

STATEMENT

Excellencies,

Distinguished colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great honor and pleasure to greet you all on behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations of Bosnia and Herzegovina. I would like to thank the Global Water Partnership-Mediterranean and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, who organized this event in cooperation with the Swedish International Development Agency.

UN pronounced 2013 as “Year of Water”. The subject of this conference is highly important for the entire region of the Mediterranean. Southern and south-western parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina are part of the Dinaric Mountains, which stretch along the eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea. The Adriatic Sea is a large bay in the north of the Mediterranean, with a high degree of rock karstification. The hydrographic specifics of karstic area are reflected significantly in the field of transboundary water Bosnia and Herzegovina.

About 70% of water in Bosnia and Herzegovina (surface and groundwater) has a cross-border character, and therefore it is very important to have a good cooperation with neighboring countries with whom we share this water.

Roughly 90% of the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina has access to the public water supply and some 75% of the water for public supply is abstracted from groundwater resources. Groundwater is also used for irrigation, industrial water supply, etc. but in lesser quantities.

The reform of the water sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is still in progress, has led to the elaboration of new water legislation that incorporates elements of the EU Water Framework Directive.

The draft New Water Law, as proposed under an ongoing CARDS project, aims at fulfilling the requirements of the EC Water Framework Directive.

The above mentioned laws prescribe the adoption of sub-laws and defined responsibilities of different bodies in this respect. The necessary secondary legislation is however lagging behind by one to two years, so that currently a great part of the legislation is still blocked for use in practice.

The Water Sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina is carrying out activities related to international contracts, agreements, conventions and protocols in water management (Danube Convention, Barcelona Convention, Helsinki Convention, the Sava River Agreement, Water Management Cooperation Agreement with the Republic of Croatia) and activities related to cooperation according to Water Management Cooperation Memorandum, etc.

General activities in the area of water in Bosnia and Herzegovina could be summarised as:

- Enforcement of GW legislation implementation of the Water laws and related bylaws;
- Preparation of studies and planning documents (development of the river basin management plans, groundwater balance, groundwater monitoring system design);
- Development of groundwater monitoring and information system as apart of the water management system;
- Achivement of systematic and financial prerequisites for adequate use and protection of water resources;
- Improvement of protection of groundwater bodies and protection of groundwater sources of water supply.

Resources of drinking water throughout the world are threatened, not only because of excessive use and inadequate management, but also because of the increased pollution of the environment. The increase in water consumption due to higher living standards, urbanization and industrialization, has led to the increase in the quantity of wastewater that is discharged into natural water systems.

For governance of the Mediterranean water sector, the recent developments at the global and regional level have marked the beginning of a phase in which the international law may begin to play a bigger role in governing this resources. These developments seem to herald acceptance of the shared nature of problems, whether they be concerned with overdrafts or pollution or both, or the more anticipated threat of ground water resources across the borders. States have geared up to deal with relevant problems in cooperative

or coordinated fashion in number of ways from informal arrangements to a few bilateral and multilateral treaties for specific problems.

Finally, I want to point that out even though Bosnia and Herzegovina is a relatively small country, it has significant water resources and in that sense I think that my country has a chance to become an important point on the map of the Mediterranean in the future.

In addition, I would like once again to thank organizers on the excellent organization of this respected event.

Thank you for your attention.