

**CNIT PARIS - LA DEFENSE**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION**  
**MEETING**  
**JANUARY 17<sup>th</sup> 2011**

**6<sup>th</sup> WORLD WATER FORUM**

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**Opening address by Mr. Loïc FAUCHON**  
**President of the World Water Council**

Minister, Members of Parliament, Excellencies,

Chairman of the Forum's International Committee, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear friends of water,

We are gathered here this morning to begin a new stage in preparations for the next World Water Forum, the 6<sup>th</sup> of its kind, to be held next March in Marseille and Provence.

It is a great pleasure to see you again. You are what we call the "stakeholders". Minister, we are honoured to have you with us this morning. Your presence and your authority give even greater value to this key meeting as we progress towards the Forum.

Over and above your own personal interest in water, your presence also marks the natural continuation of President Sarkozy's commitment, which he formulated with determination at our meeting on June 2<sup>nd</sup> 2010 at the Elysée Palace when the Forum was officially launched.

Thank you for your presence, and for your support, which is not only invaluable but indispensable if we are to ensure that the 6th World Water Forum marks a significant step forward in the history of Water.

We are gathered here for the next two days to fight for a cause.

We come from various geographic, social and intellectual backgrounds.

The entire world of water is represented here in this room. Such diversity is marvellous, because our strength and our unity, dear friends, lie in our differences. Because for a long time, we have demonstrated our ability to meet and agree in order to further the cause of access to water for all. This is our *raison d'être*. Let us never forget it.

We are here because today, this morning, two billion men, women and children, perhaps three billion, did not have the good fortune of being able to turn on a tap to make their coffee or tea.

We are also here because just as many and even more human beings are denied the dignity, yes the dignity, of having access to sanitation that meets their most basic and fundamental needs.

Yes, we are also here for the millions of people who die every year from water-borne diseases. For the patients drained by the effects of malaria, caused by

insalubrious and stagnating water, for the women who drive themselves to exhaustion fetching water, as do their children, who are deprived of schooling because they live too far away from wells and water sources. Yes, we are here for them.

We are here for the farmers who will not see their cereal or vegetable crops grow because of increasingly severe droughts. We are here for the cattle breeders who are forced to move and cannot give water to their animals due to rural migration.

Yes, we are here for them and for so many others who have to search every day for sufficient, healthy water.

We don't always know these people, but they know who we are. They know we exist. They know we have knowledge and influence. They know that we have the ability to alleviate some of their suffering and solve some of their problems.

That, ladies and gentlemen, that dear friends, is why we are here. Let us not forget it during the preparation of our Forum. Let us not forget it in March 2012, and of course let us not forget it after that, as we continue to carry forth the cause of water and its just corollary, sanitation.

If we are here today, if we are fighting together for water's voice to be heard, it is because water is facing serious threats. These threats are real. You all know what they are. They are global population growth, urban concentration and river and coastal pollution. They are the demands of development in general, through agriculture and industry. They are climate change, now and in the future, and the increasingly severe consequences of water-related disasters.

These threats are a day-to-day reality and, in our work, we cannot afford to either ignore or exaggerate them. But the changes these threats impose are harrowing ones, because water scarcity is often the result of years of thoughtlessness and lack of foresight.

For decades, we have closed our eyes to the pillaging of water resources and of all rare resources.

That era of easy water is behind us. Definitely behind us. The era of unacceptable pillaging has given way to one of sharing. Progressively we will all consume better and waste less. This is our mission: to dedicate our time and our willpower to this sharing. Sharing between people of course, but also sharing between Man and Nature in order to pass on the resource our ancestors left us to future generations. This sharing must be sustainable so that sufficient, healthy water can be distributed whilst respecting biodiversity and protecting ecosystems. It must be equitable,

because nobody has the right to deprive his neighbour of the water he naturally needs. The era of confiscated water is over. We are entering the era of shared water.

Of course, we will continue to strive to bring more water to those where it is cruelly lacking. Human genius is at work, to build a world where fetching water will no longer be an ordeal, a world where people can drink, wash and water their crops freely every day, and more generally have access to the water resources required for development.

Pumping, storage, transfer, desalination, recycling... there are many possibilities, and fortunately, step by step, we are developing the technology that allows us to mobilise more of this resource. The World Water Council contributes to this, thanks to the skills, experience and passion of its four hundred member organisations whom I wish to thank here for their commitment.

But at the same time, we have realised that our behaviour is beginning to change. While it is essential to increase the capacity to provide more water resources in certain places, demand regulation policies will slowly become a necessity. Thanks to the efforts of many countries, and France is one of them, and also of many regions and cities, we are now on our way to managing water resources more responsibly.

Marseille, and the whole of France, beginning with its government, its elected officials, its social and business communities, scientists and academics, are all committed to taking up this challenge alongside the World Water Council, and we are all addressing this challenge together with enthusiasm, lucidity and the audacity inherent to men and women of conviction.

By joining forces and combining our skills, we are determined to organise a Forum in line with its times. A modern, open and useful Forum.

A modern Forum where intelligence meets commitments. Intelligence, meaning the latest ideas. This is the strength of the thematic process so central to the Forum. Commitments, meaning the decisions to be made. This is the reason for the political process which, forum after forum, drives action.

Our thematic priorities are divided into 15 themes, which will all guide us into the future. Little by little they must be defined in more detail and approved if they are to serve action in the future.

But the themes would be nothing without the political process, without the decisions that bind human communities at international and at local level. We must ensure that international organisations, governments, parliaments and local authorities adopt the ideas and themes and actively participate in implementing

them. Politics, and policies, get into water. “Politics gets into water”. Let us facilitate and encourage this. This will guarantee progress and ensure that decision-makers take water issues into consideration.

But a modern Forum also means an open forum, because water and sanitation concern each and every one of us and must be everyone’s business. A Forum where everyone sits around the same table in a spirit of listening and tolerance. We have already achieved this, and we will do it even better by fostering dialogue and summarising it. This is how we can encourage action and social and human progress.

We also wish to ensure that as many people as possible participate via the regional processes. First and foremost, they provide an opportunity for grassroots organisations, communities, associations, local authorities, right down to the smallest of NGOs, to express themselves and be the messengers of the poorest and the weakest, of those who are excluded from access to water and sanitation.

In addition, for this Forum we have created the Grassroots and Events Commission, which will encourage and support thousands of events all over the world, be they cultural, social, sporting, artistic or intellectual, all related to the water cause. These events will give the floor to people who mostly never get it.

A modern, open and also a useful Forum, because, over and above the speeches and statements, concrete progress must be made. This is why France and Marseille have decided to place the priority on a totally new approach: the Solutions Forum.

Each of you, each of us, will contribute to it by bringing solutions that could each become a commitment. Be they technical or institutional, financial or educational, these solutions must contribute to action. It is by coupling solutions with commitments that our efforts will be effective.

More room for the political process. A modern, useful and open Forum. Concrete solutions and commitments, for the long-term. This is how we will let the voice of water speak clearer and louder as we move towards the major events of 2012: the World Water Forum, but also the Earth Summit, or Rio +20.

Here, after the progress of 2010, we must propose the effective implementation of the right to water. A right inscribed in Constitutions, with minimum water allowances for those most in need. This right is essential for human dignity, and the time has come for it to take effect.

As the climate negotiations advance, we will continue to advocate a “water-energy” packet, because producing energy and making water more accessible are one and the same struggle. All over the world, it is always the most destitute who so cruelly

lack water and electricity. And when energy is scarce, Ladies and Gentlemen, when its price soars, access to water declines.

We need this "water-energy" packet, just as the world needs a new form of climate negotiations, striking a better balance between the fight against poverty and rigorous protection of biodiversity. In this respect, the recent summits in Nagoya and Cancun are encouraging steps.

With the effective implementation of the right to water, and energy for water guaranteed, this opens the way for innovating funding solutions, fair and transparent governance and shared and more appropriate know-how.

France and the World Water Council now stand side by side on these fundamental ideas for the future of humankind, and together they are leading a diplomatic offensive to bring more participants to the table.

Preparing this Forum is a wonderful opportunity to come together. Your presence here, from all regions of the world, is testimony to that.

With Marseille and Provence's local authorities, the competency and commitment of its NGOs and businesses, and with France's water community as a whole, thanks to the will expressed by the President of the French Republic from the outset and upheld by the Ministers involved, we will promote this positive vision of water. We will promote this collective and concrete approach, one of citizenship... a drive for Solutions.

Around this challenge, we will gather all those who believe that the Time for Solutions is here and that it is time to GIVE WATER ITS CHANCE.

Thank you for taking part. Thank you for contributing to this together.