

**Video Speech Loïc Fauchon
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**10th Roundtable on Financing Water: Regional meeting on Africa
22-23 Novembre 2023, Abidjan – Côte d'Ivoire**

Translation into English

Dear friends of water, dear colleagues and friends from Africa,

It feels good to be with you again, even if it is through a short video message.

Allow me first of all, on behalf of the World Water Council, but also on my own behalf, to congratulate you on this interesting and efficient agenda.

And thank you for continuing our work on financing water.

Thank you to the OECD, the World Bank, the African Development Bank and the Dutch government.

I would also like to welcome the members of the Board of the World Water Council, who are here today.

Dear friends, the world, our world, is going through so many crises that put human beings under stress.

Water is suffering and all those who lack water are suffering even more. Climate divagation and population growth, combined with concentration in mega-cities, are exacerbating this water crisis and disrupting already fragile ecosystems.

Technologies such as digital technology and artificial intelligence are bringing encouraging advances. As are water transfers, the rational use of groundwater, desalination and the reuse of wastewater, to name but a few.

But innovation alone is not enough, and progress is essential in terms of governance, to deconcentrate and decentralize it. We need to find the right balance between the role of the State, the role of river basins and the role of local authorities, while at the same time distribute the population more evenly across the territories, closer to water resources.

And, of course, we need to be able to finance water. Funding for investment, but also - and I stress this from personal experience - funding for operation,

maintenance and training, the poor cousins of the current system, just as sanitation and pluvial drainage are also the poor cousins of water resources and water security.

“Water is short of money”, we are told, and “money is short of water”, we are told. Both are true.

And this statement should be accompanied by the wonderful African proverb that says “it takes a whole village to raise a child”. I think it is the same for water. It doesn't just take a village to save water, it takes a whole world.

Securing funding, yes! By making it more innovative and more diversified. Let us say that, as with water, we need to increase the volume of financing, while managing it better.

This means attracting new public and private capital, reassuring investors and mitigating risks, both perceived and real risks.

I would like to very briefly set out a few proposals, some of which may sound familiar to you, since I mentioned them at the opening of the 9th World Water Forum in Dakar in March 2022.

First of all, there is the question of debt. To get out of the debt trap.

We are calling for the cancellation of water debt for the poorest countries and local authorities. Debt threatens to create an additional global development emergency, in the same way that the pandemic aggravated the economies of countries that were already weak.

We also propose to encourage national governments to establish principles of sub-sovereignty as part of decentralisation to give local and regional authorities the opportunity, capacity and power to go to international markets for water loans.

And finally, we would like to propose a mechanism or standard for financing water projects, which would give greater value to projects that go beyond simple access to water. Indeed, investing in water will have positive and virtuous impacts on many aspects (food, health, education, etc.). And allow progress for the right to water.

I would like to take this opportunity to mention that we are now on the road to the 10th World Water Forum, which will be held in May 2024 in Bali, Indonesia.

For this 10th Forum, we have chosen a simple motto: "Saving water for shared prosperity". The obligation to achieve prosperity, peace and serenity through sharing. But to share, we must own, protect, safeguard and respect.

During the week of the Forum, heads of state, political decision-makers, international organizations, experts, academics, representatives of civil society

and entrepreneurs from all over the world will be sharing their knowledge, experience and practices on a wide range of water-related topics.

I invite you to join us on the road to Bali to continue our exchanges and discussions, prepare commitments and propose solutions.

It is high time that together we turned our rhetoric into tangible, concrete responses.

To this end, we, at the World Water Council will be paying close attention to your work and your proposals.

Thank you, especially the women and young people whose commitment is so necessary for the future of water.

We wish you every success in your work and hope to see you soon.