



**6th WORLD WATER FORUM
MARSEILLE
12 – 17 March 2012**

OPENING CEREMONY

**Speech of Mr. Loïc FAUCHON
President of the World Water Council**

The Honorable French Prime Minister of France,
Your Highnesses,
Heads of Government,
Ministers and managers of international organizations,
Ambassadors,
Parliamentarians and Mayors
To all of you my dear friends of the Global Water Community

My dear friends, hailing from 170 countries and representing the entire world
Thank you for your attendance. Your gathering as part of this 6th Edition of the
World Water Forum embodies both the extent of the **Water suffering** and, at the
same time, your unwavering commitment to ending this suffering.

Just like those of you attending this meeting I was myself in Marrakech, on that
bright land of Africa, fifteen years ago, at the kind invitation of our Moroccan
friends, who graciously extended their hospitality to host the First Forum. There
were no more than 500 of us back then. And who, at that time, would have
believed that we would be, step by step, Forum after Forum, this many - today - to
write this **new chapter in the history of water?**

Yes, the success of this process initiated in Marrakech - (*then in The Hague, Your
Highness**), Prime Minister, Excellencies, Dear Friends - is simply your participation
today.

The success of this endeavor caught on like wildfire, touching consciences across
the globe. This irreversible momentum, has convinced policy-makers and
economic and social leaders that the future of water is already at stake today and
will continue to be so tomorrow not only from a technical, technological
standpoint but also **on the political and societal arena.**

Let us never lose sight of the fact that having access to clean and abundant water is
a dream for a significant part of the world's population.

Absence of water is tantamount to famine, malaria and millions of deaths each year;
hence absence of water is finally nothing other than modern-day leprosy.

Let us make no mistake about it, the strength and the challenges of our Forum; it is
not in this Parc Chanot and in Marseille only that they are going to be expressed.
Not even in the media which will be conveying and relaying the fruits of our hopes;
nor will it be only in the countries suffering from **water stress** that they will be
much felt. No. It is everywhere and at all times.

Truth be told, much has been done in a relatively short time. The right to water
has gained recognition, the financings are rising modestly, the governance is little

by little giving its rightful place to citizens; knowledge is shared and always better adapted.

Pumping, transfer, desalination, recycling, and groundwater recharge increase the quantities of available water, even if some continue to favor despoliation over sharing.

Access to water has increased overall, even if sanitation remains - despite your efforts, Your Highness - the neglected stepchild of this global drive.

All together, we have come a long way. And indeed, our young World Water Council has assumed its full share. **Yet water obeys to the same principles as freedoms: what use is the right of voting if we do not have the right to live. And the right to live, it s first and foremost the right to have access to water**

For yes the escalation of tensions around rivers is of concern to us all.
Yes devastating droughts is an area of common concern to us.
Yes appalling spread of shanty towns in megacities is frightful.
Yes water-related disasters are most troubling.

However, the victims are – as usual - primarily the poor. These are deprived of water, sanitation, food and health care services, but also often lack voice.

This is why I wanted us today to share a little of that voice.

Maï Walette and Sid Ahmed Ag Ahmouden, with us today, belong in the Imrad ethnic tribe and live in the Adrar of Iforhas in the North of Mali. Brother and sister, young, poor, living in an insecure region suffering permanent **water stress**, have come to tell you in their own words, and probably with quite understandable shyness - at this particular time, to speak simply about **the Hopes for Water**.

Let us welcome them warmly and listen to them with keen attention.

THE FLOOR IS GIVEN TO MAÏ AND SID AHMED

Thank you very much on their behalf; also we would like to acknowledge their conviction, emotion and yours certainly too.

Listening to them brings us back to our responsibility... and it is a weighty one. It is incumbent upon us to listen to them carefully and to put in place the necessary levers **to face this pressing need**.

There can be no development without water indeed, but not all the water should be going for the development! The entire future of water boils down to this: to ensure water sustainable; this “Water Security” is indispensable to the entire planet.

Securing sustainable supply of water is first **the security of a decent life.**

Securing access to water means **economic and social security**, to produce goods and services in a fair and incentive-based environment

The security of water also entails a more recent responsibility: **the environmental security** so as to give back to nature the water so indispensable for the preservation of biodiversity and the lives of generations to come.

This requirement for security involves inseparably water and energy, which we will have both to use less and manage more rationally.

This is why the World Water Council is calling for the guarantee of a low-cost energy, so necessary for the availability of water. Only this indispensable energy will spare us a scenario where the soaring price of a barrel would inevitably result in the lack of water in the rural areas of Africa or the slums of Asia.

This is why we call upon the States to immediately add to the core negotiations on climate change a “**water-energy pack**” to increase the financing of major water and sanitation related infrastructure works.

This water security is key among the strategic requirements for the world of tomorrow, in just the same way as those concerning all other rare resources, of the sea, chemical and nuclear security

Winning acceptance for **water security to emerge as a global priority must result from an exceptional common will of the international community**, based on the commitment of the United Nations and on the adoption of one or several international treaties, leading to implementation through national and local policies.

Through water security, we all aim to guarantee an acceptable level of growth and harmonious development.

Blue be the planet or green be the growth, color doesn't matter. What really matters is the very nature, quality and lifespan of this growth. What matters most is to be able to harness water and energy so that water is available in **adequate quantities, evenly shared, and fair, respecting both man and nature.**

To reach this, we are looking forward to the forthcoming proposals you will be making. This week indeed but also later

What the whole world is waiting for is that **after all the rhetoric; the Time for Solutions must really come now.**

Let us put life in the platform. Let us engage in an animated debate in the Village of Solutions, let's turn this village into a true palaver tree and into a beaming water melting pot.

This Village of Solutions, it is both a reservoir and a manifestation of our determination, which will remain - have no doubt - alive ever after the life of the Forum.

I am therefore making the commitment before you, on behalf of the World Water Council, to contribute to the dissemination and implementation of these solutions, anywhere they may be required.

Our second commitment is quite naturally to assume the design or the strengthening of the progress tools, embodied in the parliamentarians' helpdesk or in the Istanbul water consensus.

All of us, regardless of our perceptions or opinions, let us take pride in the cause of water in which we all believe. For this is truly a marvelous and most noble cause. Let us be tolerant and inclusive. Let us show some teeth and be demanding. Let us be ambitious and proactive.

No single person or body can claim alone the cause of water; it is everyone's cause.

To the wider world, I would say: step in, make your voice heard but also listen to what the others have to say. Let our gathering be harmonious, even in our differences, out of respect for all those who like Maï Walette and Sid Ahmed are pinning high hopes on our solutions and on our commitments to action.

Let us commit to that together... more than a mere duty, it is an obligation!

Together our voice will be heard farther, that way we will command respect.

Let this 6th Forum be a significant contribution on this path. Let us make this an active and fruitful Forum.

Nice and great forum for everybody
Thank you for your attention