**Remarks by**

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**High-level Political Forum SDG 6 Special Event: Launch of the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework**

**13 July 2022**

Excellencies,

Dear Colleagues,

* As you know, Portugal had the pleasure of hosting a **High-Level Symposium on Water**, as one of the four special events of the Second UN Ocean Conference, in Lisbon, two weeks ago [27 June]. We sought to bridge SDG6 and SDG14, thus contributing to the preparatory process for next year’s UN Water Conference.
* Allow me to thank the Governments of Argentina, Mozambique and Singapore for working with us on the preparation of its three Roundtables, as well as DESA, UN-Water and the Governments of the Netherlands and Tajikistan for their relentless support.
* The result was an event attended by around 500 in-person participants, and followed online by more than 1500 people.
* Let me now outline **seven key messages** of the Symposium:
* *First*, this Symposium signaled the growing interest of the saltwater and freshwater communities in working more closely together. The oceans are an integral part of the hydrological cycle and their health depends, to a large extent, on the management of freshwater. However, the discussions also showed that **the road towards greater integration is still long**: large gaps persist in the access to safe drinking water and sanitation, as well as in waste management, which in turn are essential for a healthy ocean.
* *Second*, it is necessary to **strengthen the coordination mechanisms** across policy areas. We need a holistic, “source to sea” approach of the use of water, and transboundary cooperation is a fundamental component of this approach.
* *Third*, it is important to pay increased attention to **coastal wetlands** – such as marshes and mangroves – given their fundamental role as carbon sinks. It is also important to protect coastal waters from the negative impacts of agricultural effluents, and industrial and urban wastewater.
* *Fourth*, **marine litter** is a threat, not just to species and ecosystems, but also for human health. More efforts upstream are needed to curb this problem, and the historic resolution adopted at UNEA-5 needs to be swiftly implemented to this effect.
* *Fifth*, the increasing urbanization of coastal areas has not always been followed by the necessary **infrastructure** – more efficient financial and economic instruments are needed to scale up efforts in this regard.
* *Sixth*, **climate change** is aggravating the challenges for the sustainable management of water. Investments in water and sanitation infrastructure are not enough, if they are not accompanied by a genuine strategy for adaptation to the impacts of climate change, including water scarcity and drought.
* Lastly, it is essential to change the paradigm and **manage water as a precious resource**, providing similar or better services with fewer resources, adopting circular approaches and improving communication on the value of water, either as fresh or saltwater. Bottom-up approaches are necessary to enhance the involvement of local communities, partnerships are key, and successful solutions need to be scaled up.

Dear colleagues,

* A **chair’s summary** of the Symposium is currently being prepared, and it will be complemented by the written contributions received. Once ready, it will be shared with all relevant entities, thus informing the preparatory process of the UN Water Conference and other processes related to Sustainable Development.
* With that outcome, we hope that the Symposium will not just be “a drop in the ocean”, but a step further in bridging SDG 6 and SDG 14.
* I thank you.