



SPEECH by LOIC FAUCHON, PRESIDENT of the WORLD WATER COUNCIL  
INDIA WATER WEEK – 17<sup>th</sup> September 2024

NAMASTE

Minister Shri C.R Paatil

Distinguished Ministers, ambassadors,  
Dear Colleagues, Dear Friends of Water

I am deeply honored to be here again in India, and here today with all of you. I extend my sincere gratitude to the government of India for inviting the world water council and its president to this important gathering. India Water Week symbolizes your unwavering commitment to address the global water challenges.

India, with its rich cultural and environment diversity, is leading the way in demonstrating successful cooperation at every level. From transboundary river management to community led initiatives like the Jal Jeevan Mission and River Ganga cleaning, India sets a shining example of new partnerships which can drive meaningful change.

Ladies and gentlemen, we live in a world where so many long-standing balances are being called into question. A world that is experiencing multiple crises, while at the same time progressing through economic growth and social progress.

Yes, dear colleagues, navigating this century means traveling between war, and peace, inflation and deflation, poverty and prosperity.

After all, humans themselves generate both good and harm. And natural elements, and natural resources are the best examples of this.

All over the world today, air, fresh water, soil, rivers and oceans are heavily polluted and constitute a leading cause of death.

And in this modern world today, air, fresh water, soil, rivers, and oceans are heavily polluted and constitute a leading cause of death.

And in this modern world, where innovation is king, it is a paradox that a considerable proportion of its inhabitants have difficulty eating, drinking, caring for themselves and breathing.

Water, dear friends, water is at the heart of everything; it stimulates us, and more often than not brings us together. But “Water is under attack,” and our responsibility is to defend it, to protect it, to conserve it and to make better use of it.

And at this point, on behalf of the World Water Council and myself, I would like to share with you a few convictions that I believe should guide the actions of the water family in the coming years.

The first has to do with climate change and what I would rather call climate divagations.

Not so long ago, we tended to think of the world as divided into arid zones and humid zones. And it took us so many years in the water community to get people to admit that drought, too, was a form of water-related disaster.

One conclusion is clear: droughts and floods represent the same battle to secure water resources in terms of quality and quantity.

My second conviction, beyond climate, concerns the link between water and demography. World population growth will remain strong until the end of the century.

Regardless of the sobriety policies for the use of water and digital innovations to reduce wastage, one thing is certain: additional masses of water will be necessary and even indispensable to the survival of humanity.

An overly restrictive and unrealistic dominant way of thinking does not seem to accept that the world is developing, and India is a true example of this.

Demographers today rely on a science which is more accurate than climate

science.

Lets take the example of Delhi. The population here in the present times is estimated to be at 22.5 million, and by 2030, it is further expected to increase to 26.5 million. That is about a few million new inhabitants.

In six years' time, on the basis of domestic consumption of 50 liters per person per day, which is low, we will need an extra 240000 (200 forty thousand) cubic meters of water per day, meaning 85 to 100 million cubic meters of water per year.

We must take these figures as scales of magnitude, but can you imagine that by the end of the century, the number of inhabitants on our earth could grow from 8 to 10 billion inhabitants which is a huge and fantastic additional amount of mass of water resource, between 30 and 50 billion cubic meters more each year. Then what happens to the question of water for industry and above all water for agriculture and food production?

So, ladies and gentlemen, even if all the figures must be treated with caution, we can learn some important lessons from them.

Firstly, obviously we need to reduce our consumption per capita, thanks to technical and digital progress, which allows reasonable use of artificial intelligence.

Consequently, we will be producing more food with less water - "more crop per drop."

But in fact, we must be clear and courageous about the fact that global demand for water will continue to grow significantly until the end of the century.

Together, how are we going to cope?

We will transfer more and more water over great distances. We will make better use of our underground resources. We will desalinate more water, thanks to the widespread use of reverse osmosis, and we are going to reuse wastewater by recycling it on a large scale.

We are going to manage our essential water reserves more effectively by

transforming the old concept of dams into the concept of aquatic reserves. It is a perfect illustration of water for humans and water for nature, and a great example of nature-based solutions.

And it is my third conviction that shared innovation is not enough if we do not implement bold and sustainable institutional and financial actions.

The management of water resources should be implemented through accepted and decentralized governance which is not imposed by the central authority. To be as close to the ground as possible, through river basins and local authorities which should be able to have access to direct financing.

Our council is working on debt cancellation for water and on the acceptance of sub-sovereignty or on blended finance. This leads me to reiterate how political the water issue is: after “stop ignoring water,” we are saying to political leaders and economic and social stakeholders, “water is politics”

India, a great nation of this world needs to secure all kinds of water resources during the next decade. The solutions developed everywhere in India have the potential to contribute to shape water strategies around the world. In the spirit of solidarity with south nations, world water council places its trust in India’s role in bridging the water gap.

This role will be more efficient and successful when India’s youth will contribute in driving this change with innovative water solutions.

At the 10<sup>th</sup> world water forum, held in Indonesia this past May, I spoke about the need for all of us, and specifically the youth to become “water warriors” with a purpose. That purpose is clear, youth are the future, and they will lead this peaceful fight.

Let us not mix this opportunity and let us move forward together for the future of water. Thank you minister, thank you India for inviting us, for your hospitality. I wish you a successful India water week.

