

CSD Side event

“Launching the Political Process of the 5<sup>th</sup>  
World Water Forum”

Introductory Speech

**“Side event on Political Process of  
The 5<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum”**

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**World Water Council**

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Dear Ministers, Ambassadors, distinguished guests, dear friends, on behalf of the World Water Council and on behalf of his President, M. Loic Fauchon, -who could not be with us today due to last minutes difficulties- I would like to welcome you all to this side event organized jointly with our colleagues and friends of the Turkish Government and of the Secretariat of the 5<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum.

As we all know, water, its conservation, its uses, will have huge consequences for human development in the coming years.

Today water is threatened more than it has ever been before. Never in human history has so much water been used and polluted. Never has the link between water and food production been so acute, never has water scarcity placed so many people at risk. Never have the threats of natural water related disasters been so high on the global agenda. We see it today in Myanmar, and we know that the poor populations will be first to suffer of expected consequences of climate change in the future.

All these threats are due to Man and his erratic behaviour making him the worst enemy of water.

In addition but also as a consequence of these problems we see everyday the consequences of the lack of safe water and adequate sanitation which affect billions of people in many parts of the world. The lack of basic sanitation is an insult to human dignity, it prevents education of girls, it has huge impacts on health and on the pollution of water resources. And polluted water kills more children and more people than most diseases.

We all know that these difficult issues will not be solved unless the entire humanity becomes conscious of them. Water requires our individual commitment and the participation of all stakeholders. But water requires also high political awareness and commitment. Because water is at the source of our life,

because it touches all aspects of our development, because its increasing scarcity makes it more and more political.

The World Water Fora have been created by the World Water Council after the Rio Summit in response to these daunting challenges. Their two main missions are precisely to raise awareness globally on the water issues and to provide a platform where the entire water community can interact and establish bridges with politicians and decision makers in order to keep water high on the political agenda.

The next and fifth World Water Forum will take place in Istanbul in Turkey, a country which as experienced for centuries the political nature of water.

This Forum like the previous ones, aims to bring together all sectors and actors of the water community to exchange, build new partnerships and interact with the political leaders in order to trigger action. It also aims to bridge the several divides that water is facing today: divides among users, divides between societies and between social groups, between young and olders, between rich and poor.

But this Forum will also bring new approaches to the water issues.

First of all, it will focus on a limited number of priority issues. 25 main topics clustered in 6 main themes have been selected and for each one the key 4-5 concrete questions that need to be addressed for a water secure future are currently being defined. Indeed we firmly believe that the context of a rapidly changing world puts on our plates new challenges, new difficulties and that good governance of our water institutions requires quicker and quicker adaptation capacity. We see it today for instance with the price of energy which ruins many efforts and significant progress made on the ground to provide access to water.

We need to anticipate the changes and the difficulties they induce if we want to reduce their impacts and especially the number of victims they will generate.

The 100 concrete questions (25 topics times 4-5 questions) which are being selected will be discussed firstly before the Forum in various meetings, through discussions in a virtual meeting space which is being put in place, and through regional processes which have started in various places. The results of the preparatory process will then be presented and discussed during the Forum. They will also feed the political process of the Forum for which major innovations are being introduced.

These innovations revolve around 3 main ideas and principles:

- First of all, focus the discussions and preparatory work around one main theme. This theme revolves around the adaptation strategies to the current global changes induced by demographic growth, urbanization, climate change etc
- Secondly, involve not only national governments but the major groups of politicians and of stakeholders in the political process. Three parallel processes are being implemented, one for national governments, one for local governments and one for parliamentarians. The idea is that these three levels complement each other.
- Thirdly we feel that the political process of the Forum is not an end in itself. It needs to be better linked with other events that are officially intergovernmental in nature such as CSD or COP of various Conventions. Preparatory activities are being initiated for instance with the Danish Government to ensure that the results on the topic "Water and climate change" can find their way into the 16<sup>th</sup> COP of the UNFCCC. With the Dutch Government on the next year's CSD meeting on agriculture.

In addition to these innovations, we are also committed to ensure a balanced representation of stakeholders in the Preparatory and during the whole process of the Forum, including in its political process (as mentioned earlier by Professor Saatci).

Dear Ministers and distinguished guests, together with our Turkish friends and colleagues, we want to have, in one year, a Forum that advances the cause for water. A Forum, where concrete solutions will be presented and discussed to improve water security on this planet.

This is the Forum to which you should bring your experience and your talents.

We look forward to working with you in the preparation of the Forum and to see you in Istanbul