

OPENING CEREMONY

Speech Mr Loic Fauchon, Honorary President of World Water Council

Excelencia Presidente Pena Nieto

Senor gobernador del Estado de Puebla

Senor Presidente de ANEAS de Mexico

Estimado amigo Ricardo Olivares

Senoras y senores

Queridos amigos del agua

Es un verdadero placer y un muy gran honor de estar entre vosotros hoy en la ocasion de esta edicion treinta y una de la convencion de la Asociacion Nacional de Empresas de Agua y Saneamiento de Mexico, ANEAS.

Los vinculos entre el Consejo Mundial del Agua y Mejico son fuertes y antiguos.

En este pais, en esta ciudad que fue la capital del agua durante el cuarto Foro Mundial del agua, hemos procurado juntos un impulso duradero por la causa del acceso al agua y al saneamiento para todos.

Ademas, hace apenas tres anos, la comunidad mundial del agua se encontro aqui, en la ciudad de Mexico, para trabajar sobre el tema de la securizacion del agua, tema que luego fue incorporado en los Objectivos de Desarrollo Sostenible, NDGs en inglés, adoptados por la Asamblea General de la Naciones Unidas.

Mejico fue en el corazon de todas esas batallas para colocar el agua en el centro del debate politico.

Y, señor Presidente, Usted mismo, siempre fue a nuestro lado.

Queria agradecerle publicamente por su apoyo, su ayuda y su lidership.

Entre los primeros, Usted ha sido un gran amigo del agua.

Usted esta ahora presidiendo el Panel de Jefes de Estados por el Agua, y necesitaremos su apoyo en Brasilia, en el proximo Foro Mundial del Agua el proximo mes de marzo, para que el agua resulte reconocida como una de las prioridades del planeta.

Gracias a Usted señor Presidente, gracias a ANEAS, gracias a Mexico por su apoyo y su amistad.

Dear colleagues,

The world meets crisis after crisis.

Political tensions are permanent, military and diplomatic tensions are arising.

Climate evolutions are developing at an alarming pace.

Energy, water, health and food are also in continuous crisis. Billions of people all over the world are suffering the accumulated effects of these strong and repeated crisis.

As our economies and societies become more and more interdependent, as demographic growth and urbanisation reach unprecedented levels, as news spread over faster, as people hopes for a better quality of life are raising, this suffering has become more intense and more brutal for billions of people.

And at the same time, it also strengthens calls for peace and human dignity.

Peace and dignity and a fairer world, in the long term, depend on two things – access to development opportunities and the need to protect the natural world. To develop and protect nature we need to act with mutual respect and find a sustainable balance between the use of our increasingly coveted natural resources and the need to protect them.

Water is a scarce and coveted resource.

And it has become a rare commodity, in terms of both quantity and quality. Due to our domestic, industrial and agricultural uses of water, even when it is an environment-friendly use, water in our rivers, boreholes, water tables, dams and reservoirs is rapidly being depleted.

As the demand for water increases, supply is stagnating. At global and local scale.

Our lives depend on the availability of water. If we fail to manage its availability, we condemn entire populations to being excluded from development and enjoyment of fundamental human rights.

Collectively and individually, this is our responsibility, or rather, these are our responsibilities.

We must ensure water security, worldwide,

For Us All and By Us All.

To secure water use, we have to find the right balance between Water Now and Water in the Future.

But we have also to find a successful balance between water for development and water for nature conservation.

Securing resources means finding the additional water resources needed for this new demand and restore this balance.

With these emerging needs, we see that water security is now one of the key strategic challenges faced by our planet, along with climate security, nuclear security and ocean security.

Water scarcity makes human societies more vulnerable and leaves some states and communities in an extremely fragile situation.

Global water security has now become an integral part of every country national security and foreign policy. It brings us to need to develop “ Hydro-diplomacy”.

Hydrodiplomacy is the art of building peace based on this most vital resource for mankind. It should operate not only through united management of cross-border basins, but also in climate mitigation and adaptation negotiations.

Hydrodiplomacy is also needed to set up effective and fair debt refinancing mechanisms linked to water – and energy – for the world poorest nations.

However, in the last few years, we have seen that governments no longer have a monopoly on such a strategic vision. Ensuring water security, for the present and, above all, for the future, will be in the hands of parliaments, local authorities and user communities.

This is because the best people to ensure water security are, as always, those closest to the ground who can state the rights and duties of all, with a careful eye on ethics and transparency in political action.

The right to water, so easily proclaimed, yet so difficult to enforce, will be the common thread running through collective action and policy on water security.

As water security needs a long-lasting political action, it primarily depends on the genius of mankind and our permanent capacity to innovate and discover new solutions.

We are obviously talking about technologic solutions.

Tomorrow we shall be obliged to pump deeper, to transfer further, to store more safely and to treat more efficiently.

Tomorrow we will benefit from new technical solutions, that are more respectful for ecosystems and biodiversity and costless in energy. Such as desalination and reuse of waste water.

It is a great fresh-water resource for agriculture and industry.

And it is the actual subject of your convention : Waste Water, Potential Resource.

As a matter of fact, most of human activities produce waste water with an increasing polluting charge all over the world.

Recycled waste water is the only resource capable of increasing along with needs.

Let me define Reuse with precision. Reusing waste water is being able to treat polluted water with no sanitation risk, to extend the life cycle of water while preserving the global resources.

Everything is still to be done, as the global estimation for reuse is only 2% of one hundred and sixty five (165) billions cubic meters of collected waste water.

What is new in the concept of reused water is to create a secure alternative water resource which comes from the depollution treatment process to reach recycling, reuse and resource recovery.

In a word, what is new is to go from a linear economy to a circular economy.

Treated waste water will be a profitable and sustainable source for energy production and it will also provide all kinds of nutriments.

Treatments will have effects on food and sanitation security and even on mitigation of climate evolutions.

Reused waste water and desalination of briny water will be part of the circular economy in balance with the protection of natural resources and recovery of ecosystems.

This is why treatment and reuse of waste water is a precious resource at hand.

To reach the objective, our sanitation community will follow four steps :

- First, we need to prevent and reduce incoming pollutions. It means prohibition of some contaminants to avoid polluting waste water through technical solutions, but it needs above all enforcement of regulation and law.
- The second step consists in generalizing all types of waste water collection and treatment. Centralized collection and treatment of liquid waste is still the main objective, specially for industrial and commercial wastes. But for agriculture, mining, rural areas also, it will be necessary to implement semi-collective sanitation systems. These decentralized systems have proved their efficiency and are costless than traditional collective systems.
- Third, we need to adopt waste water reuse as alternative water resource. It is already the case for irrigation of farm lands. But it will be an appreciated resource also for industry and for local communities faced with financial costs. It will significantly reduce pressure on fresh water resources, recycle nutrients and may contribute to feed back water tables.
- The fourth step will be recovery of by-products from waste water treatment processes. It is a real potential new resource for energy production, such as biogas for example, or new heating and cooling systems, or electricity production. Energy recovery helps costs cuts and improves carbon-print reduction of buildings and infrastructures. Some potential resources are not yet fully exploited, as could be the recovery of nitrogen and phosphorus from waste water and sludge treatment plants. It can also be applied to rural areas in the poorer countries where primary treatment of fecal sludge and urine could be

recovered and exploited from toilet and septic systems and latrines.

Clearly, waste water reuse around the world needs technical innovation and additional financial resources.

But above all, it requires consciousness-raising among the populations and a strong political will.

And our responsibility is indeed, clearly, to create favourable conditions to convince that wastewater and sewage sanitation should not stay the forgotten child of the big water family.

To reach this objective, we must gather our strengths and lead the change.

According to studies from the United Nations, the change must be oriented towards five directions :

- First : Establish a law and regulation framework adapted to specific requirements and environment of each country.
- Second : Create financing flows through cost recovery and by similar supports as for potable water.
- Third : Reduce to a minimum any risks for humans and biodiversity
- Fourth : Gather knowledge to extend innovation
- Fifth : Make waste water reuse acceptable for populations through awareness-raising campaigns towards populations and specially the young generation.

Dear friends of Water and Reuse , such is the global context in which new potential resources like reused water can develop.

The road will be long towards acceptance of these new processes.

It is a long road too to gather children, women and men around the specific battle of access to water, to energy, to food, to health and to education.

This is the new and demanding requirement that we call the Five Fingers Alliance. Five fingers of a same hand to provide respect and dignity to the poorest, the weakest and the oppressed.

At this moment of history in this region, we do not want walls to separate and encourage hatred and rejection of difference between communities, nationalities, children, women and men.

We want walls of water to gather them, unite them and fertilize them to create harmonious and brotherly relations.

Dear friends, peace for water is peace for the world and for human mankind, awaiting for our answers to lead them towards security and prosperity.

May the walls of water that we will build together bring union to the people of our planet.