

TURKEY

Thank you Mr. Chairman,

The amount of water consumption has increased dramatically in recent decades. While the world population has tripled, water use has increased 6 fold. The demand for water, as well as problems arising from the mismanagement of water continue to increase. Therefore, wise use and sustainable management of water resources are of utmost importance for all countries. To manage water resources properly in optimum manner for the benefit for all, including the poorest, is our goal to achieve. Therefore, to meet water, electricity and food requirements, all options should be considered. These include construction of new dams or making existing projects more productive.

The challenges of water management have long been obvious for people living in arid regions. Precipitation in arid and semi arid regions is generally limited to four or five months a year. Therefore, water resources development projects especially storaged systems, dams, reservoirs and irrigation networks are indispensable for agriculture and rural development in our region.

In this respect, developing countries have to utilize their water potential through investment in multi-purpose water infrastructures by public private partnerships and governance. International community as well as regional and multilateral development banks and financial institutions are urged to assist in providing financial resources to the countries and regions in need.

When the amount of water per capita is less than 1000 cubic meters, this is considered as an important factor constraining economic development. Therefore, in order to overcome the water scarcity problem, desalination and waste water recycling techniques are widely used by the water stressed countries. In this framework, if the wastewater treatment is not effective and reliable, food crops which are irrigated by treated waters can be contaminated. On the other hand, due to high costs, desalination is not widely used by developing and water stressed countries. For these reasons, other alternatives including water transfer projects from ~~water~~ ^{water rich} countries to water stressed ones should be kept in mind.

Widely disputed concept the "virtual water" can also be solution to meet the demands of increasing population. By virtual water, I mean sharing the benefits of water instead of water itself. Assuming that 1500 m³ of water is needed to grow 1 ton of wheat, the water equivalent of 1 million tons of imported wheat is around 1.5 billion m³. The South Eastern Anatolia Project, for instance, carried out by Turkey is one of the best examples as for its contribution in food security in the Middle East Region.