

Loïc Fauchon's Speech during the Monitoring Side Event, 13th session of the
Commission for Sustainable Development, New York, 20 April 2005

For a simple and a well-received monitoring

Please allow me to give you my overall feeling on the question of monitoring. It's true that the concept is not an easy one. I believe that we should first make sure that monitoring does not appear as a constraint. We could speak of "ardent obligation", as we have in the past when referring to planning. This similarity to constraint is perhaps what we could criticize in the way in which this concept has often been presented over the past few years. In effect, constraints quickly become obligations, and obligations evoke just a hint of suspicion. And suspicion announces the possibility of a lack of trust.

And that's how a negative connotation was given, here and there, to an idea that we must, on the contrary, regard as positive, useful and generous. That's why, to quote a phrase heard often these last few days, we can say, "Don't be scared of monitoring." We must reflect on this monitoring procedure. Everyone should perceive it as an outstretched hand, as the expression of consideration and respect. It should be the manifestation of an interest, in the moral sense of the word. It's a call, and through that call, there is recognition.

If I insist on this point, it's because it seems to me to be one of the keys to the success of the steps that we wish to implement, here and there. In reality, the success of monitoring can only depend on reciprocal trust.

This reminds me, certainly like yourself, Minister, of the creation of Regional Audit Chambres in France. I, myself, was elected when I was 18 years old, and at first we said to ourselves "Here come the cops." And then, in time, we understood that we could have a lot to gain from being monitored.

Let's first of all figure out how to explain that. Next, I would like to express my very deep conviction that monitoring can only succeed if stakeholders in the field actively participate, after having been consulted, of course, on the monitoring methods. As I already had the opportunity of saying recently at the conference on the African facility for water concerning the efforts to be made in matters of research and development, the priority must be given to creating African research and development teams. We should do things for monitoring with the same spirit. From a certain point of view, the establishment of a monitoring procedure presents itself a little like a certification, like quality control, like obtaining the ISO 9001 or 14001. In this way, monitoring is, first of all, an observation that each stakeholder must direct toward his or her own activity and actions.

In high places, with international authorities, with donors who are legitimately concerned by objectives, transparency and proper management, it is in these spheres that we must be convinced. We cannot impose one single system throughout the globe.

We must admit that there are specificities, differences and particularities. Let's not try to build a new centralized system for statistics. Let's not lose from sight the objective, which is to help: to help those who are active, to help those who receive, but also those who accompany, those who give. We should help all of them to know if they are going in the right direction, and if not, where changes should be made.

In addition, ladies and gentlemen, Minister, monitoring isn't just figures. It is also and especially men and women who live and who sometimes die.

Finally, monitoring is also rights, institutions or even knowledge. In a nutshell, all the founding elements of access to water.

Let's give all a human dimension to all of that, put in some heart, and dare I say, guts.

I would just like to say two words on the role of the World Water Council in this domain. As you know, through our 350 member organizations, we wish to be the voice that is raised from the water family as a whole. The voice that speaks to decision-makers, to those that finance, to those that legislate, that organize and that teach.

As President of the World Water Council, I would like our contribution to be concrete and sustainable. This is why we decided after the Kyoto Forum, following the innovative proposals from the President of France, to create an Alliance for a worldwide mechanism to observe water (Water Monitoring Alliance). And I thank the French government for its support and in particular, Mr. Lepeltier, the Minister of Ecology, present here today.

What is this Alliance? I would like you to consider it to be a tool, a tool for progress, to count, to analyse monitoring systems that already exist.

It's a simple platform for exchange, benefiting from an Internet site that I invite you to discover today and to which you are also invited to bring your thoughts, suggestions and proposals.

I invite you to become partners of the Alliance, in the same way that I invite you to become, if you are not already, partners and members of the World Water Council.

Loïc FAUCHON