



XIX World Water Congress of IWRA

Special Session 6 Wastewater and Environmental Surveillance (WES) One Health

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Marrakech, Morocco

Good afternoon everyone,

Excellencies, Minister Ebubekir Gizligider,

As you know the current situation of the world is of great concern. Climate divagation, uncontrolled demography, anarchic urbanization, violent pollution, armed conflicts, have a significant consequence on humanities' health. Diseases, pandemics, and disasters are everywhere.

Health like water, it is not only a problem of providing safe care through doctors, free clinics and hospitals.

Human health is highly dependent on other components of our living environment: animal health (remember that around 60% of diseases affecting humans are reported to be due to bad animal conditions), but also, food safety and security (enough food, decent quality food), and spread of diseases from mosquito contamination as malaria, to bacterial and virus contamination. And finally, environmental contamination, such as air, soil, fresh and ocean waters, plants long lasting contaminants such as PFAS (substances per- et polyfluoroalkylées), heavy metals, antibiotics and micro plastics.

All these strengths clearly mean that prevention should be considered before curation. Health, like Water, is no longer a local or a national problem. Diseases do not stop at borders. We live in a global, digital and interconnected world.



Pandemics, disasters, hunger, death as floods and droughts, are deeply transboundary. So, Health, as Water, must be considered as a whole. Prevention is the only way and the most economical.

I would like to recall the work of my friends Dr. Bilge Kocamemi and Prof. Ahmet Saatci. Once again, I would like to pay tribute to them, as they were, and still are, visionaries. Long before anyone else, they understood that wastewater and environmental surveillance (WES) was a major, concrete response to the recognition and early detection of infectious diseases and pandemics.

They created a powerful tool by capturing these early signals through wastewater analysis. Without their foresight, without their work, we would probably not be here today. They deserve our respect and consideration.

And it's a great chance that Wastewater Environmental Surveillance, WES, has now been integrated into GLOWACON, I would like to thank Dr. Gawlick, Hera, and all operational teams, and more broadly, the European Union.

However, we now need to go further and faster. As has been emphasized, the issue is not just awareness, but above all connectivity. What are the main difficulties in concretely implementing One Water One Health?

The first is that we have to break down the various silos whose work is vertical but independent.

One example among many is that, for years, we have remained within Integrated Water Resource Management, denying connectivity with other subjects, and taking a vertical approach instead of a horizontal one.

Similarly, we cannot be satisfied with water, energy and food interconnexions without integrating health, nature and even education.

This is why, for many years now, we have been talking about an Alliance, the Five Fingers Alliance: water, energy, health, food, nature.



The second difficulty is that we need to make the three main pillars of the water house more solid.

First, knowledge, based on intelligence and innovation. But with vigilance, that is, artificial intelligence strictly controlled by human intelligence.

Then, governance, governance that is accepted, not imposed. Governance closer to the ground, decentralized to local and basin authorities.

And lastly, finance. Our five Fingers alliance is short of money. That's why the World Water Council is calling for the cancellation of the development debts of the poorest countries, the creation of guaranteed mechanisms and the generalization of mixed financing.

The Council's ambition is to contribute, with humility, to putting forward practical solutions and concrete responses.

This is one particular objective of the 11th World Water Forum, to be held in Riyadh in March 2027.

Through the thematic process, and notably the sub-theme: Water for Humans and Nature, we are putting forward, and you are putting forward, work and proposals. I personally pay attention to this process and invite you to contribute.

Our main joint target with SUEN is clearly to frame a One Water One Health Center as the foundation for a shared governance linking water security (preserve, reserve, serve) public health and economic competitiveness.

Be assured, dear colleagues and Friends, of our determination to place all health-related approaches at the forefront of geopolitics and what I would like to call Health and hydrodiplomacy.

The task is huge, dear friends.

Thank you for everything that each of you has been able to do.

Let's take action together.