

Speech of M. Jean Paul COLIN,
Vice-Chair of Greater Lyon in charge of water policy

Opening of the preparatory days of the 6th World Water Forum Marseille 2012

Lyon – 30th May 2011

M. Serge Lepeltier, Ambassador for Climate Change Negotiations, Former Minister of Ecology and Sustainable Development of France, Coordinator of the 6th World Water Forum Local Authorities Political Process

Mrs. Margaret Pageler, Governor of the World Water Council, Member of the Executive Committee of Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI), Coordinator of Local and Regional Authorities Political Process of the 6th World Water Forum,

M. Guy Fradin, General Director of the Seine Normandie Water Agency, Governor of the World Water Council, Vice-President of the 6th International World Water Forum Committee

M. E. Sergul, on behalf of Kadir Topbas, Member of municipal assembly, Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality

M. Michel Dantin, President, Basin committee of Rhône Méditerranée and Corsica

M. Martin Guespereau, General Director of the french water agency for the Rhône, Mediterranean and Corsica agency.

Mesdames, Messieurs les Élus,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very happy to be present among you for these two days in preparation for the 6th World Water Forum.

I am especially happy that these meetings are taking place in Lyon, with the backing of Greater Lyon, a local authority with extensive experience in the management of water and sanitation.

We are all aware of the seriousness of the world situation as to water resources and access to drinking water.

With climate change and the recent meteorological vagaries, we can all, including we in the northern countries measure just how fragile this resource is and to what point we can in no way consider water as inexhaustible.

However, if there is a global emergency, the perimeter for action starts locally.

I. The scale of the territories is propitious to the development of effective strategies.

In a context of the growth of cities, the increasingly poignant importance of urban dynamics in national economies and international relations, **the metropolitan areas are the strategic places for the promotion of sustainable development.**

This is particularly true for the question of the water resource, for while it is the city that many of the stakes concerning water are played out, - supply, treatment, distribution, sharing, sanitation – the responses are to be found there as well since the local authorities are the main managers of this resource. The methods of governance, the scientific collaboration, the support for innovation, the possibility of proposing spaces for experimenting are just some of the means for our metropolitan areas to disseminate and have adopted rapidly the best practices.

Yet, we are forced to admit that all the urban regions throughout the world do not have the financial, technical or human means to manage this resource in the best possible way, with the terrible consequences that we know for human health and biodiversity. We therefore have a duty of solidarity with the territories and the populations from the rest of the world.

As Vice-Chair in charge of water for a local authority recognized for its actions of decentralized cooperation, I am acutely aware of this responsibility.

I am therefore particularly happy to see us all together here today to share our experiences and know-how and to confirm the progress in the commitments of the Istanbul Water Consensus.

II. The 5th World Water Forum led to the precious recognition of the importance of cooperation between territories to solve the global challenges linked to water.

It was a splendid moment which we lived through together at the last World Water Forum in March 2009.

The Mayors and local and regional councillors of highly diverse authorities, including Gérard Collomb, Chair of Greater Lyon, accepted their responsibilities and signed the Istanbul Consensus, an expression of their political determination to respond to the challenges posed by the management of water at the beginning of the 21st century.

This text is important. While it has no legal or constraining value, it has just as much force for it is based upon the commitment of each of our authorities to make this very question an absolute priority.

By signing this Consensus, **the partners recognized the urgent need to develop new frameworks for more effective action**: local and regional governments in fact depend on legal, institutional and financial frameworks, which are often far removed from the realities of the field.

In these circumstances, and confronted with the emergency, we have undertaken to do what is in our power to improve the governance of water and orient our local policies towards more sustainable management of water resources and water system and sanitation infrastructure.

The role of national governments and international institutions in the improvement of access to water is complementary to that of local and regional governments; the latter have moreover seized this responsibility and for me this is a powerful symbol.

The 2012 World Forum is equally full of promise, for all of us will be able to report of our respective achievements. This represents a great step forward and gives rise to formidable hope.

III. Greater Lyon is deeply involved in the accomplishment of the Istanbul goals.

1. A set of good practices:

Greater Lyon approaches this Forum with great enthusiasm.

Our local authority is today identified as a territory of expertise a terrain for the experimentation of cutting edge technologies, benefiting from ultramodern facilities, that foreign delegations come to visit, during the Pollutec trade show, as an example.

This expertise is also deployed through a network:

Firstly at local level, thanks to such precious partners as INSA, CEMAGREF and the GRAIE (Group of Research Rhone-Alps on Infrastructure and Water) which has contributed to structuring the Lyon's Centre of Excellence in the water domain. This synergy has helped Greater Lyon to obtain 5 competitiveness clusters including Axelera, a world cluster, centered on the chemical environment the stakes of which are strongly linked to water.

Then, on the international scale: recognized as a "Pilot city for water and health at world level" during the last World water Forum, the Lyon conurbation exports and shares its expertise in matters of engineering, with those territories which so wish. **It should also be noted that that access to drinking water and sanitary facilities is a Human Right recognized by the United Nations since July 2010.**

So as to encourage the exchange and the mutualization of best practices and successful experiments, we have also created the Water4health Forum, organized in 2008 in partnership with the Pollutec trade show and in preparation of the 5th World Water Forum, and which brought together more than 300 professionals in water, health, the city and innovation.

With the strength of these assets behind it, our local authority is working willingly in the respect of its Istanbul commitments, point by point, following each line of the strategy defined by the Consensus:

Evaluation :

Firstly, thanks to our sustainable integrated and participative approach to the management of water and sanitation: **we have defined strategic 6 orientations**, among which is to guarantee the supply of drinking water to the people of Greater Lyon, as well as fighting against pollution of all sorts and contributing to the achievement of the UNO development goals. For each of these orientations, we have established short and mid-term targets and we can measure their progress thanks to clear indicators.

Conclusion:

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Lyon metropolitan area is a land of confluences: situated at the Confluence of two rivers it has managed over the decades to take its place at the Confluence of the territories to become a liaison point between Northern and Southern Europe, a door open to the East and the West.

We would like to continue playing this role and today renew our commitment along with you.

Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome to Lyon!

I thank you.