**High-level Political Forum Special Event**

 **Launch of the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework**

**Remarks by Mr. Matthias Berninger, Senior Vice President for Public Affairs, Science and Sustainability of Bayer AG**

*This transcript is developed from the oral presentation of Mr. Berninger.*

As a representative of the private sector, I’m very honored to be able to speak today at the launch of the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework.

The first and most important thing the business community needs to do in order to contribute to a successful World Water Day in 2023 is to focus on disclosing how water is connected to their individual value chains. That, for me, is the key corrective lens to the water blindness that exists today across many sectors.

More than 70% of all freshwater is used by the agricultural sector. Bayer as a leading crop science manufacturer has an almost 25% market share in the agriculture value chain. So, if you think about it that way, almost 20% of all the global fresh water used is somehow touched by our company’s value chain. With that comes huge responsibility.

And you can imagine that for Bayer investing in innovation that reduces the demand of water in agriculture is one of the key contributions that we as a company can make en route to 2023. Our R&D budget in agriculture is 2,5 billion dollars. We make this investment to enable farmers to produce more with less.

Speaking of R&D: The top 50 companies in the world spend more than 300 billion dollars for research and development. Think about what would be possible if you mobilized a larger amount of those R&D dollars for sustainability or more specifically to conserve and protect our water resources.

I also believe, and Inger from UNEP made that point, in the context of water management, we need a strong commitments of the business community to net zero deforestation. This is, by our estimate, a key precondition for us to maintain regional water cycles. Rainforests are called rainforest for a reason. Without those forests we won’t have rain in the regions that are currently facing the challenges of deforestation. Farmers already today experience the drought caused by deforestation on three continents.

I also believe in 2023 the invisible hand of the market needs to turn blue and force businesses to pay attention to water. For this, investors play a key role. We already see on de-carbonization that investors put pressure on companies to focus on being transparent about and reducing carbon emissions in their value chains. I think the same pressure needs to be put on how we consume water as businesses throughout our value chain. So, in the run-up of the 2023 World Water Day, the investment community is a key enabler of a successful transformation of businesses in order to preserve water for our future.

I can say on behalf of Bayer, we are very committed to do our part to help make 2023 a success and put again new momentum into achieving SDG 6.

Thank you!