

Message on World Water Day 2005

To Whom it may concern,

Will the world survive the level of lack of concern of its people? Will we continue to be more spendthrift than frugal? World Water Day gives us the opportunity to address these questions. Here, water is lacking.

There, it's polluted. In many places, it's wasted. The resource, we can see, is not guaranteed. Many figures demonstrate this reality. Let's not manipulate them. Reality is hard enough, as is poverty.

What can and must we do about it? Persuade, convince. It is true that we do a lot, but still not enough. Insignificant. Unacceptable. Today, water and its sanitation are part of every discourse. No cooperation agency is without water on its programme. No conference is without its declaration on water. Yes, but on one side, at least 1.5 billion citizens of this world are without water or are supplied with so little and so poorly. On the other side, only 5% of public credits are devoted to this sector. As one can see, acts are very distant from words.

So, we must convince those who finance, those who legislate, those who plan and those who have the knowledge. To put it briefly, everyone here and there who decides. Those who govern both at the highest and the lowest levels.

Convince them that faucets come before rifles and that potable water is better than a portable phone. It's obvious, you will say, we already knew it. Obvious, yes; in effect, no. Those who finance must give more and the money must be better used. Those who legislate must guarantee the right to water as a recognized element of dignity for all. Those who plan must enable the best possible balance between the central government that regulates and the initiating collectivity. Those who have the knowledge must transmit it realistically and as adapted to the circumstances.

All of this, financing, rights, institutions, knowledge, constitutes the pavement of the road that leads to full access to water. We must all fight for this. Not to wage war, but to build peace, strengthen solidarity and enhance hydro-cooperation. Yes, world water day is a good opportunity to demonstrate conviction. Convince them, in other words, ourselves.

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