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Draft resolution on effective and inclusive solutions for strengthening water policies to achieve sustainable development in the context of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution*

The United Nations Environment Assembly,

Recognizing that water from terrestrial, coastal and marine sources is essential for human health, well-being and livelihoods, ecosystem functioning and services, and the survival of all living species,

Emphasizing that water is critical for sustainable development and the eradication of poverty and hunger recognizing that water, ecosystems, energy, food security and nutrition are linked, and that water is indispensable for health, well-being and human development,

Recognizing with concern that the world is not on track to achieve the water-related Sustainable Development Goals and targets at the global level by 2030 at the current rate of progress which has a tremendous impact on human well-being and on the three dimensions of sustainable development,

Highlighting that the second highest Sustainable Development Goal investment gap is in water and sanitation, with a growing need for sustainable, innovative investments in water and sanitation to ensure progress on the achievement of water-related goals and targets,

Recalling paragraph 38(f) of the Political Declaration adopted at the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development under the auspices of the General Assembly in September 2023, which states: “We will address water scarcity and stress and drive transformation from a global water crisis to a world where water is a sustainable resource, ensuring the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.”,

Highly concerned about threats to water quantity and quality, in particular from pollution on both land and sea across the globe, and that water-related ecosystems sustain the impact of climate change and severe pathogen pollution, among other factors, and of human activities such as urbanization, increased industrial and agricultural activity and poor sanitation,

Recalling its resolution 3/10 of 6 December 2017 on addressing water pollution to protect and restore water-related ecosystems, as well as its resolutions 5/4 of 2 March 2022 on sustainable lake management, 5/5 of 2 March 2022 on nature-based solutions and 5/14 of 2 March 2022 on ending plastic pollution,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 64/292 of 28 July 2010, “The human right to water and sanitation”, as well as General Assembly resolutions 74/141 of 18 December 2019 and 76/153 of 19 December 2021, “The human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation”,

* The present document has not been formally edited.

Welcoming the convening of the United Nations Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018–2028, held in New York from 22 to 24 March 2023, which generated significant momentum towards enhancing water action and political commitment at all levels to address water-related challenges, as well as General Assembly resolution 77/334 of 19 September 2023 on the follow-up of the conference and *taking note of* the Water Action Agenda,

Taking note of the convening of the forums in 2024 inter alia the 10th session of the “World Water Forum”, in Bali, Indonesia, “World Water Week” in Stockholm, Sweden, “One Water Summit” in New York, USA and “Cairo Water Week”,

Stressing the importance of the ecosystem approach for the integrated management of land, water and living resources and the need to increase efforts to tackle desertification, land degradation and drought, water scarcity, biodiversity loss and pollution,

Recognizing the importance of traditional, local and Indigenous knowledge as part of possible solutions for sustainable water management and addressing water scarcity, inter alia such as tank cascade systems, which are designated as Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) and are resilient systems characterized by remarkable agrobiodiversity, traditional knowledge, invaluable cultures and landscapes. Recognising the values of these systems to be sustainably managed by farmers, herders, fisherfolk and forest people in ways that contribute to their livelihoods and food security,

Noting the importance of water ecosystems and water quality for mitigating the risk of health challenges in accordance with the One Health approach and other holistic approaches that deliver multiple benefits to the health and well-being of people, animals, plants and ecosystems,

1. *Calls upon* all Member States and members of specialized agencies and invites relevant international organizations and relevant stakeholders, as appropriate, to:

(a) Implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate, and adopt coherent responses to the water-related challenges and risks across sectors, regions and actors, taking into account, where applicable, the interlinkages of water, ecosystems, energy, food security and nutrition, with their social, economic and environmental impacts;

(b) Mainstream sustainable water management and the protection, conservation, restoration and sustainable management of aquatic ecosystems into relevant intergovernmental processes, as well as national and local development strategies and relevant policies, with consideration of the One Health approach;

(c) Enhance the collection and monitoring of reliable, up-to-date water-related data in accordance with national laws and policies, including on water quality and quantity, and increase their use for evidence-based decision-making across sectors, noting the water cycle and implement sustainable, integrated, disaster-risk-informed water resources management as a necessary tool for successful disaster preparedness, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation, inter alia as contribution to the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015 – 2030;

(d) Promote integrated water resource management in agriculture to address water stress, and adapt agricultural systems, inter alia, to promote overall water efficiency and resilience to water stress as well as to transition to sustainable food systems, and taking into account indigenous and traditional knowledge and approaches, including inter alia that associated with cascaded tank village system as well as agroecological and other innovative approaches;

(e) Promote integrated water resources management in and between large water consuming industry sectors to reduce water stress risks and pollution, and adapt water reuse strategies, inter alia by enhancing wastewater reuse and strengthening pollutant discharge control to improve the overall water efficiency and their resilience to water stress;

(f) Encourage investment in sustainable, climate-resilient water and sanitation infrastructure and nature-based solutions and/or ecosystem-based approaches, including to close the investment gap in water and sanitation;

2. *Requests* the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, in collaboration with relevant UN agencies and other relevant stakeholders subject to the availability of resources, to:

(a) Scale up action by the United Nations Environment Programme on the protection, restoration, conservation, and sustainable management of water-based ecosystems for their multiple

benefits, including by assisting Member States, on request, in their implementation efforts on water-related national strategies and plans, and for their contribution to inter alia enhance water-related climate information and early warning systems;

(b) Present to the United Nations Environment Assembly at its seventh session, a set of strategic priorities for how freshwater will connect across and accelerate the implementation of UNEP's 2026–2029 Medium-Term Strategy, and for how it engages with the UN system-wide strategy on water and sanitation;

(c) Enhance cross-divisional coherence between the United Nations Environment Programme's freshwater and other activities at the level of global programmes, and in its support at the country level;

(d) Reinforce the United Nations Environment Programme's engagement with the United Nations Water mechanism and strengthen its collaboration with members of the mechanism and other relevant parts of the United Nations system for enhanced coherence within the United Nations system, including at the country level;

(e) Play an active role in the preparatory process of the 2026 United Nations Water Conference to Accelerate the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all, as well as the 2028 United Nations Conference on the Final Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action, "Water for Sustainable Development", 2018–2028, in close cooperation with other United Nations Water members;

(f) Compile taking into account the work in other relevant United Nations forums and in coordination with relevant United Nations entities and other organisations best practices and case studies of the interlinkages between water, energy, food and ecosystems, and make them available to Member States;

(g) Enhance action to improve data provision, including through capacity building, and track progress relating to the Sustainable Development Goal 6 indicators for which the United Nations Environment Programme serves as one of the global custodians, in particular through UNEP's Global Environment Monitoring System on Water and the integrated monitoring initiative on SDG 6, and continue to report on the progress achieved and challenges;

(h) Promote dialogue and collaboration on water-related traditional, local and Indigenous knowledge, including among others integrated sustainable and climate-resilient tank cascade system and management;

(i) Report to the Environment Assembly at its seventh session on progress in the implementation of the actions set out in subparagraphs (a) to (h) above;

3. Invites Member states to scale up means of implementation to promote and implement integrated water resource management, in particular in developing countries.
