

ISTANBUL 2009  
5<sup>th</sup> WORLD WATER FORUM



BRIDGING  
DIVIDES  
FOR WATER

## **REGIONAL PROCESS OF THE 5<sup>th</sup> WORLD WATER FORUM**

**26-27 February 2008, Amman, JORDAN**

**“Water Management Strategies and Practices in  
Arid and Semi-arid Regions”**

### **Opening Speech of**

**M. Loïc Fauchon**  
**President of the World Water Council**

**By**

**M. Hachmi Kennou**  
**Governor at the World Water Council**



World Water Council  
World Water Forum

Misters Ministers,  
Your Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Dear Friends,

At the Opening Ceremony of the Conference on Water Management Strategies in arid and semi-arid regions, please allow me first to greet all the participants gathered these days in Amman. It is a great honor, and a pleasure, for me to be here with you today and to take part in the opening of the First regional Meeting leaded by Turkey. Loïc Fauchon, President of the World Water Council, has asked me to represent our Council as he is unfortunately not able to attend himself, which he deeply regrets. And to thank all of you for coming so numerous.

I would like to thank the Government of Jordan for hosting inviting us today. My friend Mokhtar Bzioui, was here last year in May in Amman, representing the Council, on the occasion of the "Iraq Water Vision" Conference. And it is very positive from a global point of view, the one of the Council, to see how the countries in the region are committed to making the cause of water advance.

The theme of our meeting is of great importance for the issues concerning water resources management in Jordan, real challenge of policies for the economic development and funds of the Kingdom.

The opportunity today is to debate theses issues which arise both in urban and rural areas, as well as sharing experiences gained in the countries boarding Turkey.

Please allow me also to thank the Government of Turkey for taking the excellent initiative of organizing this meeting under its leadership. And I would like to pay tribute particularly to the Minister of Environment and Forestry of Turkey, Professor Veysel Eroglu. Thank you for your efforts and leadership, which enabled to obtain the legislative, administrative, financial and human means needed for an efficient preparation of the Forum. Thank you for your strong determination in giving to this Forum, the Istanbul Forum, a strong regional sense and spirit.

As you already know, ladies and gentlemen, Turkey has committed to organise a series of regional meetings in Turkey and its surrounding. This meeting is the first one held and as such, will be very important in providing the opportunity to all stakeholders interested in water, sanitation and development issues within the region to join the regional and thematic preparatory process of the Forum.

The Council is very proud to work so closely with Turkey for the organization of the next Forum. It is the recognition, Mister Minister, of the competencies of your country in the field of water. Turkey is what Mr Fauchon calls a "Hydro Nation", which decade after decade has developed its own expertise. We are used to say that there is no development without water and Turkey in the past has shown that it knew how to put its hydraulic potential to the service of economic growth and social progress.

Let us not overlook this constant objective: that is of making water and sanitation a top priority in the political agenda.

Water is not lacking on our earth, you all know this. But it is not always there where it is needed most. Water resources should be available anywhere it is necessary both for human development and protection of the ecosystems.

Thus, due to the current demographic growth, the unlimited pollutions, the significant climatic evolutions, or due to bad management, water is lacking here, and is too abundant there.

This situation asks us to rethink a large part of our water policies. The challenge is important and requires some urgent solutions.

If we want to find solutions at the global level, we have to focus on the stakes at the regional and local level.

This is the very *raison d'être* of the World Water Council. The Council, which was created in 1996, is still a young institution but yet, with its three hundred members, it is today a leading voice of water, recognized and listened to as such. It addresses both decision makers, to convince them that water should be awarded more priority, and the public at large, through the media, in order to make people aware that this cause is worth defending as the survival of mankind depends on it.

This task is a very challenging one but I do believe that your constant efforts and willingness will be the basis for a success.

And we can pay tribute to the organizers of this conference, and to all of you ladies and gentlemen, for gathering us today and for contributing to solving water issues in arid and semi-arid regions through concrete actions and not only intentions.

The issue of water management in arid regions, as well as other issues which are particularly relevant to Turkey and its surrounding, to the Mediterranean countries, to the Arab countries, will be at the centre of our analysis throughout the preparatory process of the 5th World Water Forum that will be held in Istanbul in 2009. And the World Water Council will be particularly attentive to what is happening at the regional level of the preparatory process, because regions are the first that will be able to bring concrete and local solutions. For this reason, we are very pleased that Turkey and its surroundings, Mediterranean countries and Arab countries have decided to work in a spirit of close collaboration and friendship to produce concrete tools and local solutions to the issue of water and sanitation within these regions. And they will receive our entire support to do so.

We would be very pleased to collaborate with all of you to have strong and concrete achievements for your region and the themes that are important to you. Your approach and experience will be very profitable to all of us, especially within the framework of the central theme of the next Forum, which is "Bridging Divides for Water".

Thank you all for contributing to the peaceful battle for water we are conducting, for water deserves extending hands, gathering hearts and merging minds, beyond the frontiers.

Thank you all for contributing to the success of the Forum of Istanbul. And thanks to Turkey for hosting this Forum and joining its efforts to those of the World Water Council to organize it in March 2009.

I wish great success to this First regional Meeting on the theme of Water Management Strategies in arid and semi-arid regions and a profound impact in the water community.

Please accept my brotherly salute and my friendly regards.