



10th World water Forum Follow-up Conference

Keynote Speech by Loïc Fauchon, President of the World Water Council

Jakarta, Indonesia

02/2025

Dear colleagues, dear friends,

Here we are once again, on this beautiful land of Indonesia, to help make water a global priority at all times.

This priority is of course linked to local situations, but it is also dependent on the tensions running through the planet.

Yes, this year, the world is experiencing countless tensions. And these last few weeks have seen them worsen. Political and diplomatic tensions can lead to serious disorders. These tensions are also becoming financial, and more broadly economic. They are also a health and food issue. Disease is on our doorstep, and hunger is touching over part of humanity.

And closer to our environment, at the heart of our daily lives, the tensions are also about energy and water.

We can see that gaps are opening up. Ethnic and cultural gaps, geographic and demographic gaps. And when these gaps widen, intolerance gains ground, bringing human misery.

Yes, dear colleagues, before talking about water, I would like to tell you today that navigating this century is travelling between war and peace, inflation and deflation, poverty and prosperity. Because human beings generate benefits and harms.

Yes, this is the reason why, in the spirit of Bandung, the spirit of peaceful coexistence, the spirit of mutual respect and tolerance, the World Water Council, through my voice, is pleased and honoured to participate in our continuous and necessary dialogue.

You all can see how huge our responsibility is, to overcome selfishness and dogmatic opposition. Our joint responsibility is to clarify the issues, determine the objectives and undertake actions to make it possible to bring over the light of prosperity over the world.



Together, Indonesia and the World Water Council, we have chosen to place the 10th World water Forum under the banner of water security for shared prosperity. As you all know, water is the very essence of life. It irrigates our fields and feeds our people. It makes our hospitals safe and also supplies our factories. And at the same time, it guarantees biodiversity.

Water, dear friend, is a universal good, owned by no-one, but belonging to all. Because saving water is saving lives and bringing collective and individual prosperity.

Saving and sparing water is the most efficient way to deal with situations where humanity is in danger. I am talking about lack of water with droughts and excess of water with floods, and also about poor quality of water with pollutions.

All of this is due mainly to climate divagation, population growth and uncontrolled urbanization combined with rural desertification. All of this has a permanent impact on the global and local security of freshwater resources.

At this point, keeping the spirit of the Bali Forum and its follow-up, allow me to deliver a few messages and make a modest contribution to our work through a few proposals and commitments.

The first concerns floods and droughts. Not so long ago, we tended to think of the world as divided into dry and rainy regions. And it took us so many years to admit that droughts, too, were a form of water-related disaster.

In fact, fighting droughts, floods and mega-pollutions, are all part of the same effect.

In concrete terms, this means that freshwater supply, wastewater treatment and stormwater control are all part of the same innovative battle, with the same types of investments and the same extended need for funding. We also need to rethink the use of geographic, regional and urban planning as well as early warning systems.

My dear friends, and this is my second message, over and above climate trends, we should be more realistic and consider the increasingly strong link between water and demography.

I will give you two figures, among many others.

50 years ago, there were 4 mega-cities with populations of over 10 million inhabitants : New York, Mexico City, Tokyo and Sao Paulo. Today there are almost 50, and Jakarta is one of them.

The second figure concerns Africa, with 1.5 billion inhabitants today, 2.5 billion in 2050, and according to previsions, 3.8 billion in 2100 !



These figures should make us think. How are we going to meet the needs of our populations, not only domestic needs, but also industrial and agricultural needs?

One thing is certain: large quantities of water will be essential to the survival of many human communities.

Just imagine for a moment the tremendous question of water requirements to produce the food needed by those 2 billion extra inhabitants by the end of this century. Think at the importance of “more crop per drop”.

Obviously, we will need to produce more water and consume less. Consume less water by better managing the water cycle, thanks to digital developments and artificial intelligence. And also, of course, to be more sober and save water, particularly in agriculture.

But all this will not be enough, and this is my third message. We have to trust in the genius of human beings, scientists and engineers. Of course, we are going to increase water transfers from a rainy region to a dry one. We are going to pump deeper into the great underground aquifers, we are going to improve seawater desalination. And above all, wastewater recycling will gradually become the rule and the most economical and environment-friendly resource.

The message is loud and clear: get ready for unconventional water reuse and treat them by producing renewable energies, thanks to wind, sun, geothermal and hydroelectric power, ocean energy, bioenergy and even, for a short time when necessary, nuclear power.

This is why the World Water Council has taken the initiative of creating a “World center for unconventional waters associated with renewable energies”.

These are dear friends, the messages I wanted to put forward today. Among others.

First, a common approach to climate, then taking into account demographic and urban growth, and lastly, adopt all forms of wastewater reuse.

But messages alone are not enough: action is essential, with some priorities and important issues.

The first priority is to jointly tackle the disastrous pollution of the air, sea and fresh water, which are a danger for millions of lives every year.

The second priority concerns health, food and nature. Water for health, early detection of pandemics and water-borne diseases, and a real place for wastewater and sanitation as well as rainwater management. Then water for



food, by reducing irrigation losses and rethinking more water-efficient food models. And finally, find a better balance between water for Humans and water for Nature, through nature-based solutions to guarantee biodiversity and protect air, land and sea ecosystems.

The third priority is a human one: free the voices of young people, women and local communities. Let us hear the voices of those who are closest to the ground, those who bring new ideas and are capable of shaking up conventional speeches.

The fourth priority is, as you said in New York, Ms Reno Marsudi, “the global acceleration of SDG6 must focus on financing, innovation data and governance”.

Firstly, knowledge, by finding the right mix of human and artificial intelligence. Secondly, governance, which has to be accepted rather than imposed. Deconcentrated or decentralized governance is indispensable to secure water as close as possible to local communities.

And thirdly, increased funding. Funding which should be accessible, not begged for. This is a huge undertaking, because water is short of money, and money is short of water at the same time. We have long called for the cancellation of the water debt of the poorest countries, the introduction of sub-sovereignty, the generalization of financial aid, the creation of a global public guarantee mechanism and, more generally, decentralized financial systems.

That, dear friends, is the global outlook for water security.

As you can see, all these issues are highly political, which justifies our slogan: “Water is politics”. And we need to get politicians at all levels and in every country in the world to accept them.

And this is what justifies the existence of a water diplomacy, that I have named hydro-diplomacy. Combining political action with hydro-diplomacy generates aqueducts of cooperation, promoting hydro-dialogue between nations generates river sharing and protection of transboundary basins and aquifers.

I know we all want peace on the shores, rather than war on the rivers. Cooperation rather than confrontation, association rather than division.

This is why, after the Bali Forum, we are continuing the peaceful fight for the cause of water. This is why I said to you, and especially to the younger generation: “Be Water Warriors! “

To make the cause of water a great cause of this century, a cause in the spirit of Bandung for the peace of water and the peace of the world.