

**Press Information Bureau  
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Ministry of Water Resources**

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**Speech of Nitin Gadkari in the International Conference on Water for Sustainable Development**

Following is the Text of speech delivered by Shri Nitin Gadkari, Union Minister for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation in the “Conference on International Decade for Action: Water for Sustainable Development 2018-28” held at Dushanbe, Tajikistan:-

Tajikistan has taken a leading role to get the theme of water at the centre of global Sustainable Development Goals for the coming decade. I am thankful to the President and the Government of Tajikistan for organizing the High Level International Conference as part of the International Decade for Action “*Water for Sustainable Development, 2018-2028*”. The topic chosen for this present Conference, “*Promoting Action and Policy Dialogue on Water for Sustainable Development*” is extremely relevant today, especially in the light of climate change. This Conference will go a long way in the development of common understanding and international dialogue on water, promote national, regional and international action on integrated and sustainable water resources management worldwide.

Water is a cross cutting element of sustainable development and for poverty eradication. It is key to food, energy and health security, and therefore it is not surprising that water is covered under many Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) including SDG 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 11, 13 and 14. There is enough water in the world, but many people do not have access to it due to problems of water management. Sanitation remains a major issue. Further, demography, pollution and urbanization are putting additional challenges on management of water. I believe that political will is extremely essential for water governance, finance and education. The key to promote sustainable water management and to explore synergies with other water related aspects of the SDGs calls for cooperation at all levels across all sectors and stakeholders including the sharing of knowledge, experiences, innovations and solutions.

The Government of India clearly sees sustainable water as a vital input for sustainable development. India has taken significant steps during the last 4 years and made sustainable development of water as one of the top priorities of the

Government of India and I will be failing in my duty if I don't mention few of these initiatives.

In the field of resource assessment, India is in the process of upgrading its water resources information and management system for scientific development, conservation, and conjoint use of our ground and surface water resources. The National Water Information Centre (NWIC) is a modern platform for assessment of surface water and ground water, flood forecasting, reservoir monitoring, coastal information management system and river basin management. India has launched an ambitious national project on aquifer management (NAQUIM) to completely map 2 million sq. km. of the map-able area of the country. The mapping is followed by proper aquifer management plan.

In the field of river rejuvenation, the Namami Gange is our flagship programme to rejuvenate and make river Ganga pollution free. We are also taking similar steps to rejuvenate other rivers to bring them to their pristine form. To increase our food grain production, India is committed to bring more areas under assured irrigation. My Government has launched a flagship programme of Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojna-PMKSY (Prime Ministers Irrigation Project) whereby we will complete 99 large irrigation projects till December, 2019 and thereby create additional irrigation potential of 7.62 million hectares. The other important objective of this programme is "Har Khet ko Pani" or provide water to every field by extending command area development & undertaking water management works. The other objective of PMKSY is to ensure 'More Crop Per Drop', through promotion of micro and drip irrigation and ensuring better water efficiency. We are also settling outstanding issues on the international rivers with our neighbouring countries and within the country, on the inter-state rivers.

In the field of drinking water, my Government is undertaking National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP) with the objective of providing adequate safe water for drinking, cooking and other domestic basic needs on sustainable basis through creation of infrastructure. The Government of India plans to achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all by 2030. Another flagship programme of my Government is Swachh Bharat Mission, which is being executed in both urban and rural areas of India, with focus on safe sanitation and aim to achieve universal sanitation coverage. This program in rural areas shall improve the level of cleanliness, solid and liquid waste management activities and make villages open defecation free (ODF), clean and sanitized. In the urban areas, Swachh Bharat Mission targets construction of 6.6 million individual house hold toilets, 0.25 million community toilets and 0.26 million public toilets. Besides, the programme aims to achieve 100% door to door collection and scientific management of municipal waste.

To mitigate against floods and droughts and to make the country water secure, my Government is committed to implement the programme for inter basin transfer of water, through the program of inter-linking of rivers. We have identified 30 such priority links to be undertaken which would add 35 million hectares of irrigated area and produce 35 GW of additional power. Under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, water conservation and water harvesting works are being undertaken by digging wells, ponds and repairing of traditional water bodies, reservoirs and canals. India is spending about USD 5 billion on water conservation across the country in around 100,000 villages.

In conclusion, my Government is taking steps for development and management of water resources in sustainable manner through improved water assessment, equitable resource allocation, improved efficiency, pollution abatement, conservation and water harvesting and providing safe sanitation.



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