

**6ème Forum Mondial de l'Eau  
MARSEILLE  
12 – 17 Mars 2012**

**Speeches of Mai Walette and  
Sid Ahmed AG Ahmouden**

Good morning,

I have come to talk to you today about a topic that I know quite well: water.

It is not a text that I am going to read out to you; rather I am going to tell you about our life. These words are not mine only; I have chosen them with my grandfather, the village school teacher and my sister and brother, who are also here with me.

The trip was quite long from my native region. Back in where I live, we are certainly not rich and many are hungry. We are also, nowadays, suffering from diseases and from war ...

These - you would agree with me - are a lot of problems for the very few that we have. Few clothes that are often heavily mended before they are handed down to others to wear. Too little to eat and almost the same food: millet seeds and rice. But also too little money to afford buying medicines, when we suffer from diarrhea or malaria

But let me reassure you. We have managed to retain a precious commodity: our dignity. This is where few still can mean a lot.

Today, thanks to your generosity, I have come with my brother to entertain you on water. Or rather on thirst... Do you know what thirst is? And if yes, do you remember what it looked like?

I am not talking about a dry mouth after a festive meal. No, I am referring rather to the fire burning your throat after three hours spent waiting to collect water from a well under a stifling sun.

I am referring to that terrible feeling and need to vomit after you have drunk dirty water from a stagnant pond, following the only rain in the entire season.

I am talking about that harrowing anxiety following the death of cattle after several months of drought.

I could also talk about the fear from mosquitoes and the suffering from a rainless year ...

I have not come here to bring tears to your eyes. What I am telling you about is just our reality. But since you have been saying everywhere that in Marseille, you would not only talk but finally bring solutions, we have come to collect them.

I am referring to true and real solutions, not just rhetorical speeches which are forgotten as soon as they are applauded... I am talking about acts which will ease access to water for us too ...

You claim you have solutions? Then so much the better. Bring them, but listen also to ours. And promise that you are going to commit yourself to implement them.

Promise that tomorrow, not in one hundred years from now, not even in ten years, but tomorrow, there will be no schools without drinking water taps and latrines in my country.

Promise that what you call « new energies » will drive pumps that will provide water for our families and livestock.

Pledge that in Rio too, you will make water a clear priority. And finally, when water will be available every day that we will laugh with joy and that you will shed tears of joy...

Myself, my brother and all the others back home, are relying on you.

Thank you for your kind and noble endeavors.