**Welcome statement**

**SDG 6 Special Event, Conference Room 8, UNHQ, New York**

**UN-Water Chair**

**8:00-9:30 EDT, Wednesday 13 July 2022**

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

A very warm welcome to the SDG 6 Special Event 2022.

Thank you all for joining us and showing your commitment to achieving water and sanitation for all by 2030.

I regret that I cannot be with you today in person, but I am pleased that our UN-Water Vice Chair, Ms. Kelly Ann Naylor, is in the room and will moderate your discussion.

Thank you also to my esteemed colleague, Mr. Liu Zhenmin, co-Chair of today’s event.

Dear colleagues,

It is now two years since we launched the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework.

During this time, COVID-19 has taught everyone a painful but valuable lesson: that a safe and prosperous society depends on public health.

The pandemic has exposed shocking inequalities.

As wave after wave of infection sweeps across the world, those with access to basic services – especially water, sanitation, hygiene and healthcare – are better able to cope.

We may all be in the same storm, but we are not all in the same boat.

As we strive to build more sustainable economies and societies, water and sanitation must be at the heart of our efforts.

However, we are currently off track to achieve SDG 6 by 2030.

Billions of people are living without safely managed water and sanitation.

This crisis poses a threat to every aspect of sustainable development.

The latest data show we need to work, on average, four times faster to ensure water and sanitation for all within the next eight years.

The SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework shows us how to get there.

Since 2020, I have been inspired by your commitment to the Framework.

The Water and Climate Coalition, Hand Hygiene for All initiative, and the Roadmap for the Promotion of the Human Rights to Water and Sanitation are all driving progress.

At the highest level, from the UN General Assembly, to the European Union, to the Dushanbe Water Process, the Framework is being used to shape discussions and guide action plans.

We are picking up speed, but need to go much faster.

As we prepare for the UN 2023 Water Conference next March, the eyes of the world are upon us.

This will be a critical moment for everyone working in sustainable development.

In our preparations, and at the Conference itself, everything we do must translate into rapid, concrete, and sustainable action.

On behalf of the UN-Water family, I would like to say a special thank you to Tajikistan and the Netherlands for your determination, energy and leadership as we approach this historic event.

You have consistently reminded us that success will be measured by what we achieve at the country level.

I look forward to learning from all our colleagues, so that we can accelerate faster and further, and leave no one behind.

Thank you.