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Water is Key for New Development Agenda

When more than 1200 delegates meet tomorrow at the Budapest Water Summit, they will recommend to the United Nations that water should play a central role in the post-2015 development agenda. Water's cross-cutting nature underpins all progress - not only as access to water for water's sake but as a tool to ensure health, food and energy to eradicate poverty within a growing global population.

Budapest, Hungary, Monday, 7 October 2013: At a time when 780 million people lack access to improved sources of drinking water and a staggering 2.5 billion still lack improved sanitation, Hungary has invited top leaders to Budapest for a four-day summit which will take stock of the various developments, in and outside the UN system, in preparing water-related goals for the post-2015 development agenda.

"We have to protect our water resources," said the **Hungarian President, János Áder** at Rio+20 last year. "We Hungarians are ready to contribute our share to this work and to share with others the experiences of our developed water management culture," he continued while proposing to hold, in Budapest, a United Nations-backed conference on water and sanitation to continue the work started in Rio.

Since then, the Hungarian Government has worked together with the UN System and the World Water Council to organize the Budapest Water Summit. The event aims to contribute to the design of a Sustainable Development Goal that incorporates the fundamental role that water plays in securing food, reducing poverty, empowering girls and women and in improving the quality of life of humans in both the developing and developed world as well as in ensuring the long term sustainability of water resources. The event will allow for a deeper analysis that will enable a transition from the Millennium Development Goals targets on water and sanitation to more encompassing targets including wastewater treatment, water resources development and management, international water cooperation, water-related disasters or innovative water technologies.

The **Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon** fully supported the initiative and will be present in Budapest on Tuesday to give an opening speech. In an address earlier this year, the Secretary-General emphasized the importance of the Summit and said that these types of discussions will "help our deliberations on the post-2015 development agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals where water issues will be critical."

One of the major outcomes of the Summit will be a statement recommending that the United Nations develop one dedicated goal on water. "We fully support this recommendation," says the **President of the World Water Council, Benedito Braga**. "Water is the common thread connecting all of the Sustainable Development Goals. For this reason, we need to have specific targets for water to make sure that goals in other areas, such as health, food and energy, will be attained. Besides, this summit will provide important inputs for the World Water Forum in Daegu-Gyeongbuk, Republic of Korea, in April 2015."

The four-day summit will take the shape of a policy forum. It will focus on five areas: access to water and sanitation, integrated water resources management for the 21st century, good water governance, green economy and the investment in and financing of the implementation of water and sanitation sustainable development goals. These areas are complemented by parallel stakeholder meetings around science, youth, civil society, business and philanthropy.

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