

10th World Water Forum, Bali, Indonesia

Opening of local and regional authorities' day, Wednesday 22 May 2024

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



“Water is also diplomatics”, and through your various networks of cities, but also through the World Water Council, we encourage you to, if I may use this image, please, open your taps wide and contribute to the hydro-diplomacy that will help improve access to water for all and consequently share prosperity and guarantee peace.”



Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear colleagues, dear friends of water,

On behalf of the World Water Council, I am particularly pleased to take part in the opening of this "Local Authorities" segment of the political process of the 10th World Water Forum.

And on a personal level, I do appreciate it even more, as myself I used to be a "public and local servant" in the Local Authorities of the Provence region of France and the city of Marseille during many years. I also had the honor of being Mayor of a small town for over 10 years.

Dear participants in this working day, co-organized with the government of Indonesia and the various UCLG sections and affiliates, we all know the growing responsibility of Local Authorities about water management.

Access to water and access to energy are the basis of human dignity and equitable local life.

Water is suffering the effects of the many crises facing our planet. And local communities, towns and villages are affected by erratic climate evolution, urban sprawl and pollution of all kinds.

Obviously, the availability of water, in terms of quantity and quality, varies between droughts and floods, between natural disasters and man-made accidents.

We are gathered here in Bali to confront this situation and restore the right balance between water availability, human activities and respect for Nature.

Gathered to move from plundering to sharing. Thanks to your political will, your experience and your respective commitments.

Allow me to make a few introductory remarks to help set our working day on a positive trajectory.

First and foremost, let me focus on water security. It may be summarized as a dual necessity. On the one hand, to increase the volumes of available water resources and, on the other hand,



to control reasonable use and consumption. This can be summed up as “produce more and consume less”.

Water security is all too often considered to be the responsibility of the State and the River Basin Authority. This is no longer entirely true however, as cities and groups of municipalities are gradually assuming responsibility for pumping, desalination and recycling transfers.

Today, they are a key player in water security, and this responsibility is growing, along with deconcentration and decentralization.

Similarly, the right to access to water for all is a local reality. Of course, this right must be enshrined in national constitutions, but water, the common good of mankind, must become an enforceable right comparable to the right to education.

And local authorities have a role to play in this, whether it is a question of minimum allowances for the most disadvantaged, networks of fountain-taps or public toilets accessible to all.

Innovate, but also finance, because water needs ideas and determination, but also money for safety, treatment, distribution and waste-water treatment.

I hope that one day, dear friends, we will devote as much financial resources to water as we are doing to digital technology.

We need more accessible, mixed, sub-sovereign financing as well as the will to explain to our populations that water has a value and water supply has a cost, and that each family must devote a share, however small, as a contribution for its water consumption and access to sanitation.

After innovation and finance, let us focus on adequate governance. Water governance should be modern, competent, transparent and open to citizens. Close-to-the-citizens decision-making processes are a guarantee to ensure equity and sustainability and avoid mismanagement and corruption.

Yes, Ladies and Gentlemen, the role of Local Authorities is essential for the future of water. This justifies the term “Water is Politics”, because in the modern world, political life is first and foremost local.



It also justifies cooperation, exchange and sharing of know-how between cities and local communities.

Tomorrow there will be even more city diplomacy in the field of water and natural resources.

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Be assured of our support and consideration.

Good work.