

**Ministerial Luncheon on Tackling Water Risks to Ensure a
Sustainable Future**

25 September 2013 – UN Headquarters, South Terrace Dining Room

WATER SECURITY IN A CHANGING WORLD



Speech of Mr. Benedito Braga

President of the World Water Council

Honorable Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations
Ministers and leaders of international organizations,
Ambassadors,
Parliamentarians and Mayors
Members of the World Water Council,
Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

I would deeply like to thank the Governments of Colombia, the Netherlands and Switzerland, UNSGAB and UN Water for hosting together with the World Water Council this important meeting during the International Year of Water Cooperation.

Water has brought civilizations livelihood, sustenance and well-being. In fact, poets from ancient China as well as from our modern era refer to water as the carrier of the collective memory of humanity. Water has been instrumental in our past development. It is equally *the* key to our future development as well to maintaining our life support on Earth, our home.

Throughout the history of civilizations water investments and actions have been primary means for societies to adapt to changing climate and social conditions; and key means to allow social stability in times of great stresses.

Solutions to finding water security in our age must become even more cooperative to capture the great soft uniting power of water to liberate humans from the constraint of poverty in ways that maintain our ecological life support systems.

This meeting is timely because it will help us create new paths to transboundary water management, and new diplomatic ways to bring the concerned stakeholders to elaborate priorities and shared commitments. It will also address the role of water in poverty reduction and in fostering socioeconomic development worldwide.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen. The world is changing. It is changing very quickly and particularly as it is facing multiple crises. Urban crisis, food crisis, energy crisis, climate crisis, financial crisis and many more. These crises are threatening a more careful handling and consequent solution of our present water problems and our capacity to reach those in need. For this reason, the elaboration of new financial models based on local realities and competencies brings us hope of a better future.

Increasing the global amount of investments for the water sector can be easily justified

by our pressing need to adapt to global changes including climate, population growth and urbanization;

by the need to have sustainable financing of our water and sanitation services and

by the opportunities that water resources development offers to reduce poverty worldwide.

The combination of these matters must help us to shape the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the Sustainable Development Goals post 2015.

In this regard, the World Water Council, advocates for global recognition of water security and its multiple dimensions as a milestone for the upcoming Sustainable Development Goals. We are already working with the Government of Qatar on water for food security in dry lands and with Electricité de France on the nexus between water and energy.

Let us build on the official recognition of the right to water and sanitation by the United Nations General Assembly, on the high profile given to water during the Rio+20 and within the Report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

Many successes have been accomplished since the launch of the MDGs as billions have gained access to water and sanitation. But the uneven distribution of water brings new challenges mainly when we consider population growth and the increasing consumption patterns of the emerging countries worldwide.

Clearly, water development and management underpin all future Sustainable Development Goals and cooperative water actions are central to this effort.

The Budapest Water Summit, co-hosted by the Government of Hungary and the World Water Council. The 7th World Water Forum co-hosted by the Government of Korea and the World Water Council are excellent opportunities to consult a large multi-stakeholder technical and political community on a set of global post-2015 goals where water should have a specific and important place.

Leonardo da Vinci said “not to anticipate is already to moan”.

In this perspective, as I mentioned before, we must develop “no regrets approaches”. In our age no regrets approaches are primary means for societies to adapt to climate and social uncertainties, regardless of the climate scenario, while maintaining the ecological integrity of our life support systems.

In many countries that suffer from low agricultural yields, the potential represented by water storage in reservoirs is tremendous, as they can provide for significant and stable economic growth. When water becomes scarce, the combination of hard and soft solutions is necessary. Storage as well as investing in new agricultural models for climate adaptation is an answer to unpredictable climate patterns.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, an enormous challenge lies ahead of us—one of creating our water future together. By taking into account the future of water, by guaranteeing its availability, we will guarantee security in many other domains. It is our responsibility, a huge responsibility, towards the generations to come.

Thank you for this opportunity and we look forward to working with you as we move toward 2015 and beyond in shaping an agenda on water that will ensure a livable planet.

Thank you.