

Statement

by the Minister of Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, Kingdom Bhutan

H.E. Mr. Yeshey Dorji

**at the Side event of the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Summit on the Environment
“Impactful Investments in Water Efficient Infrastructures : Inputs to the 3rd
Asia-Pacific Water Summit”**

(Thursday, 12:30-14:00, 7 September 2017, CR-3, UNCC, Bangkok, Thailand)

Distinguished Ms. Shamshad Akhtar, Executive Secretary, ESCAP

**Distinguished H.E. Mr. U Ohn Winn, Union Minister, Ministry of Natural
Resources and Environmental Conservation, Myanmar,**

Excellencies, Distinguished guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure and honor to be here and share our views on water.

During the past decade, water-related issues have struck our society more frequently. Situation surrounding water is expected to bad to worth in the near future due to rapid economic growth and adverse influence of climate change. Water is cross-cutting issues when we consider the sustainable economic growth and biodiversity conservatory. In addition, currently ‘Water-Food-Energy Nexus’ is discussed as an important element for sustainable development and as one of the themes of the security issues. In this way, now, everybody has come to realize the role and importance of water.

Based on these backgrounds, international society has piled up the discussions to improve these situations. Currently, the word of ‘Solution’ or ‘Implementation’ is strongly mentioned in many statements at the international conference or commitments. However, it seems that the gaps between discussions and field are getting wider, and more concrete approaches with financial resources are desired, although everybody understood that there are no panacea and ‘No-one size fits all methods.’

Bhutan is also facing the issues of water, especially flashflood caused by the breach of glacier-lakes caused by climate change. Many people have affected by the flashflood and brought huge amount of economic damage. At the same time, we have a huge

amount of potential of hydropower thanks to the glaciers. Facing these facts, we had questions such as ‘How to balance it by considering the people’s happiness and biodiversity? Or, what kinds of approaches to be introduced?’ We need practical, appropriate and applicable solutions. At the same time, we understand that financing and institutional and human capacity development are indispensable to create and implement the plan.

In Bhutan, to grasp the current situation and prepare for making appropriate countermeasures, the Bhutan Water Security Index (BWSI) was developed in 2015 based on “Asia Water Development Outlook” issued by Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Asia-Pacific Water Forum issued at the Asia-Pacific Water Summits. BWSI is comprised of five dimensions namely, i) Rural drinking water supply, sanitation and hygiene, ii) Economic water security, iii) Urban water supply, sanitation and drainage, iv) Environmental water security, and v) Disaster and climate change resilience. BWSI contributed to develop ‘NATIONAL INTEGRATED WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PLAN 2016’ supported by ADB and JICA. The plan was developed based on the evaluation of the current situation and foreseen by using BWSI and prioritized the National IWRM plan. The approach is very useful and practical, and River Basin Organization which manages the river was established to implement the plans at field. We’re convinced that these practical activities would be applicable at similar situations in the region. So, today is a wonderful opportunity to deepen the discussion on investment and IWRM by sharing valuable and practical experiences by participants.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In conclusion, I would like to stress that investment to create and implement practical and appropriate approach through international network are ‘key to success’ to achieve goals and target of SDGs based on our experiences. Fruitful discussions by the practitioners, specialists and international organizations at this session and valuable summary for the 3rd Asia-Pacific Water Summit and the 8th World Water Forum are expected.

Thank you.