

**GLOBAL WATER LEADERS FORUM
10 November 2020**

Keynote Speech



**Speech of Mr. Loïc Fauchon
President of the World Water Council**

Dear President Dr Jae Hyeon Park, Dear Governor
Dear President Dr Jae-ill Byun
Dear Dr Shamila Nair-Bedouelle

Dear colleagues, panelists

Dear friends of water, from Korea and abroad

First of all let me thank my Korean friends for organizing this GLOBAL WATER LEADERS FORUM despite the difficult current situation.

And thank you for inviting the World Water Council to express its ideas with the high-level guests of the “Global water Leaders” invited to-day.

I regret that the current sanitary conditions do not allow me to be with you in Korea, your wonderful country, which welcomed me so warmly many times and organized the 7th World water Forum with great success.

Let me underline that the World Water Council has developed, for more than 10 years, with Korea a long and fruitful partnership around the concept of “green growth”. And on many occasions I have appreciated the high technological skills and wonderful know-how of the Korean specialists, who are leaders in many sectors of the water industry.

Today, I would like to share with you just a few ideas about Water Security.

As some of you know it, I have been thinking and expressing on this subject for several years, and I have now the satisfaction to note that this subject has become a worldwide major concern for global development but at the same time for nature conservation.

In the Action Group which is preparing the thematic process of “Water Security” for the next World Water Forum, the 9th one which will take place in Dakar in March 2022, more than 100 high-level organizations have decided to give priority and work on some strategic issues I would like to mention:

Implement the Right to Water and Sanitation

Provide access to safe water and sanitation in emergency situations

Improve water quality and waste management

Reduce water-related illness and deaths

Protect and restore ecosystems and forests, including coastal and marine impacts, and combat desertification

Halt the loss of aquatic biodiversity and invasive species in water ecosystems

Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate change and water-related disasters

All these subjects are accurate, complex, and they have been identified to give a special impulse for the progress of water security.

But my real concern is wider, more political, more social.

How to secure access to water AND sanitation for all ?

How to secure access to water for Man and for Nature ?

How to secure sustainable and equitable development, and peace for the planet ?

Our world is thirsty, hungry, ill, and poor.

Energy and water are becoming increasingly scarce or erratic resources. People are facing growing threats to their health, as well as vital food supplies. Billions of people all over the world are suffering the accumulated effects of many types of crises.

Due to demographic growth and uncontrolled urbanization, suffering is becoming more intense and more brutal.

And at the same time, there is a new consciousness about the necessary environmental approach.

Peace and dignity, and a fairer world, in the long term, depend on two elements : 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 one of these natural resources. And it has become a rare commodity, in terms of both quantity and quality. Due to our careless domestic, industrial and agricultural uses of water, resources in our rivers, boreholes, water tables, dams and reservoirs are under pressure and rapidly being depleted.

Water security is first of all a question of balance between supply and demand :

As the demand for water increases, supply is insufficient.

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 equitable enjoyment of fundamental human rights.

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

We must remember to ensure water security, worldwide, For Us All, and By Us All.

To secure water use, we have to find the right approach between “Water Now and Water for the Future”. Securing resources means finding the additional water resources needed to meet demand and respect the balance.

To achieve all this, we can rely on human engineering and the ability to constantly innovate and come up with new solutions.

This begins with technical solutions. In the future, we will need to drill for water more deeply, transport it over longer distances, store it for longer and purify it more efficiently.

We will develop new, cheaper and more advanced solutions, such as the wider use of desalination and wastewater reuse.

Technological innovation will enable us to speed up the progress of new, smarter, more efficient, more environment-friendly, more sustainable, and fairer solutions.

Digital innovation will be also bring a better future for water security. For example, digital technologies range from, sensors, remote controls, leak detection, weather forecasts, data processing, augmented reality, process optimization.

But all the technological and digital solutions will be a real progress only if they are respectful of basin water sharing, ecosystems protection, and nature conservation.

But apart from technology, there is also the need, indeed the obligation, to take political action.

Global water security has now become an integral part of every country's national security and foreign policy.

To improve efficiency, we now need to go beyond the concept of integrated water resource management, which is a vertical approach to the short water cycle.

It needs to be combined with a horizontal approach, based on the fundamental links between water, energy, food, health and education, by applying the **"Five Fingers Alliance" concept**.

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.

Everybody knows that the days of easy water are gone.

We must build to ensure that every drop of water is useful for these basic needs.

Water is not one Sustainable Development Goal among 17 others. It is the most precious element that enables the future of the planet.

The World Water Council advocates to-day for four recommendations :

1. Universal right to water and access to water for all should be given a higher political priority.
2. Financing water, better knowledge and shared governance are keys to implement water priority
3. Urban and rural planning should include water security solutions as a pre-requisite for any type of project.
4. Electricity and water resources should both be approached as renewable resources.

For example water recycling and re-use should enter in our legal portfolio.

We are on the road to the 9th World Water Forum which will be held in march 2022 in Dakar, co-organized by the World Water Council and the State of Senegal.

You are my dear colleagues, all of you, global leaders and high-level decision-makers. I invite you to seize this opportunity to work together during the World Water Forum preparation process. Together we shall bring joint solutions and give answers and responses to the world, as populations need to see a change in their daily life.

It is an emergency ! It is our duty ! It is our responsibility !

Thank you for your attention