

Dear ministers, dear colleagues,

Water is the common thread that ties together ecosystems, energy, agriculture, and human livelihoods. Integrated water management is a crucial tool for adapting to climate change, as changing weather patterns intensify floods, droughts, and water scarcity worldwide.

This September, part of the territory of Czechia experienced devastating floods, which are estimated to be twice as likely due to climate change. Our country is warming faster than the global average, increasing the risks of drought and water scarcity. We can't tackle this monumental challenge alone. International cooperation is vital. Last month, we successfully alerted neighbouring countries about the incoming floods using regularly tested early warning mechanisms. This demonstrates just one tangible example of the benefits of transboundary water cooperation.

Czechia has developed strong bilateral partnerships with all our neighbours and is an active member of three river basin organizations. One of them, the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River, unites the most international river basin in the world. It comprises of 14 countries, who now regularly come together and discuss solutions to common issues. We are proud that these arrangements fulfil the obligations of indicator 6.5.2 of sustainable development, which will be presented later today.

We are also honoured that our commitment to transboundary water cooperation has been recognized by UN-Water. Czechia was featured in one of this year's three "SDG 6 Country Acceleration Case Studies." Since 2022, these case studies have showcased practical, replicable examples that can help countries achieve the objectives of SDG 6. This recognition highlighted our unique progress on all relevant SDG 6 indicators.

The world is not on track to provide safe water and sanitation to all by 2030. Political stakeholders around the world and across sectors must make water our priority. Allow me to reiterate key takeaways from the case study:

- Make water a non-political priority—commitment to water can win elections
- Balance technical and nature-based solutions
- Ensure sustainable financing for water infrastructure through mechanisms like appropriate water tariffs
- And build trust and collaboration among neighbouring countries and within international basins.

Of course, many challenges still remain in Czech water management. We recently developed a governance framework for operational drought management, and our Water Act now sets order of priorities for water allocation. We are trying to scale up the use of nature-based solutions to create "sponge landscapes" that would help us mitigate the impacts of floods and droughts.

Our government remains fully committed to addressing these critical water issues.

Thank you for your attention.