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Statement on Water Security/Sustainability

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Water security is a relatively new concept¹ that has become increasingly popular among policy-makers concerned for the over-utilization and degradation of water resources. Despite the current development level, waters and related phenomena have grown ever more threatening to humankind. The current situation has been exacerbated by the negative effects of climate change, extreme weather conditions and the ensuing damage. With the onset of climate change and increasing number of natural disasters the link between environment and security is hard to dispute. Climate threats are invariably water-related. Water being on one hand the source of life, and on the other life threatening factor. Climate change will alter rainfall patterns and further reduce available fresh water by as much as 20-30% in certain regions. Rising sea level, increasing water scarcity as well as more frequent floods and hurricanes are all attributable to global warming and a human security threat.

Sustainability is the fundamental principle of sustainable development, involving a balanced integration of economic, social and environmental considerations in planning the development and use of natural resources at the local, national, regional, and global level (Think Globally, Act Locally/Agenda 21).

In the continuation we are emphasizing Slovenian good practices for ensuring/strengthening water security and sustainable management of waters.

Slovenia has been actively engaged in regional cooperation promoting the realization of the principles enshrined in Agenda 21 in the Mediterranean in the context of the Barcelona Convention. It participated in the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development, particularly in the drafting of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development that was adopted at the 14th conference of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention in

¹ Slovenia was chairing the High Level Roundtable on behalf of the Green Group (Cape Verde, Costa Rica, Iceland, Singapore, Slovenia and the United Arab Emirates) at the World Water Forum in Marseille in March 2012 (the full report will be published by the Forum). The Roundtable dealt with the issue Water Security and Sustainability.

Portorož, Slovenia. It has also actively advocated the Strategy's implementation at the sub-regional level by participating in the drafting of the Strategy for the Adriatic (Portorož, 2008).

In the context of inland waters, Slovenia has been involved in the implementation of the regional Convention on Co-operation for the Protection and Sustainable Use of the River Danube. It has also contributed to the drawing up of the first sub-regional agreement in the Danube region and the Framework Agreement on the Sava River Basin. Enhanced cross-border cooperation on joint cross-border infrastructure projects and facilities is of key importance for greater water security and sustainable development of international basins. During its 2010 presidency of the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River, Slovenia also contributed to the integration of environmental and development issues in the drafting of the EU Danube Strategy. This is how the Danube River Basin Management Plan became an environmental pillar of the regional development strategy.

The International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River is an example of good practice for sustainable management of a regional basin. It has served as a model to countries along the Yangtze, the Mekong, the Orange River as well as those along the large rivers in South America in increasing the efficiency of the management of these large basins.

Water is primarily a catalyst for cooperation rarely the cause of conflict. More often, water merely strains pre-existing political tensions. Therefore it is important to underline, that water security is best dealt with when activating local/regional/transboundary cooperation. This is the first level of the practical implementation of principles for sustainability and security of water ecosystems. Basins and ecoregions should become basic management units for the planning of sustainable solutions (adequate infrastructure and facilities, better flood protection and alleviating damage from droughts).

Faced with increasing water scarcity and degradation of water resources we should be attentively and with no delay addressing the challenge of water security.