

Loic Fauchon's speech

Dear Brazilian leaders and officials
Dear friends of Water,

Let me tell you how much I regret that sanitary circumstances do not allow us to be together in Brazil today.

It is always a great honour and pleasure to meet and work with you, the water professionals of Brazil.

Your know-how is recognized worldwide and ABES has long been a distinguished member of our Board.

Everyone will understand that I have a special greeting for Benedito Braga. He has contributed to the development and influence of the Council, before, during and after his presidency.

We live in a complex world of complicated situations which follow one another in quick succession. The very rapid circulation of information from one end of the planet to the other contributes greatly to this.

Social tensions, political confrontations, natural disasters, today everything is known, commented on, valued or criticized.

But global crises are here, pandemic and war, both of which have consequences with effects in space and time that we still cannot measure.

The principle of reality imposes itself on each and every one of us: we are committed to the course of the world, whether it will be worse or better tomorrow.

More than ever before, the condition, use and protection of natural resources will be the cornerstone of the future of this world.

And in the first-place air and water, which are the receivers of huge and terrible pollutions.

Collective studies within the framework of the Global Burden of Disease, recently published in The Lancet, put the number of deaths due to pollution at 9 millions per year. This means that air, water and soil pollutants kill three times more than AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria combined. This means that we suffer two to three silent Covids every year.

And this dramatic situation is getting worse. It is growing all around the world. Of course, these effects are concentrated in the poorest countries and regions, where 90% of the deaths due to these various forms of pollution occur.

Water pollution itself is linked with about 1.5 million deaths every year. And lead alone accounts for more than half of these deaths. This confirms a very close link between air- indoor and outdoor, land- soil and underground, and water- surface and aquifers. What can we do about such a low-profile disaster that is too often ignored by media and politicians?

It is to the credit of ABES, to which I would like to pay tribute, that this congress is devoted to the subject of sanitation for all. Water sanitation must be considered as a whole and not only as a curative act of purifying the water which has been used.

Tomorrow's sanitation will bring together all the innovations which enable the natural environment to be preserved in its initial state, in a clean condition, allowing the survival of animal and plant biodiversity. And this is true of all natural environment, whether it is air, land or sea. This is why we must already consider sanitation as an essential element of environmental policies and ecological developments.

But we must go beyond and look at water for what it is, a basic component in the air and in the earth, which will play an essential role in the survival of humanity or in its disappearance.

Humanity, as the word indicates, is first and foremost mankind. And mankind can only progress in the search for peace and the control of development. Water and air are obviously at the center of this process. This is why, four years ago, we chose "water for peace and development" as the main theme of the 9th World Water Forum, which was recently held in Dakar, Senegal.

At the opening session of the 9th World Water Forum, we highlighted four key points about water as a vehicle for peace.

The first one is water security : more water but less consumption. Technology and digital innovation will not do the job alone. Of course, we need to innovate, and keep innovating: pumping, transferring, desalinating, recycling, increasing the amount of water available. But we also need to radically change our uses, our habits and our behavior. Only then will we be able to share water for Man and Water for Nature, through Nature-based-solutions. Only then we will we be able to secure tomorrow's water through a proper use of today's water.

The second concerns the right to water, a collective and individual right which will gradually become a daily reality. We must make it "enforceable" by involving the legislative, executive and judicial powers.

The third is financial. First, cancellation of the water debt for the poorest countries and cities. Secondly, creation of a "blue water fund" dedicated to water security.

The fourth is to establish clearer and stricter rules for international mediation through good governance of transboundary basins. This will favor peace on riverbanks rather than war along rivers, through the establishment of a "Global Observatory for Water for Peace, Development and Nature".

These actions can be summarized in four words: security, law, financing, diplomacy. Through them, water should unite instead of divide.

These, dear Brazilian friends, are some of the issues I wish to bring to your attention on the occasion of the opening of this Brazil Water Week, Semana da Agua do Brazil. I would also like to express the respect and consideration that the World Water Council and its President have for you.

Desejo-vos o maior sucesso no trabalho da terceira Semana Mundial da Água do Brasil

Obrigado