

Pan-European Regional Preparatory Meeting for the United Nations 2023 Water Conference

Geneva, 12 – 13(am) April 2022

Short statement, 12.4.2022, Anna-Stiina Heiskanen, Finland

Thank you for the opportunity to give a short statement for behalf of Finland,

Excellences, ladies and gentlemen

We are happy to contribute for the Water conference 2023 preparations

- **Effective, coordinated and consistent international cooperation, and political will, is needed** to ensure the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation
- Climate change, and unsustainable use of water, are increasing water scarcity and threatening the health and wellbeing of people and ecosystems. Finland considers it essential that water scarcity will be addressed in a meaningful way at the conference – Therefore we emphasize a need for a discussion on **transboundary water cooperation** to learn lessons from parts of the world where such cooperation has been successful, for instance practices of the water allocation, on which a recent handbook has been produced by the UNECE water convention.
- Furthermore, we also suggest **that water and peace** is addressed as a theme, given that transboundary water cooperation can potentially act as a conducive factor for enhancing cooperation and building peace, while the failure to effectively find solutions to water related disputes carries great risk of contributing to conflicts.
- we emphasize to take a **gender transformative approach** to accelerate actions **related to human rights to water and sanitation**, with adequate participation of relevant organizations
- We consider **it essential to work towards a common agreement on the concept of water security**; defined as the capacity of a population to safeguard sustainable access to water.
- **Multi stakeholder and multi-disciplinary approaches, as well as enabling policy environment**, including technical, financial, and institutional solutions, followed by cross-sectoral implementation is critical for the process of **integrated water resource management**.
- **Open and accessible Information** is crucial, policy makers should be enabled to employ reliable, fit-for-purpose **data, smart technologies and robust monitoring** systems to develop effective cross-sectoral policies.
- Finland urges the adoption of a **UN system-wide approach** that integrates the UN activities related to water: most notably the Water Decade and the Global SDG 6 Accelerator Framework, within the framework of the planned Midterm Review.
- We emphasize the need to continue open informal consultations on the themes for 2023 conference.
 - The following topics should be the focus of the interactive dialogues:
 - Best practices and building capacity in transboundary water cooperation
 - Multistakeholder approaches to integrated water resource management

- Strengthening global action on water and peace
 - Adoption of a UN system-wide approach to water
 - Promoting water, energy, food security and ecosystems Nexus
- it is essential that the conference leads to concrete results. We therefore envisage a range of tangible commitments and results that should be announced at the conference. These could include;
 - The establishment of a Special Envoy on Water that leads on developing a UN system-wide approach to water and concrete plans for strengthening the capacity of UN-Water
 - Recognition of the concept of water security
 - Strengthened water diplomacy including capacity building of water negotiators.
 - Commitment to deliver a synthesis report on global water resources