STATEMENT

by

Ambassador H. E. Mr. František Ružička
Permanent Representative of the Slovak Republic to the United Nations

High-Level Interactive Dialogue
International Decade for Action – “Water for Life”
Progress Achieved and Lessons Learned for Sustainable Development

New York, 30 March 2015

-Check against delivery-
Distinguished Secretary General,
President of the General Assembly,
Excellences,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

- Let me express my gratitude to the President of the General Assembly for organizing this high-level interactive dialogue devoted to discussions on the progress achieved in the implementation of the Decade for Action including the lessons learned and best practices.

- I align my statement with the statement delivered by the European Union and would like to add some remarks in my national capacity.

- We are approaching the end of the Decade and are on the eve to set-up the Post-2015 agenda. Without water there is no life, thus it is natural, that its importance will be reflected in the post-205 agenda. We need to discuss on lessons learned and focus on future actions on water related issues.

- Slovakia naturally highly appreciates the fact that the issues related to water are adequately reflected in the new sustainable development agenda.

- Dealing effectively with water and sanitation is fundamental to fighting poverty. Despite the progress we have achieved so far, 750 mil. people live without access to water. 37% of those people live in Sub-Saharan Africa.

- Water is important for almost every goal we are talking about. Let me take a few: Education. Over half of the developing world's primary schools don't have access to water and sanitation facilities. 443 million school days are lost each year due to water-related diseases.

- Healthcare: Nearly 1 out of every 5 deaths under the age of 5 worldwide is due to a water-related disease. Diarrhea caused by inadequate drinking water, sanitation, and hand hygiene kills an estimated 842,000 people every year globally, or approximately 2,300 people per day.\(^1\)

- Economic development: According to the World Health Organization, for every $1 invested in water and sanitation, there is an economic return of between $3 and $34.

- Security: absence of effective management of water resources can endanger stability and security in some regions. Universal access to safe water will increase global security.

- A few areas where Slovakia offers its assistance.

---

• **Water purification**: Slovakia has good experience with water purification and is keen to share its approaches in this area with other countries. We developed a close cooperation with Western Balkan countries by providing development assistance in the form of technical cooperation based on knowledge sharing and capacity building for water management and purification systems.

• **Natural disasters, flood management**: As a consequence of demographic and economic pressures together with climate change many countries are likely to experience water problems, including flood issues. Slovakia is committed to prevention and aims at reducing damage caused by floods by creating efficient system of prevention.

• **Regional cooperation in Danube river basin**: Trans-boundary water co-operation provides an effective means for addressing water management challenges at the regional and national levels also by involving the private sector.

• At the EU level, Slovakia supports intensifying the cooperation of countries in the Danube Region by common problem solutions as well as by more effective use of existing water resources. In the framework of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, Slovakia, together with Hungary, is the leading country for coordinating the environmentally focused activities of the Danube Region Countries.

• **Energy**: Slovakia supports the concepts of regional cooperation between neighbours and effective use of potential water sources. The trans-boundary waters are shared between two or more countries and are one of the most important and vulnerable freshwater resources on the planet.

• We have to promote innovative and effective solutions to address sustainable global and regional water challenges. How we will cope with this challenge depends on key decision-makers in water solutions from across governments, regional institutions, international organizations, research and science, academics and private sector.

• Distinguished Secretary General, Distinguished President of the GA, water is a powerful tool for cooperation across borders, sectors and communities. Addressing issues relate to water we may help reaching many other goals. We need to ensure that water is a source of partnership not of conflict.

Thank you.