

Dear Water Friends,

On this 22nd of March, water has its world day. A day that gives us the opportunity to reflect on solutions to be applied in order to protect it better. An essential question in a world where, today, many threats loom over water: demographic growth, urban concentration, coastal pollution, development needs or even climate projections.

Faced with increasing urbanisation, the world's cities are confronted with new challenges:

- Increasing demand for water supply and sanitation services - How to supply water and sanitation to a billion more inhabitants every ten to twelve years?
- Overuse of water resources - How can very large urban areas respond to overdrawing from their water resources?
- Worsened pollution - How to keep a large portion of megacities from become actual ticking "sanitation" bombs?
- Vulnerability to the risk of water-related catastrophes: How can cities protect themselves against rising waters or extended drought

We must answer these questions now. More than ever, our planet needs concrete and credible action. "The time for solutions" has come. This is the challenge to which France, Marseille and the World Water Council, together, will rise by organising the 6th World Water Forum between now and March 2012.

These solutions will be useful and sustainable if the commitments are strong and long-term. During the last World Water Forum, the World Water Council launched the Istanbul Water Consensus, a true commitment signed by more than 600 municipalities throughout the world. On this World Water Day, we invite you to convince cities throughout the world to sign this Consensus and to, thus, support access to water and sanitation for all.

Today, from Cape Town in South Africa, we launch an initiative in favour of the Right to water. In 2010, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution stating that the right to water is a human right. We want to go further and concretely implement this right. The World Water Council calls upon definitive actions for it to become a daily reality.

We want this right to be included in the Constitution of each State, minimum allocations to be guaranteed for the destitute. We want school building or renovation to come along with the compulsory creation of taps and sanitation facilities. And so many other initiatives that will enable so many men and women to have their dignity recognized.

Water is the first form of life. We must ensure its survival.

Loïc Fauchon
President of the World Water Council.