

## Loïc Fauchon

**L**oïc Fauchon has been **President of the World Water Council** since 2005, having already served as its Vice-President and being one of its principal founders.

Mr. Fauchon previously worked in the French public sector at the levels of Prefecture and in Regional Assembly, before becoming Chief of Staff to the Mayor of Marseilles, France, and then Secretary-General of the City of Marseilles in charge of the city centre. He also served for eight years as Mayor of the City of Trets, France.

In 1992, Mr. Fauchon joined the Marseilles Water Supply Group as Director-General and in 1997 became its Chief Executive Officer. A subsidiary company of Suez and Veolia Water, the Group works in France and in the countries of the Mediterranean region.

Vice-President of the Mediterranean Water Institute, Loïc Fauchon also chairs the "Transahara", a humanitarian non-governmental organization which he founded more than 30 years ago, and which organizes emergency and development assistance missions mainly in sub-Saharan Africa.

**ISO Focus:** Can you elaborate on the mission of the WWC. How can International Standards contribute to meeting its goals?



**“More than 1,5 billion people lack access to safe drinking water.”**

**Loïc Fauchon:** More than 1,5 billion people lack access to safe drinking water, and almost twice that number do not have access to sanitation. In this context, the mission of the World Water Council is to advocate access to water for all, while promoting the political priority of water and sanitation.

The WWC can be understood today as the voice of the international water community explaining to decision-makers, the media, and the public at large the necessity of making water available for human development, as well as for the protection of the environment and biodiversity.

A number of international standardization projects coincide with the objectives of the WWC. The ISO standards for water services – ISO 24510, ISO 24511 and ISO 24512<sup>1)</sup> on activities relating to drinking water and wastewater services – are of course a good example, as are the draft standard on social responsibility (ISO 26000) and ISO’s work on risk and crisis management.

The WWC has a special interest in the latter, as it is part of a high level panel of international experts, formed in late 2007 at the initiative of the UN Secretary-General, to respond to two

1) The standards were developed by ISO/TC 224, *Service activities relating to drinking water supply systems and wastewater systems – Quality criteria of the service and performance indicators.*



## Striving for world water equity

major issues that arise during a disaster: how to limit the humanitarian consequences and how to ensure safe drinking water and basic sanitation. We will present our recommendations in March 2009 at the 5<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum.

**ISO Focus:** *Currently, what, in your view, are the main global issues concerning water? How can ISO's numerous standards on water issues, as well as on inter-related challenges, such as climate change, energy and nutrition, contribute to tackling these problems?*

**Loïc Fauchon:** Water today is subject to multiple aggressions, often from human beings, who can be considered water's worst enemy.

Demographic growth is a good example. Every ten years there are one billion additional inhabitants on earth – populations that settle and concentrate mainly in mega-cities drawing heavily on the available resources. A number of these large cities already suffer from water shortage, or risk doing so in the near future.

Economic, agricultural and industrial activities severely pollute the air and water affecting the health of billions of human beings. Considering the state of many rivers and underground water reserves, we can talk of “sanitary bombs” with a slow fuse, bound to blow up one day.

### Voice of the international water community

The World Water Council (WWC), with its headquarters located in Marseilles, was created in 1996. Today, it numbers approximately 350 member organizations from more than 60 countries, representing governments, municipalities, large professional organizations, development banks, associations of local authorities, UN agencies and many international and local NGOs.

### Largest gathering dedicated to water

The World Water Forum (WWF), organized by the WWC, is held every three years. The 5<sup>th</sup> WWF will be held in Istanbul in March 2009. These far-reaching events bring together the entire water family – without exception – to work on the major topics that concern water: financing, the right to water, governance, knowledge, and more.

Climate change adds to the difficulties as we are faced with growing disparities between shortage and excess of water. In response, we over-design infrastructures either to ensure access to increasingly scarce water resources or to provide protection against floods.



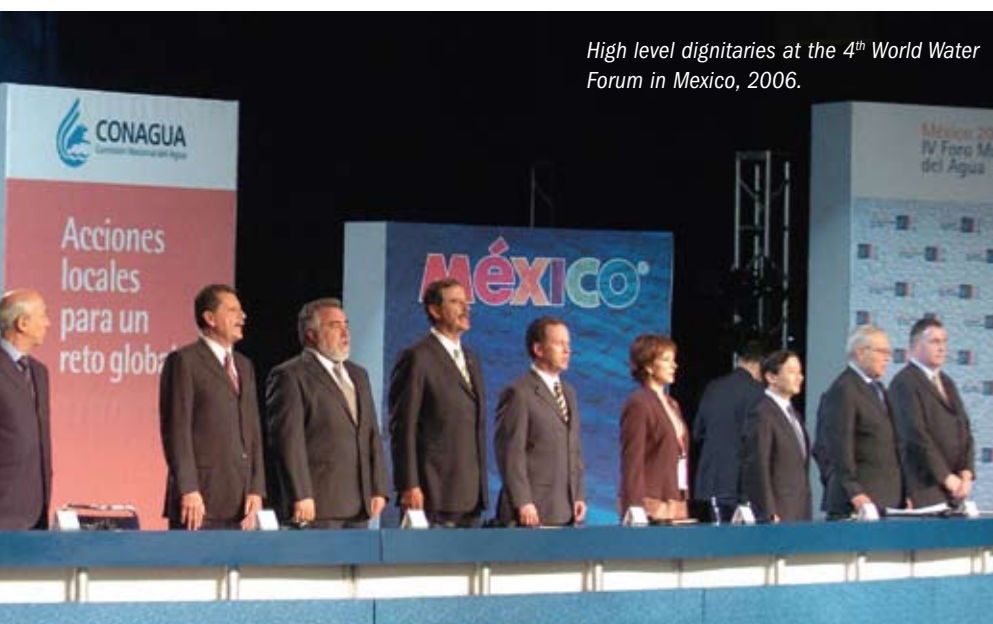
Children pumping water in China.

To this should be added waste and poor management of water. Abusive consumption, excessive watering, leaking pipes and incoherent tariff systems can also pose a serious threat to water resources.

**“The ISO/TC 224 standards service management methodology represents a key milestone for improved water management.”**

Despite this scenario, to date human beings have been incapable of establishing a new harmonious relationship with water that shows more solidarity. We know that we need to mobilize more water and guarantee its quality in all places and at all times. Scarcity and pollution are resulting in insufficient water for agriculture and industry, and in a failure to satisfy domestic needs.

High level dignitaries at the 4<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum in Mexico, 2006.



## Guest View

Furthermore, there is a lack of energy for water, which is essential to tackle these problems. Rising costs have deprived parts of the world's population of access to this vital resource. Three years ago, in the African bush or in a Pakistani village, pumping water for eight hours cost as much as it does pumping for four hours today. This is a key issue for which we need to mobilize our intelligence as well as our willpower.

Today, many areas are covered by defined standards. All the issues directly or indirectly related to water (such as water for energy, or energy for water, water for food, water for health, and many more) are affected by the work of international standardization.

The existence of common guidelines defined by these standards helps promote, through the common vocabulary they provide, the understanding of a problem as well as communication amongst different international players. This is necessary for progress in the cause for water.



The Alps.



French President Jacques Chirac speaks in a video message at the 4<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum in Mexico, in 2006.

It is also important to capitalize on the know-how and to formalize it in a “good practices guide” in the form of International Standards, thus contributing to capacity-building.

In this regard, allow me to make a link to the concept of monitoring. A few years ago, the WWC launched “the water monitoring alliance”. Its aim is to strengthen and improve the exchange and sharing of information between organizations and

programmes for the collection and dissemination of data on water, so that policymakers, the media and the general public can have easier access to information.

**ISO Focus:** *ISO has recently published a series of standards on service activities relating to drinking water and wastewater services, as well as the International Workshop Agreement IWA 6 on drinking water*

*utilities under crisis conditions. What, in your view, is the value of this work for the water community?*

**Loïc Fauchon:** Improving the governance of services in the water sector was at the heart of the decision to launch the work of ISO/TC 224, *Service activities relating to drinking water supply systems and wastewater systems – Quality criteria of the service and performance indicators*. As such, it fits in with the objectives of the international water community.

The ISO/TC 224 guideline standards have the advantage of proposing a framework which did not exist until now, and of giving fund providers the means to set the rules for water and sanitation services and thus better manage their investments.

Moreover, their proposed service management method – based on the ISO 9001 (quality management) and ISO 14001 (environmental management) standards and requiring the determination of objectives, the setting up of indicators and the measuring of client satisfaction, as well as of service quality assessment methods – represents a key milestone for improved water management.

Lastly, we need to praise the work of the committee for its diverse and positive embracement of developing countries, as well as for the universality of its applications – whether in industrialized or developing countries, or in urbanized or scattered habitat regions.

Let me insist on one parallel aspect to these remarks: International Standards definitely have a role to play along with the work of the international water community. But we must not forget that in a number of countries we cannot even talk about water and sanitation services. In my opinion, in these areas these services simply do not exist and neither do the preconditions necessary to implement standards.

*ISO Focus: The 5<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum will take place in Istanbul in March 2009. Why was “Bridging divides for water” chosen as the theme? International Standards are often seen as bridges of consensus in a globalizing world, bringing together stakeholders and countries – in this context, how can they contribute to the WWF’s goal?*

**Loïc Fauchon:** Allow me to say a few words about the World Water Forum. These events represent an important opportunity to advocate the priority that needs to be given to water and sanitation. They are not meant to be international conferences, but rather forums and opportunities open to all without restriction to meet, exchange, discuss and propose.

**“International Standards definitely have a role to play along with the work of the international water community.”**

The World Water Forum is the largest gathering dedicated to water – with more than 20 000 people, 150 ministerial delegations and 2 000 journalists – enabling all the world’s water and environment decision-makers to come together.

Each Forum has a main theme. In Istanbul it will be “Bridging divides for water”, to underline the need to overcome diverging views and share solutions

when faced with water-related issues. This theme focuses not only on the geographic crossroad that Istanbul represents – between Europe and Asia, the Middle East and Africa, the North and the South – but also on the cultural barriers that exist, the differences between traditional and modern usages, between the rich and the poor, between the developed and developing regions. It emphasises the need for better interaction and communication between the players both within the water sector and with other sectors.

Given the place International Standards hold today in the water and sanitation sector, I feel that your organization should be present at the Istanbul Forum. Your work, which today covers all sectors, can contribute to establish links and span bridges between the different domains. You are once again welcome in Istanbul to present your work, just as you did at the Forum in Mexico. ■

*Women draw water from a well in Darfur, Sudan.*

