order to achieve our joint mission with the future of sustainable growth and prosperity.

Finally, I wish this summit success and fruitful outcomes as expected,

and wish Your Majesty, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, happiness, success and prosperity.

Thank you!