



Statement by

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on the launch of the UN System-wide Strategy for Water and Sanitation

Today, the challenges posed by water scarcity and management are more pressing than ever. Approximately 40% of the world's population is currently affected by water scarcity: a frightening figure that is highly likely to increase with climate change. In some regions, droughts are causing reservoirs to dry up, while in others, communities face the dangers of glacial lake outbursts, flash floods, and rising sea levels. These phenomena not only threaten agriculture, biodiversity, and livelihoods but also endanger the lives of millions residing in coastal habitats.

The international community bears the collective responsibility of addressing these challenges and mitigating their impacts as far as possible. This requires a heightened commitment to cooperation, leveraging all available technologies, while also enhancing Member State capacity make best use of available solutions. The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) is fully aligned with the objectives of the UN System-wide Strategy for Water and Sanitation and is ready to contribute our expertise and resources to this global effort.

Space technologies have become increasingly indispensable for effective water management. Through expanding access to vital information and knowledge, these technologies underpin climate action, stimulate sustainable development, and allow for the comprehensive monitoring of natural resources. The potential of space assets to improve life on Earth is immense, but we must now focus on democratizing access to these transformative tools and scaling their applications to benefit communities worldwide.

To advance these goals, UNOOSA launched the Space4Water project at the outset of the Water Action Decade in 2018. This initiative exemplifies the critical role that space-based technologies can play in water management. Space4Water serves as a platform for interdisciplinary knowledge exchange, capacity building, and fostering partnerships, with a particular focus on supporting actors from developing countries. By facilitating access to space-based data and technologies, we empower stakeholders to make informed decisions that enhance water resource management and sustainability locally.

Furthermore, the UN-SPIDER programme, another cornerstone of UNOOSA's efforts, ensures that all countries and international organizations have the capacity to use space-based information across the entire disaster management cycle. Through technical advisory missions, UN-SPIDER has been instrumental in building member state capacity in disaster management, providing access to space data and helping them understand how to use it. Looking ahead, UNOOSA proposes to contribute to a global network of satellite-based early warning systems for droughts and floods. This initiative, utilizing advanced satellite technology, aims to significantly improve disaster preparedness and response capabilities, thereby mitigating the impacts of natural disasters on water resources and communities, and enhancing overall resilience.

As we proceed with this collaborative action, our focus must be on the following strategic priorities:

1. **Integrated Data Systems:** We must develop and enhance integrated data systems that provide comprehensive, real-time information on water resources and sanitation. This will enable better decision-making and more efficient resource management.



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2. **Capacity Building:** Investing in capacity-building initiatives is essential to empower communities, particularly in developing countries, to utilize space-based technologies effectively for water management.
3. **Cross-Sector Collaboration:** We must foster cross-sector collaboration within the UN system and with external partners to harmonize approaches and deliver coherent, impactful programs.

UNOOSA's leadership in supporting the implementation of the UN System-wide Strategy for Water and Sanitation includes:

1. **Facilitating and Coordinating the Use of Space Technologies:** Through the UN-Space mechanism, UNOOSA will play a key role in coordinating the use of space technologies in water resource management among UN entities.
2. **Capacity Building and Technical Assistance:** UNOOSA will provide training and technical assistance to UN member states, particularly in developing countries, helping them to leverage space-based technologies for water management. This will include workshops, online courses, and on-site training.
3. **Global Partnerships and Collaboration:** We will strengthen international cooperation by forming partnerships with space agencies, UN-Water members, and other stakeholders to share knowledge, data, and best practices in water resource management.

To support country-level coordination, UNOOSA's Space Applications programme can assist countries in integrating space-based data and technologies into their national water resource management strategies. This will be achieved through collaborative projects, joint research, and policy advisory services.

The launch of the UN System-wide Strategy for Water and Sanitation is a significant milestone. It represents our shared commitment to ensuring that water - a resource so fundamental to life - is managed sustainably, equitably, and effectively. Together, leveraging the power of space technology, we can ensure a future where water is available and sustainable for all.