

**Ms. Khaled** (Bangladesh):

We thank the Senegalese presidency for convening this open debate. We also thank the briefers for sharing their insights and recommendations.

As a finite resource of the global commons, water is fundamental to the three pillars of United Nations work on development, human rights, and peace and security. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has articulated the interlinkages between water and wider sustainable development. Water resources, and the essential services they provide, are among the keys to achieving poverty reduction, inclusive growth and food, health and energy security.

Nearly 750 million people around the world continue to lack access to an improved source of drinking water. Access to safe drinking water and sanitation are therefore duly recognized as human rights. The sustainable use and management of water are vital for promoting the dignity and well-being of all humankind. The interface between water and international peace and security is becoming increasingly self-evident. A number of conflict situations around the world can be directly or indirectly linked to some form of water scarcity or water-related natural disasters, in conjunction with other factors.

As stated in the concept note (S/2016/969, annex) for this debate, water-related issues among countries can often aggravate the sense of insecurity and act as a potential trigger for inter-State or regional conflicts. The Water Cooperation Quotient, developed by the Strategic Foresight Group, makes an interesting case about the lack of institutional cooperation in shared river basins as an underlying cause for conflicts in different parts of the world. There are a number of instances in which effective dialogue and cooperation among the States concerned in shared-basin areas have helped prevent, avert or diminish the chances of conflicts. In other instances, investment in water-intensive technologies and innovations, including through international partnerships, has effectively mitigated the potential drivers of conflict.

In terms of conflict resolution, water may need to be factored in as an essential component of sustaining peace and peacebuilding in certain contexts. It might be relevant for the Peacebuilding Commission to consider, as part of its thematic discussions, the role of water in promoting a comprehensive approach to sustaining peace.

The particular needs of the most vulnerable, including women and children, need to be mainstreamed into our various approaches and analyses. In many parts of the world, women and children must be freed from the burden of fetching water on a daily basis so as to open up enhanced opportunities for their empowerment and education.

In that connection, water must be seen as an integral part of the international

development architecture, with focus on meaningful global partnership in achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6. The need to mobilize enhanced resources and expertise for water-related infrastructure and services should continue to feature prominently in the United Nations development discourse. We reiterate the call made by our Prime Minister at the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Marrakech earlier this month to establish a global fund on SDG 6 to support, inter alia, water-related research, innovation and technology transfer.

The protection of water-related critical infrastructure and essential services during armed conflicts also deserves the international community's priority attention. The severe impact of breakdowns in water-related services and of restrictions in access to water in certain conflict situations continues to increase the vulnerability of civilian populations. The relevant international humanitarian law provisions stipulated in the 1977 Protocols Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 should provide guarantees against indiscriminate attacks on or restriction to water resources and installations by various parties to armed conflicts. There is a need for further informed discussions on ensuring accountability for such breaches and offences, in the light of the Rome Statute and other applicable international law. We urge the Global High-Level Panel on Water and Peace, among others, to further consider those issues.

In Bangladesh we consider water to be the vital, sustaining force of our economy, environment, ecology and culture. As a lower riparian and low-lying delta State vulnerable to climate change, we constantly grapple with challenges relating to the availability of fresh water, especially during the lean season. The growing saline intrusion in our coastal areas, the depletion of groundwater reserves in large urban areas and the persistent challenge of arsenic contamination of groundwater in certain parts of the country add to the systemic constraints in our overall water use and management.

Against the backdrop of such challenges, today more than 98 per cent of our population have access to safe drinking water, and more than 65 per cent have access to safe sanitation. Open defecation, involving as much as 42 per cent of the population in 2003, has been reduced to less than 1 per cent.

As a member of the United Nations-World Bank High-level Panel on Water, our Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is scheduled to attend the Budapest Water Summit 2016 next week. Among other issues, Bangladesh will continue to advocate

for the efficient governance and management of water resources, integrated management of shared river basins and access to less water-intensive technologies and crop varieties.

We commit to remain at the forefront of the international community's efforts in building

a water- secure world for all.