

3rd World Irrigation Forum
International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage
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Sharing water to feed the world

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President of the World Water Council

Dear Ministers,
Dear Governor,
Dear President of ICID,
Dear Colleagues,
Dear friends of water,

It is a true honour to participate in the Opening Ceremony of the 3rd World Irrigation Forum on this land of Indonesia, on this island of Bali, where men, water and agriculture have been for centuries travelling companions.

This an honour, but also a duty to respond to ICID's leaders invitation. Because your organization, Dear President, Dear Secretary General is one of the founders of the World Water Council.

I have special thoughts for ICID's esteemed leaders who have served on our Board of Governors in the recent past.

I would also like to extend my greetings this morning to all of you in this room.

And at last, thank all the authorities in this country and this province, for their hospitality, their courtesy, and professionalism.

Ladies and Gentlemen,
You know that the world is thirsty and also hungry.

Far too often it is challenged by food shortages, hunger, water scarcity, illness, poverty, and ignorance.

An important share of the world population demands that their rights are respected, and be treated with dignity and respect.

In this world faced too often by the plundering of its natural resources, and its material wealth, we want to establish with all our might a harmonious distribution between the needs for human development and the imperatives for nature conservation.

Water and food are necessary for this sharing. And irrigation is the ancient and constant link between these two basic services to human survival.

This is the challenge we are facing: which water for a world which is thirsty and hungry?

What capacity do we have in responding collectively to today's challenge, and more importantly in feeding 10 billion people tomorrow?

To begin with, let's not mistake the causes of the situation at hand. Climate evolution concerns us, but first of all, demographic growth worries us greatly.

Population is increasing, but urban concentration, changes in lifestyle and eating habits, the poisoning of land and rivers, increasing poverty and malnutrition, war and conflict, water-related disasters, flooding, but especially droughts, are all too often ignored.

Yes, water is mistreated and agriculture as well. Professional irrigation and drainage efforts find themselves undermined and sometimes demolished.

Consequently, the surface of agricultural lands and irrigated lands are decreasing globally, even if, of course, the yield is increasing to support increasing food production.

We could evoke at length all these causes and their consequences continent by continent.

But all of us want to give priority to action and to the concrete impacts it can have on the ground.

Please allow me on behalf of the World Water Council to present modestly a few remarks and suggestions as a contribution to the debate.

We should both sound the alarm and bring forth the solutions, and also initiate mediation.

Water security and land security are the same combat. Both are indispensable to guarantee future food security.

For water, thanks to technologies, we must provide greater quantities of water and ensure its quality.

But at the same time, we need to consume less. And without pitting domestic use against agricultural or industrial use.

Let us build on the three essential pillars of sound management: first, adapted and accessible financing, not endowed and not begged for.

Next, knowledge that is freely shared and not ripped away.

Finally, assumed governance, rather than imposed.

In the same way, our approaches become multi-disciplinary, horizontal and no longer only vertical through the notion of IWRM.

I'm delighted to see how attentive ICID is today to the subject of water quality, healthy eating habits and, therefore, public health.

The World Water Council, itself, advocates for a proactive link between water, energy, food, health and education, which is more solidary and transparent.

Beyond securing the resource, we maintain that sustainable advocacy should concern the vitality of rurality as opposed to what the urban world dictates.

Who ensures water and food security, if it is not the rural worlds that we overlook and sometimes look down upon?

If country folk, farmers and countryside were to disappear little by little, life on Earth would also disappear.

We need to maintain rural public services to reign in the exodus towards cities.

Let us refuse to retire those who safeguard nature.

The guardians of water and land are the first defenders of nature conservation.

Let us oppose clearly and sustainably the disappearance of agricultural spaces, as well as surface and underground water resources.

In addition, let us vote in favor of clear, reinforced and sustainable frameworks that assist the installation or continuation of young farmers' activities so that tomorrow's rural areas may thrive. It is our rural youth that will ensure food security for decades to come.

But, as was pointed out before, nothing can be done without using the digital revolution to our advantage, a characteristic of the beginning of this twenty-first century.

For more efficient drainage, better irrigation, repairing leaks, reducing consumption, we will innovate again and again.

Let us use the best of wireless networks, data analysis, the Internet of Things, every aspect of the cloud, telemetry, water-specific data, but let's also use it for sanitation, waste, air and energy management that are necessary for irrigation and agricultural production.

Let's not pass up this opportunity to harness technology to create and maintain systems that enable greater yields and better management of land and groundwater.

But, I would like to seize the opportunity of being in front of eminent experts today to raise a subject that is sensitive in most countries.

It's the subject of water conservation, for our planet is lacking water reserves. This contributes to water scarcity, to drought and to many crises, like the ones we now see in the USA, in France, in India and in so many other countries.

We need reservoirs immensely. The world changes and the concept of dams must evolve. It is no longer a question of

blocking the passage of water, but of explaining that water must be valued, maintained, restored.

These areas of conservation, or what we should call hydrological reserves, would be places of life, harmony, rebirth of biodiversity, of fauna and flora.

Let us understand how to keep rainwaters for the dry season, today's water for tomorrow's water.

Dear Colleagues, Dear friends of water,

We know that thanks to your commitment, your devotion, your expertise, your capacity to innovate, we are gathered, the irrigation community, with the food and water community.

We know that we have the technical solutions, economic and social ones, to feed the world which is to come.

But we are nothing without the political will, without the commitment of international institutions, states and local authorities.

Again and again, water is politics and we must raise awareness around the world among the political power, require from

political leaders that the real priority should be continuously given to the five fingers, water, electricity, food, health, education that I mentioned earlier.

Support and political decisions for water and food security, for the respect and development of our countryside and to maintain our farming populations.

Support and political decisions for technology and innovation serving water and food.

This is the duty of the political power to support our action to restore dignity and ensure the rights to billions of children, women and men, and promise them a better future.

Be assured Dear friends of the World Water Council's commitment and support to achieve this.

Saya berharap forum anda sukses !

(I wish you a very successful forum)

Terima kasih

(Thank you)