



WE MUST BUILD DAMS



We are being told that climate variation will dry the planet up. That is, if nothing is done. A few billion people are already suffering from acute thirst: because of little or no water, because of sources polluted either by agriculture, industrial and domestic usage, because of a lack of proper toilets and sewerage systems.

Although water and sanitation are millennium goals, they still have not become a priority. Guns, canons and mobile phones are constantly being put before drinking water.

Water is still available pretty much everywhere, on and beneath the surface of the earth; and it is available at short notice, but not always in the long run. Today, many countries – including France– have little or no means to stock water to

face the higher demands due to population growth and increasing standards of living – which both affect water consumption, especially in urban areas.

Dams are fresh water reservoirs, but they have a bad reputation. They are said to be detrimental to the conservation of biodiversity and use up valuable land. As a result, seasonal lack of water is recurrent in France. Last August alone, water usage limitations were imposed in seventy out of about one hundred French counties.

It is obvious that poorer countries are not the only ones affected: California is going through an unprecedented water crisis and is on the brink of bursting, as are literally some of its older and rather neglected dams.

Ever since ancient times, humanity has always been careful to keep its winter waters for summer needs, rainy days for days of thirst.

Our priorities for the future are twofold: we need more dams, that respect nature, are more “intelligent” and have equally-balanced purposes. And we will need many of them. We must also renew our networks, as well as our pipes that leak like old sieves all over the place and cause shameful loss and waste. Finally, we must convince the populations and younger generations to be better and more respectful consumers.

Ours is a huge program, but of compelling necessity. Our political obligation is to secure water for today and tomorrow.

Loïc Fauchon, President of the World Water Council