



Opening session

World Water Day Celebration 22 March 2021

"On the road to the 9th World Water Forum

Webinar organized by the Republic of Senegal, the 9th World Water Forum Secretariat and the World Water Council

Speech by Loïc Fauchon

President of the World Water Council

Good morning Mr. Minister,

Dear colleagues from the African Development Bank, OMVS, IFAD and UN-Water, representatives of international and regional institutions, the Secretariat of the 9th Forum, ladies and gentlemen, participants and listeners of this webinar,

And my special greetings go to you Mr. Thiam, Minister of Water and Sanitation of Senegal, who, with your team, have organized this event, in collaboration with the World Water Council.

Dear friends of water,

We are here today for two reasons. It is World Water Day, but also because of the proximity of the 9th World Water Forum, which will be held almost on the same day in a year's time.

I would like to thank our Senegalese friends once again for organizing this celebration.

Through these two facts, World Water Day and the proximity of the 9th World Water Forum, we can see that water is at the heart of our daily lives. In fact, it is every day that we should celebrate the values and virtues of water.



And during the coming year, it is every day that we will say how important it is for water, for the planet, to have this great gathering of women and men. But also the great gathering of ideas and actions that Senegal and the World Water Council are bringing together through the next Forum.

What really brings us together, dear friends, is the future of water, the future of global water, the future of African water, the future of Senegalese water. Together we are responsible for water in all its forms, water from above and water from below, the water of today and the water of tomorrow, the water for Man and the water for nature, the water for health as well as the water for food, the water of the forest and the water of the desert, fresh water and salt water of course.

Through all these states, we bear the responsibility for the water of the future. And this future, you see, worries us because we know, we feel, that often in many places, at many times, water is in danger.

And if water is in danger, then Man and Nature are also in great danger.

Water, whether we like it or not, has become a rare resource. And this scarcity, as we know, creates tensions, sometimes even crises. Tensions that are most often synonymous with misery and suffering. And it is our responsibility to fight this misery and suffering.

Four years ago, we decided, with President Macky Sall, to unite our convictions, our wills and our capacities, in order to give the planet water a rendez-vous in Dakar.

This should have taken place in 2021 and today, normally, it should have been the inauguration of the 9th World Water Forum in Dakar, but the pandemic decided otherwise and forced us to review our plans. It will therefore be held in March 2022.

With Senegal, with the world water community, we are working hand in hand on this priority/response pair.



One hand to understand and share the priorities of today and tomorrow. And another hand to convince people to implement concrete, equitable and sustainable solutions as soon as possible, which we call "answers" for this Forum.

Because we know that the world's inhabitants require a better quality of life, but also peace and dignity, and this means that we must give people access to harmonious development and growth, and at the same time protect and enhance nature.

The one cannot go without the other, and this is one of the messages we must convey on this day and during the coming year, in mutual respect.

And this creates an urgent obligation for us to ensure water security, which means for everyone and for the long term that we must be able to make water accessible. Water in quantity, water in quality, must be accessible to all, today and tomorrow.

In fact, securing water is simply a balanced combination of technological innovation and political will. This is why we have long been advocating the strengthening of the three pillars on which the construction of our water house is based. A house that is sustainable, long lasting, and equally accessible to all.

These three pillars are first of all knowledge, in order to be able to share innovation, because water security must take advantage of the digital developments that the world is experiencing.

This is also the example of desalination, where we share water and salt. (By the way, let's be careful with what we do with the salt).

And then there is the evolution, perhaps the revolution of the years to come: waste water reuse, which, for Africa, will gradually follow the implementation of waste-water purification processes throughout the continent.

Consequently it means that we must give the same priority to sanitation as we give to water.

But digitalization is also good for agriculture, for the citizen, for industry and for all uses of water, in order to ensure consumption

as close as possible to needs. To reduce losses and in short to reach better water management.

Finance, the second pillar of water, lacks money and money lacks water. It is a paradox, but this is what all the studies we have carried out over the last few years have shown us. The World Water Council is currently working, through a group of experts and consultants, to set up financing that is more easily accessible, “blended” and more virtuous.

We would like to find a new way of exploiting sub-sovereignty to allow large local authorities and cities to borrow directly for water infrastructures, perhaps creating taxes specifically on energy for water.

Financing maintenance is also essential, especially in Africa. Investments are to be financed but continuity of the infrastructure creates financing obligations.

And then governance, the third pillar. I'm going to express things in a “cash” way to make it perhaps a little clearer. I think that it is the end of centralism, and we must make way for deconcentrating, and decentralization of water.

The State has to show the way and make Laws, with parliaments. The Basins are there to express the community of action and the local authorities - in the case of Senegal, let me salute the mayor of Dakar - to ensure management as close to the ground as possible.

All this justifies, moreover, as Mr. Abdoulaye Sene mentioned earlier, that we set up an extremely important political process during this forum. This will not only be a summit of heads of States, even if it is the most important one, but also a ministerial process (remember that in Brasilia there were almost 150 ministerial delegations), a parliamentary process and a process for Basins.

It will also include a process for local authorities to show that we know how to bring the daily management of water closer to the citizens by expressing solutions but also by promoting transparency.

All this, dear friends, will allow to reach three objectives. First, move towards reducing tensions over water and this is obviously the step-by-step promotion of international and local hydro-diplomacy. Water must be a vector for peaceful coexistence. The example of the Senegal River and the ONVS, which has just been mentioned, is an extremely convincing and concrete proof of this.

The second objective is to impose progress on the right to water. The international right to water and its inclusion in the constitutions of States, but also the local right to water by the establishment of allocations, subsidies and facilitations for access to water for the most disadvantaged.

No more people on our planet without water. It is our goal.

And finally, we must focus on concrete action, which is what we all want. This is the very idea, the very foundation of the "responses", and Mr. Minister, I would like to congratulate you on all the efforts made by Senegal in preparing the 9th World Water Forum, which represents an exemplary co-production between the World Water Council and Senegal.

Our role and our success at the end of the Forum will be to have been able to bring together all those who make the future of water an exemplary and peaceful struggle.

See you in Dakar in one year.

Thank you for your attention.