Comments of the Russian Federation
on the Draft United Nations System-Wide
Strategy for Water and Sanitation

I. General comments

1. As per UNGA resolution A/RES/77/334 the Secretary-General is requested to present a UN wide water and sanitation strategy in consultation with Member States. The Russian Federation expects the Secretariat to produce a revised draft accommodating the provided comments.

2. The strategy should be providing guidance to those UN agencies that specifically work with water and sanitation issues, i.e. the members of the UN-Water. Overflowing agendas of those UN structures – that do not have a specific relation to water – with water and sanitation issues would divert their resources from their direct mandates.

3. Development of national policy measures in the field of water and sanitation is an exclusive prerogative of the Member States. International assistance should not be dependent on the implementation of externally imposed conditions and recommendations of various United Nations Special Rapporteurs or Resident Coordinators.

II. Specific proposals

4. Delete references to the concepts that are not universally agreed, namely “triple planetary crisis” and “human-development-peace nexus” (Output 3.2).

5. Outcome 4 should be specifically aligned to the needs of the Global South, as requested by UNGA resolution A/RES/77/334 which specified that the strategy should have “particular emphasis on the water-related needs of the developing countries, including those related to finance, technology transfer and capacity-building”.

6. References to the outcomes of the UN Water Conference should be deleted as they were not intergovernmentally agreed (including from Outcome 1, Output 3.3, Outcome 4). The intergovernmentally agreed mandate for the strategy is contained exclusively in OP5 of UNGA resolution A/RES/77/334.
7. Delete “There is no single United Nations agency, fund, programme, or office dedicated exclusively to water issues” from Output 1.1 as the purpose of the Strategy is to be a reference document for implementing the existing intergovernmental mandates.

8. Harmonize the human rights language with the agreed formulations:
   a) In Output 3.2 change “feminist/ gender-responsive” for “gender-sensitive” or “linkages with gender equality and empowerment of women”.
   b) In Output 2.2 delete “following the principles of the human rights-based approach” as the paragraph is related to stakeholder participation.
   c) In Output 4.1 delete “in accordance with international human rights standards” as financing of water and sanitation should not be linked to human rights.

9. In Output 4.5 delete “RC/UNCTs can promote the uptake and application of human rights-based approaches for water and sanitation in policies and support follow-up on relevant recommendations from reports UN Special Rapporteurs” as these activities are beyond RC/UNCTs mandates.

III. Areas of concerns

10. The nexus between water and security is highly debatable. The Russian Federation alongside with some other UN Member States does not recognize this connection. In this regard, references to conflicts and security must be deleted across the text of the strategy (including from Section I, Output 2.2, Outcome 3, Output 4.5).

11. The UN wide strategy should not involve UN-Water Partners, many of which are not related to the United Nations (Section VII.A).

12. A wider rendering of the mandate of resident coordinators implying their direct participation in the implementation of the strategy is of concern. The wording should be modified to specify that the function of RCs with regard to this document is exclusively coordinative, while the strategy should be implemented by the relevant UN entities (see “country-level” sections throughout the document).

13. Transboundary water cooperation is a prerogative of Member states and should not be specified in the document (Outputs 3.2, 4.5).