

WD EXCLUSIVE



HYDRODIPLOMACY, DISASTER RESILIENCE, AND THE FUTURE OF WATER GOVERNANCE

In Conversation with Mr. Loïc Fauchon, President of the World Water Council

Mr. Loïc Fauchon, President of the World Water Council, is a leading figure in global water governance. With a background in political science, a distinguished career as Mayor of Trets, Chairman of Société des Eaux de Marseille, and a humanitarian through the TransSahara initiative, Fauchon has shaped policies and initiatives that influence water management worldwide. In this candid conversation with Ms. Anupama Madhok Sud, Director & Editor Water Digest he shares his insights on water security, hydrodiplomacy, disaster resilience, and the crucial role of youth in shaping the future of water.

Water Digest (WD): Having served as a mayor, led a major water utility, and chaired the World Water Council, how has your diverse experience shaped your vision for global water management?

LF: My experience comes from wearing many hats – mayor, civil servant, NGO chair, and leader of a major water company. This journey gave me perspectives beyond just the technical or engineering side, as I come from political science. Over time, I gained a unique blend of governance and grassroots insights. I believe this multidisciplinary background has been a strength and has contributed to my success, allowing me to chair the World Water Council for more than two decades.

WD: With decades of experience in both public service and international water policy, what do you see as the biggest challenges in ensuring equitable access to water today?

LF: The primary challenge is water security—ensuring sufficient water for every community, both in quantity and quality. I often summarise this with three words: preserve, reserve, serve. Preserve means safeguarding water quality and quantity, particularly as droughts, floods, and other water-related disasters become more frequent. Reserve is about managing water across seasons, years, and regions to secure supplies for agriculture, domestic needs, industry, and emerging demands such as nuclear plants and data centres. Finally, serve focuses on ensuring fair and equitable distribution so that no community is left behind.

WD: You founded the humanitarian association TransSahara to aid populations in emergency situations. How can water initiatives contribute to disaster resilience and humanitarian efforts worldwide?

LF: TransSahara holds a very special place in my heart. Over four decades ago, together with

my wife and close colleagues, we established this humanitarian organisation to deliver essential food, medical aid, education, and crucially, water to the Tuareg tribes living in the remote Sahara Desert. One of our most meaningful initiatives was the creation of “schools for nomads,” enabling children to receive an education while their families continued their traditional nomadic lifestyle.

This experience serves as a constant reminder that water issues are far more than policy discussions, they are matters of human survival and dignity. It reinforces the importance of stepping beyond conference halls to truly understand the realities faced by communities living without reliable access to water.

WD: Having promoted hydrodiplomacy and water security globally, what strategies do you recommend for countries to collaborate effectively on shared water resources?

LF: Clear and shared priorities are critical, I focus on three: water for health, water for food, water for nature. Cooperation must be fostered between regions, communities, and nations, particularly where transboundary rivers and basins are involved.

This is where hydrodiplomacy comes in. Beyond traditional diplomacy, we need dialogue —bringing stakeholders together to discuss river basin issues. Whether it is the Indus, the Nile, or the Mekong, such dialogue is vital. Hydrodiplomacy will be an increasingly important tool for peace and cooperation worldwide.

WD: Based on your lifelong commitment to water, what key lesson or advice would you like to share with Water Digest readers and viewers about the future of water management?

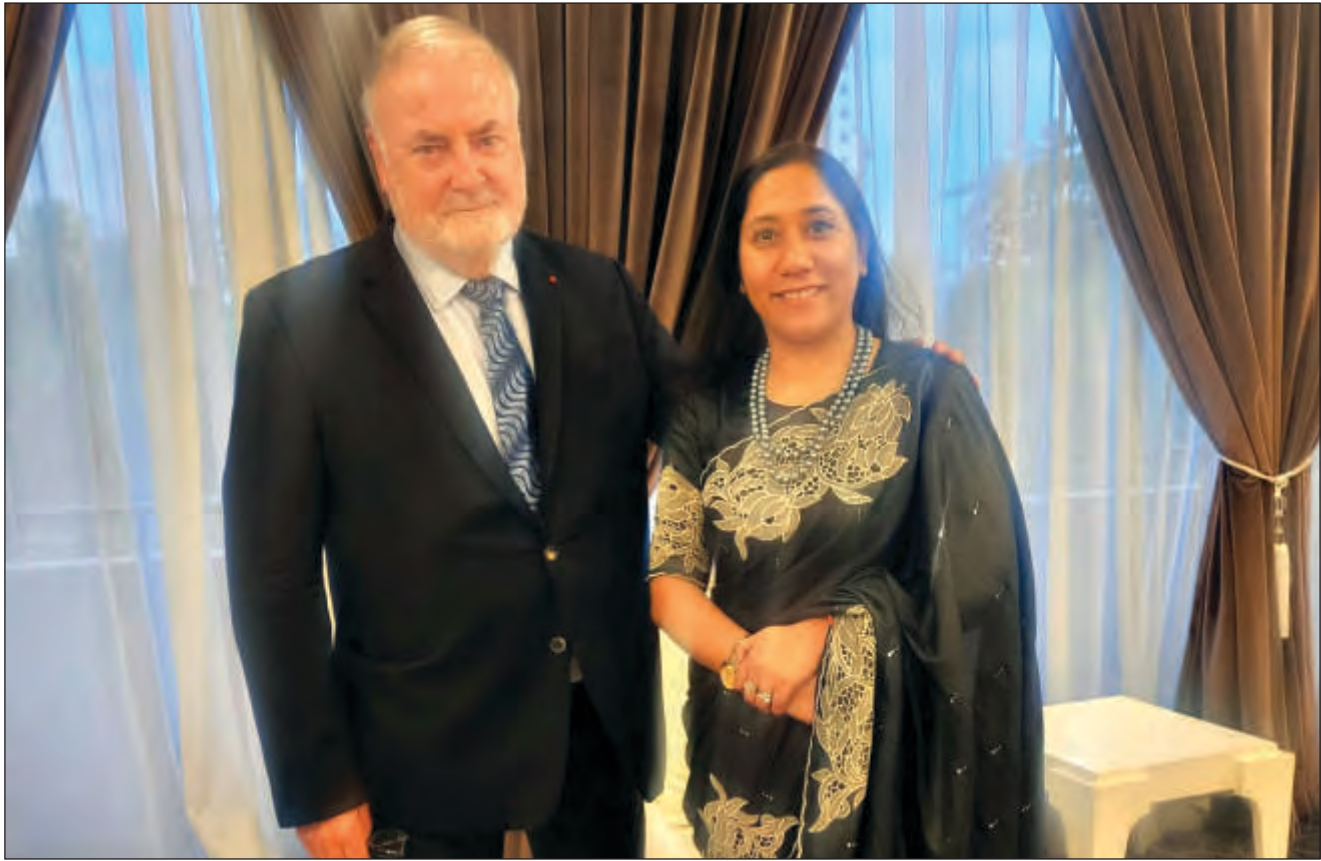
LF: Youth are central to the vision of the World Water Council. We have established a dedicated youth programme that not only enables us to share our knowledge and

experience but also allows us to benefit from their fresh and innovative perspectives. I engage with them regularly, and their contributions often stimulate meaningful and thought-provoking discussions.

We have witnessed similar progress in advancing women's participation. When I first assumed the presidency, there were very few women in leadership positions; today, we have nearly achieved gender parity. I am confident that the future will hold similar promise for

youth, provided they remain proactive and continue to bring their ideas to the table.

Actively listening to young people, encouraging their participation, and incorporating their priorities, whether focused on health, food, or nature, is essential for building sustainable water management systems for the future.



L to R: Mr. Loïc Fauchon, President of the World Water Council & Ms. Anupama Madhok Sud, Director & Editor Water Digest