

7th World Water Forum

12 April 2015 – Daegu

OPENING CEREMONY



Speech of Mr. Benedito Braga
President of the World Water Council

Check Against Delivery

Honorable President of the Republic of Korea,
Your Royal Highnesses,
Heads of Government,
Ministers and leaders of international organizations,
Ambassadors,
Parliamentarians and Mayors,
Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great honor and pleasure to welcome you to the 7th World Water Forum in beautiful and colorful Daegu. The organization of this Forum was done in such a meticulous way, that even the weather was specially prepared for you. This is cherry blossom time! Please enjoy Korea!

I would like to start by expressing, on behalf of the World Water Council, our deepest gratitude to all our Korean colleagues for co-organizing the 7th World Water Forum. This beautiful country is by nature a friend of water, and I thank you for your continued commitment to this important cause.

I expect that this 7th World Water Forum will be a landmark in this year of 2015, when the UN system launches the Sustainable Development Goals in September and discusses a climate convention in November.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we enter this important year, let me share a viewpoint that may not be widely presented, that is: the world is getting better. In significant and far-reaching ways, the world is a better place to live in today than it was before. :

- Consider life expectancy that has nearly doubled in the past 100 years.
- Consider that since 1990:
 - 2.1 billion people have gained access to improved sources for drinking-water,
 - That the lives of 1.7 billion people have been improved by gaining access to electricity,
 - and that 200 million people have been spared from undernourishment.

In these crucial areas, the world is getting better. It is my strong belief that water is the connecting thread that makes the world a better place.

But the world is changing. It is changing very quickly, and water now represents the number one risk in terms of impact on our global society. That is why it is so important to manage this vital resource with care and wisdom. And this is why we are gathering here in this magnificent country of Korea.

There are a great number of conferences and seminars dealing with water all over the world. But, the World Water Forum is not a week where people come just to deliver their own messages. This Forum is a process. Valuable as much for its preparation as for its holding.

The added-value of the World Water Forum comes from the multiplicity and diversity of voices expressed in its preparatory process and during the forum week. And we do count on all of you to build this multi-stakeholder dialogue, to make everybody seat around the same table because water deserves this gathering.

Water also deserves new thinking and concrete action. It deserves clear and transparent debates, adequate solutions and consequent implementation. That is why this Forum utilized a preparatory process that emphasized participation, interaction that was focused on solutions and implementation on the ground at all levels of decision-making.

Today is a day to say thank you. As some of you know, many people have contributed to the success of this event. If I would dare to name all of them, I am afraid that my allotted time would not be sufficient. However, I must pay tribute to my old friend, Prof. Soontak Lee, whom played a definite and important role in co-chairing the International Steering Committee and Mr. Jung Moo Lee, Chairman of the National Committee, whose energy and leadership were fundamental for the success of this event. Thank you both from the bottom of my heart.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Water is what unite all of us Humans. Recent episodes of floods and droughts have caught the attention of laymen as well as high-level decision-makers. Let us take this opportunity to reflect on the importance of using this vital resource wisely for the benefit of Humankind.

I wish you all a very fruitful week. Enjoy the Forum program, make new friends, and be prepared for a very innovative and forward-looking Forum of Gyeongbuk-Do, Daegu, and Gyeongju in this enchanting country of Korea.

Thank you.