



9TH CAIRO WATER WEEK – 25th October 2026

OPENING CEREMONY

Loïc Fauchon, President of the World Water Council

Excellencies

Mr. Prime Minister,

Mr. Minister of Water Resources and Irrigation, Prof. Hany Sewilam,

Ministers and Ambassadors,

Colleagues and friends,

It is always a pleasure to participate in the Cairo Water Week, which has become one of the world's leading events in the field of water. It is an honour, on behalf of the World Water Council, to address you during this opening session.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The world is in troubles, with numerous tensions and deadly conflicts. Diplomatic, climatic, demographic and economic\$ challenges lie ahead in an uncertain future. In a world where instabilities are becoming normal due to geopolitical uncertainties.

At the same time, contemporary history is marked by positive developments. Globally, poverty is decreasing, access to healthcare is improving, digital evolution is accelerating, and artificial intelligence is a promise to open new horizons.

But the management of the planet's natural resources remains a dark spot in this picture. It is a real obstacle for humanity. Despite the warnings, we continue to plunder Nature; the land, seas and air are becoming a little more degraded and polluted every day. The race for minerals, rare earths, exploitation of forest and fishing resources, and many others is depleting biodiversity. This relentless race threatens the survival of ecosystems.

In many parts of the world, water is in danger, whether on land or at sea.

And our role, ladies and gentlemen, is to face the problems.

The climate is in divagation, and the population is growing fast. Faced with extreme weather events, long droughts and sudden floods; faced with the uncontrolled growth of megacities, changes in food diet habits and the proliferation of consumer goods, the response required to



secure our water resources has evolved – it has changed ! And all of you here, gathered on the banks of the Nile, know this better than anyone else.

Climate and population growth require a new approach.

We know the solutions: the prudent use of deep groundwater, water transfers from one region to another, low-cost desalination and, above all, this century's water revolution, which is wastewater reuse everywhere, first for agricultural and industrial purposes, and soon for all domestic uses.

We need not go far from here to see a perfect example of this revolution in wastewater reuse. The 'Al Gabal Al Asfar Wastewater Treatment Plant', built here in the Qalubia Governorate, is a model and a true 'water recycling success story'.

Its treatment capacity – soon to be increased to 3.5 million m³ per day – serves three purposes: sanitation, energy production and water reuse.

It is a remarkable example of Egyptian expertise in producing non-conventional water by utilizing and generating renewable energy from wastewater.

But faced with the need to increase water resources – a huge responsibility – we are also faced with a pressing obligation:

To control and then reduce our consumption in all areas! To reduce consumption through better digital management of losses and leak repairs, and through technologies designed to save water in the fields, in factories and everywhere we live – on the streets, in schools and in our homes.

And we also need to reduce our consumption by changing our behaviour, by changing the way we view water, and by accepting water as a scarce resource that we should conserve on a daily basis and treat with respect in the long term.

Step by step, we will establish a new balance.

Yes, but this new balance – for tomorrow, for the future – is a mix between offer and demand, which will enable us to limit our water withdrawals by controlling our consumption. A completely different perspective is required; shifting the balance between supply and demand is a long-term endeavor that lies ahead of us, involving communication, public outreach and training, in which the younger generations will have a vital role to play.

For too long we have prioritized supply; the time has come to proactively manage demand.

We are considering a new doctrine for water use. This water doctrine will bring an innovative water order.

It means governing together the water we mobilize and the demand we control, so that we may also better conserve the water that Nature needs.

Yes, ladies and gentlemen, we are facing considerable challenges. We are accountable to the citizens of this world for ensuring water security and proper water use.

And this can be summed up in three simple words:

PRESERVE, RESERVE, SERVE.



Of course, we must preserve both the quantity and quality of the resources.

We must conserve these resources from one season to the next, from one year to the next, and ensure that one region's reserves can be used to support another. And whatever some people may say, we need more dams, reservoirs and aquatic reserves, well distributed across territories. This new generation of reservoirs will be smarter, and also more respectful of the delicate balance of biodiversity. They will secure water supply and produce energy at the same time.

In this regard, the El Tor project in South Sinai is a model. It will be Egypt's first pumped-storage hydroelectric station, which, with a dam featuring a 175-metre head, will eventually generate 15 gigawatts and provide 250 gigawatt-hours of storage capacity. This is a model for water and energy renewable equipments on the path to both water and energy sovereignty, which we must guarantee for the planet.

Dear colleagues,

Among the challenges is also the issue of water footprint: adapting crops, livestock farming, crafts, industry and tourism – in short, everything associated with excessive and water-intensive consumption.

And, of course, on a global scale, we must review, wherever necessary, the issue of food loss and waste, which spares no country, region or city. Let us remember that, in total, 40 per cent of the food produced worldwide is not consumed – that is 2.5 billion tons per year, or an average of 300 to 350 kg per person per year. This represents a significant amount of water, energy, fertilizer and seeds. This issue deserves to become a global cause to be incorporated into the Sustainable Development Goals.

Ladies and gentlemen, I have briefly outlined a few of the many challenges that the water, energy and development communities have a duty to address without delay.

And to do so, I would like to emphasize two obligations. The first is to strengthen international cooperation. We must identify, share and implement best practices and adaptable solutions across continents, and from one region or city to another. Your country, Mr. Prime Minister, Mr. Minister, your country, Egypt, has expertise; we must let it know and publicize your 'success stories'.

The second obligation is to engage young people – all young people – by listening to their relationship with water, at the same time, sharing with them experiences and expertise. Water deserves – and indeed requires – that future generations be educated and prepared to respect and value water. There is no grand vision, ladies and gentlemen – and I say this solemnly – that can be conceived without the world's youth.

So, dear friends, I wish to assure you of the full and wholehearted support of the World Water Council. We express our respect and appreciation for the work Egypt is doing on the path to water security and sharing.



I wish to express here, on a personal note, my conviction that the hydrodiplomacy which we have, step by step, designed and established will give rise to aqueducts and channels of cooperation. We all – yes, all of us – want peace along the waterways, and we reject water wars.

Our responsibility is to manage these challenges and choices for the sake of human dignity.

A water doctrine towards an innovative water order.

That is why, together with our Saudi friends and the wider water community, we are working to ensure that the 11th World Water Forum, to be held in March 2027 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, becomes a landmark event in the history of water.

Thank you, dear friend, Minister Sewilam, for once again welcoming the wider water community.

Thank you, and every success to the prestigious Cairo Water Week.