



# MALAYSIA

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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**STATEMENT BY H.E RAMLAN IBRAHIM,  
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**SECURITY COUNCIL OPEN DEBATE ON WATER, PEACE AND SECURITY**

**22 NOVEMBER 2016, NEW YORK**

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Mr. President,

Thank you for convening this important meeting and for the comprehensive concept note. Our discussion today is an important follow-up to the Arria-formula meeting held last April chaired by His Excellency President Macky Sall in which Malaysia was pleased to participate.

2. I have followed UN Secretary-General His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon's comprehensive views on this topic with much interest. Similarly, I wish to convey my appreciation to the briefers namely, Dr. Turk of the Global High-Level Panel on Water and Peace, Ms. Beerli of the ICRC and Mr. Walsekar of the Strategic Foresight Group for their respective expert views and presentations.

Mr. President,

3. The competencies of the General Assembly and its processes with regard to multilateral approaches on sustainable development and the environment including on management of transboundary water and water resources require no further elaboration.

4. However, it cannot be denied that there exists a legitimate linkage between the issues of water, peace and security which falls arguably under the purview of this Council. Therefore, for the purpose of this discussion, I will focus my remarks only on the issue of water-as-resource and the potential conflict that could arise from competition over water as a scarce resource.

5. Against that backdrop, my delegation is of the view that this discussion demonstrates the Council's ability to assume a preventative posture by considering issues that could be a driver of conflict.

6. Hence it is hoped that the discussion today will be frank and forward-looking exchange on how the UN and the international community as a whole could address potential threats to international peace and security related to competition and conflict over natural resources – specifically, in this case – over water and water resources.

Mr. President,

7. The question of water security or rather, water insecurity cannot only be limited to issues of access. Water insecurity should be seen as a potential threat multiplier that can aggravate or be aggravated by existing tensions and conflict rooted in the political, social and economic realms.

8. In this connection, various possible causes of conflicts related to water including rapid population growth, industrialization, agriculture, and urbanization were highlighted earlier. The list should not preclude the impact of military occupation.

9. One particular situation stands out in this regard namely the dire situation of Palestinians in the OPT, specifically their right to water and access to water resources. Since 1967, Palestinians had lost access to the water of the Jordan River.

10. 90% of Palestinian water resources have been under Israeli control since 1967. Furthermore, the Apartheid Wall not only cuts off Palestinian access to their own land, it also cuts off their access to many important underground aquifers.

11. The expropriation by annexation of Palestinian water resources is illegal under international law. It is thus doubly illegal for the expropriated water to be used and channeled to the illegal settlers. In addition, the decision to prevent Gaza from rebuilding its water and sanitation infrastructure following the 2009 and 2014 attacks is abhorrent and unacceptable.

12. We call for an immediate end to systematic and cynical exploitation of Palestinian water resources which has caused much anger, frustration and despair among the Palestinians. Such unsustainable situation could trigger not only political-security crisis but potentially even a public health crisis in an already volatile region that can ill afford further threats to peace and security.

Mr. President,

13. Across the globe, my delegation is encouraged by the pursuance of collaborative efforts on transboundary water cooperation in the context of regional cooperation. Initiatives such as the Senegal River Basin Organization in Africa, the establishment of UNRCCA in Central Asia and the Blue Peace initiative in the Middle East that seek to

harness water as an instrument of peace as opposed to a reason for conflict are inspiring.

14. I am pleased to share that in my own region Southeast Asia, the ten member states of ASEAN pursue such collaborative approach under the framework of the ASEAN Working Group on Water Resources Management or AWGWRM. Since 2005, AWGWRM has spearheaded implementation of the ASEAN Strategic Plan of Action on Water Resources Management.

15. In essence, this format provides a platform to enhance cooperation, promote networking and engagement in collaborative action towards the practical implementation of integrated water resources management in the region.

16. At the global level, we commend and support the ongoing effort and work of the Global High-Level Panel on Water and Peace led by Dr. Turk to strengthen the global architecture aimed at preventing and resolving water-related conflicts and tensions. We look forward to the release of the Panel's final report and recommendations as a future contribution to the ongoing debate on water, peace and security.

Mr. President,

17. In concluding, I wish to highlight three additional points:

17.1. We acknowledge the potentially destabilizing effects that could arise from poorly managed conflicts and tensions related to water and water resources. Hence, it is vital that the capacity and capability of preventive diplomacy mechanisms and institutions including those

deployed by the UN and by regional organisations continue to be supported;

17.2. It is vitally important to understand and address the negative impact of armed conflicts on water resources and related infrastructure, especially in those currently ongoing conflicts where we have seen the callous contamination of water and destruction of water-related infrastructure resources employed as military strategy or tactic in flagrant violation of applicable IHL norms and standards; and

17.3. In the post-conflict recovery phase, provision of safe water should rank among the highest priorities. Water, sanitation, and the associated delivery infrastructure are critical to economic development and the recovery of livelihoods in the aftermath of conflict. In this regard, partnerships, capacity building and transfers of technology are key to ensure sustainable water management in peace building effort. At the same time, collective efforts in achieving water related targets under SDG Goal 6 would help in addressing potential conflict driven by competition over increasingly scarce water resources. It is also vital that our collective efforts be further intensified in addressing the issue.

I thank you, Mr. President.