



**6<sup>th</sup> WORLD WATER FORUM  
MARSEILLE  
12 – 17 March 2012**

**OPENING CEREMONY**

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**Speech of Pr. Benedito BRAGA  
President of  
the International Committee of the Forum**

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

It is for me a great honor and a pleasure to welcome you to the 6<sup>th</sup> edition of the World Water Forum in this magnificent and historic city of Marseille. The organization of this Forum was done in such a meticulous way, that even the weather was specially prepared for you.

There are a great number of conferences and seminars dealing with water all over the world. But the World Water Forum is not a week where people come just to deliver their own messages. This Forum is a process. Valuable as much for its preparation as for its holding.

The preparatory process of the 6<sup>th</sup> Forum through its four commissions: thematic, regional, political and grassroots and citizenship gathered more than 600 institutions, 160 working groups and more than 2 000 professionals that diligently for the last two years worked to produce more than 300 technical sessions, high level panels; water debates; ministerial round tables; ministerial, local authorities and parliamentarians conferences; regional dialogues; side events and cultural, youth, gender, religious and entertainment events that you will experience during the next 6 days.

The added-value of the World Water Forum comes from the multiplicity and diversity of voices expressed in its preparatory process and during the forum week. And we do count on all of you to build this multi-stakeholder dialogue, to make everybody seat around the same table because water deserves this gathering.

Water also deserves new thinking and concrete action. It deserves clear and transparent debates and adequate solutions. That is why the World Water Council, together with the French Government and the City of Marseille have designed a totally new process for this Forum. A process that emphasizes participation, interaction and that is focused on solutions and actions on the ground at all levels of decision-making.

As a process, the 6<sup>th</sup> Forum, is working in perfect alignment with the UN system to bring water into the discussions of the Conference on Sustainable Development Rio+20. We have the privilege to have with us the Minister of Environment of Brazil, Mrs. Izabella Teixeira and the UN Executive Coordinator for Rio+20, Mr. Brice Lalonde. They have confirmed the inclusion WATER as one of the 9 themes of the on-site event: Four Days of Dialogue on Sustainable Development.

Today is a day to say thank you. As some of you know, many people have contributed to the success of this event. If I would dare to name all of them, I am afraid I would certainly be lynched. However, I must pay tribute to the President of the World Water Council whose competence, dedication, friendship and support were essential for the completion of this

work. Thank you my dear friend Loïc for guiding us through this river of sometimes very troubled waters along these last three years.

I want to thank the City of Marseille in the person of Mayor Jean-Claude Gaudin, a visionary that trusted the World Water Council and its mission from the very beginning and Vice-Mayor Martine Vassal who was the driving force mobilizing the whole region of Provence and specially the youth to participate in our Forum. I want to thank the French Government in the person of Mr. Chrystian Fremont who has been always kindly available notwithstanding his heavy agenda. Last but not least, I would like to thank our Vice-President Guy Fradin and Executive-Director Jean-Marc Lacave for guiding the excellent Secretariat team at different times in the most efficient way.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Water is life. And life is like water flowing in a river. We have had during these two years of preparatory work different periods of low flows, meandering times, high flows and flooding times. However, as the river always reach the sea (provided of course that it is well managed), so we reach today the beginning of an extremely interesting event.

I wish you all a very fruitful week. Enjoy the Forum program, make new friends, and be prepared for a very innovative and forward looking Forum of Marseille.

Thank you.