

Foreword

See you in Istanbul

" **A**CCESS to water and sanitation for all is, today and for some time to come, an essential cause that humanity must support effectively and enduringly. France intends to participate in this action as evidenced by its policies in the field of sustainable development and protection of ecosystems."

These words from François Fillon, the French Prime Minister, are the very expression of the determination of the international community to rally its skills and knowledge to serve this cause.

Since their creation in 1997, the World Water Forums express this determination. The utility and originality of these Forums depend essentially upon their ability to engage directly tens of thousands of people in an exchange of ideas on technical solutions and best practices for improving access to water and sanitation.

The 5th World Water Forum, which will soon take place in Istanbul, is the result of an extensive preparatory process, carried out region by region and theme by theme. This work was accomplished bearing in mind two principles: bringing people together and creating continuity.

In bringing together the entire water family, without exclusion or exception, a special opportunity arises in the Forum for dialogue at the crossroads between technical and political, informal and institutional.

Continuity is needed, for today, the urgency for action, as much as its complexity, requires unremitting presence and effort. The Forum is no longer a one-week event organised every three years.

The necessity for lasting relationships and for constant communication warrants and gradually requires the creation of a permanent Forum whose activities would be organised in triennial phases established between the World Water Council and the host countries and cities.

The French water stakeholders, both public and private, local and national, have understood for several years now these two principles of bringing people together and creating continuity.

The French Water Partnership (FWP) perfectly embodies this will of presence and expression.

The work accomplished since the Kyoto Forum, already six years ago, has grown and deepened to bring the French voice of water into the international arena, as well as to local communities.

The French experience, widely recognized for its administrative and financial organization, for its linkages between public and private, for its geographical distribution of skills, is brought forth by the FWP through the legitimacy and proficiency of its members.

Thanks to their know-how and commitment, the voice of France will be loud and strong in Istanbul and afterwards, from the 5th World Water Forum to the 6th.

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Chairman of the World Water Council