



20 January 2023

H.E. Mr. Antonio Guterres
Secretary-General of the United Nations

Excellency,

It gives me great pleasure to invite you to address an Opening Remarks at the Plenary Session of the 6th United Nations Special Thematic Session on Water and Disasters to be held on Tuesday, March 21st, 2023 at United Nations Headquarters in New York, the U.S.A. The Session is the highest-level event globally on this issue and is organized by Australia, Hungary, Indonesia, Japan, the Netherlands, Republic of Korea, Sweden, Tajikistan, the High-Level Experts and Leaders Panel on Water and Disasters (HELP) and the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS) of Japan as co-hosts.

United Nations Special Thematic Sessions on Water and Disasters have been successfully organized biennially since 2013. In these sessions, representatives of the member states, international organizations, and diverse stakeholders shared experience, good practices, and understanding that addressing the issue of “water and disasters” is a critical element of achieving sustainable development. The Session called on all stakeholders to galvanize actions towards improving the way we mitigate the risks around water and disasters.

This year’s session will be held under the title of “Connecting Water, DRR, and Climate Change,” right before the UN 2023 Water Conference to make its inputs to the following discussion and outcomes. The Session will focus on connecting priority issues and actions in Midterm Review of Water Action Decade and that of DRR, COP28, and processes beyond, reflecting various lessons of COVID-19 and promoting their actions to realize a sustainable, resilient and inclusive society in the post-COVID-19 period.

I believe that the Session will keep momentum of the previous Sessions in raising high-level political awareness and urging actions on the issues of water and disasters among UN member states. It will help place globally agreed agendas back on track in post-COVID-19 period by providing with useful suggestions, innovative ideas, and common understandings.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurance of our highest consideration.

Han Seung-soo
Chair of the High-level Experts and Leaders Panel on Water and Disasters
Chair of the Council of Presidents of the UN General Assembly (CPGA)
Former Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea