

**National Statement by the Minister of Development, Brunei Darussalam,
His Excellency Dato Seri Paduka Haji Suhaimi bin Haji Gafar,
At the Ministerial Conference of 8th World Water Forum,
19th March 2018, Brasilia, Brazil**

**Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh
Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim**

- **Your Excellency, Chair of the Ministerial Conference**
- **Excellencies**
- **Ladies & Gentlemen**

On World Water Day in 2001, Mr. Kofi Annan, the then United Nations Secretary General from 1997 to 2006, stated that, “*Access to safe water is a fundamental human need and therefore a basic human right*”. Today, 17 years later, his statement is not only very valid, but is a lot more significant, as the world is confronted with the combined impacts of population and economic growth, rapid urbanization, competition for water usages and unpredictable climate variability. Access to safe drinking water and sanitation is still a daily struggle to many people, water security and water related disasters culminate in an ever more challenging level globally.

As we all know, the World Economic Forum Global Risks Report has consistently placed water security in the top 10 global risks. And this increasing urgency and growing momentum makes the advent of a dedicated Sustainable Development Goal for universal access to clean water and sanitation by 2030 extremely timely. Nations are no longer working in silos.

Through this Forum, we can witness the good work done by many dedicated organizations, create opportunities for the country to manage water, achieving water and sanitation targets for the less fortunate nation and the

underprivileged. We are able to learn and share knowledge in water governance, advanced technology, methodologies for infrastructure development and maintenance, capacity building and financing, among others.

At this juncture, I would like to applaud the 2030 Agenda for providing people and governments around the world with the necessary tools to take ownership of their own future and thank the World Water Council (WWC) for organising the World Water Forum since 1996. We look forward to be involved actively in the deliberations and discussions of this 8th World Water Forum with the theme “Sharing Water”.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Brunei Darussalam ratified the United Nation Millennium Development Goal (MDG) in 2000 and had met its target in providing 100% access to safe drinking water in the country and improved sanitation. In its continuous commitment in resource governance and sustainable management, the Ministry of Development formulates policy and legislative Acts for water, sanitation, environment and building control. Some key considerations in our National Development Plan focus on enabling the development of water and drainage infrastructure in the country, and being periodically reviewed, for future demand and supply needs.

Continuing our journey in nation building with the development of necessary infrastructures for water and centralized sanitation, we face challenges similar to other nations. Economic diversifications, increased population and densities in urban areas, affluent lifestyle and climate change are common challenges. Brunei Darussalam is aggressively pushing to diverse its economy to non-oil and gas sector, at the same time forging ahead to achieve self-sufficiency in rice production, our staple food. Further, there have been notable variability of extreme weather in recent years in the major water catchment areas and increased incidents of flash floods in the country. These challenges add

urgency for our Ministry to formulate a balanced and sustainable water resource utilization plan. We embark on this new journey with a strategic foresight, dedication, technology and innovation, together with critical assessment of their potential socio-economic development impacts. Another area of focus to our ministry is the creation of human capacity and capabilities to drive the process towards achieving sustainable development.

As a small nation in South East Asia, Brunei Darussalam recognizes the importance of maintaining regional and international collaborations in advancing technology, in progressing towards dynamic economic growth and sustainable resources management. We see the benefits to be engaged in regional and international platforms to pool available resources, to exchange experiences and to acquire knowledge to address common challenges. Brunei Darussalam will continue to stay active and relevant with international and regional institutions and nations in addressing these numerous challenges. For instance, the Ministry of Development has participated in the ASEAN Working Group in Water Resources Management where countries are engaged in collaborative action towards practical implementation of water resource management and capacity development.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

What is certain is the world will be plagued by decreasing water availability and increasing impacts of climate change. To respond to these challenges, we must close the knowledge gap together, find innovative solutions, now and endlessly.

My appreciations to the Organising Committee of the 8th World Water Forum for inviting me and extending their warm hospitality to me and my team to participate in this valuable event. I wish to congratulate the beautiful city of Brasilia for hosting this event successfully.

To end this statement, allow me to share a quote from an unknown source:

Quote:

*“Grandfather saw it in River
Father saw it in Well
We saw in Tap
Our Children see it in Bottle
Where will our Grand Children see it!
In CAPSULE?
If we still neglect
It will be seen only in Tears.
SAVE WATER NOW”*

Unquote.

Thank you.