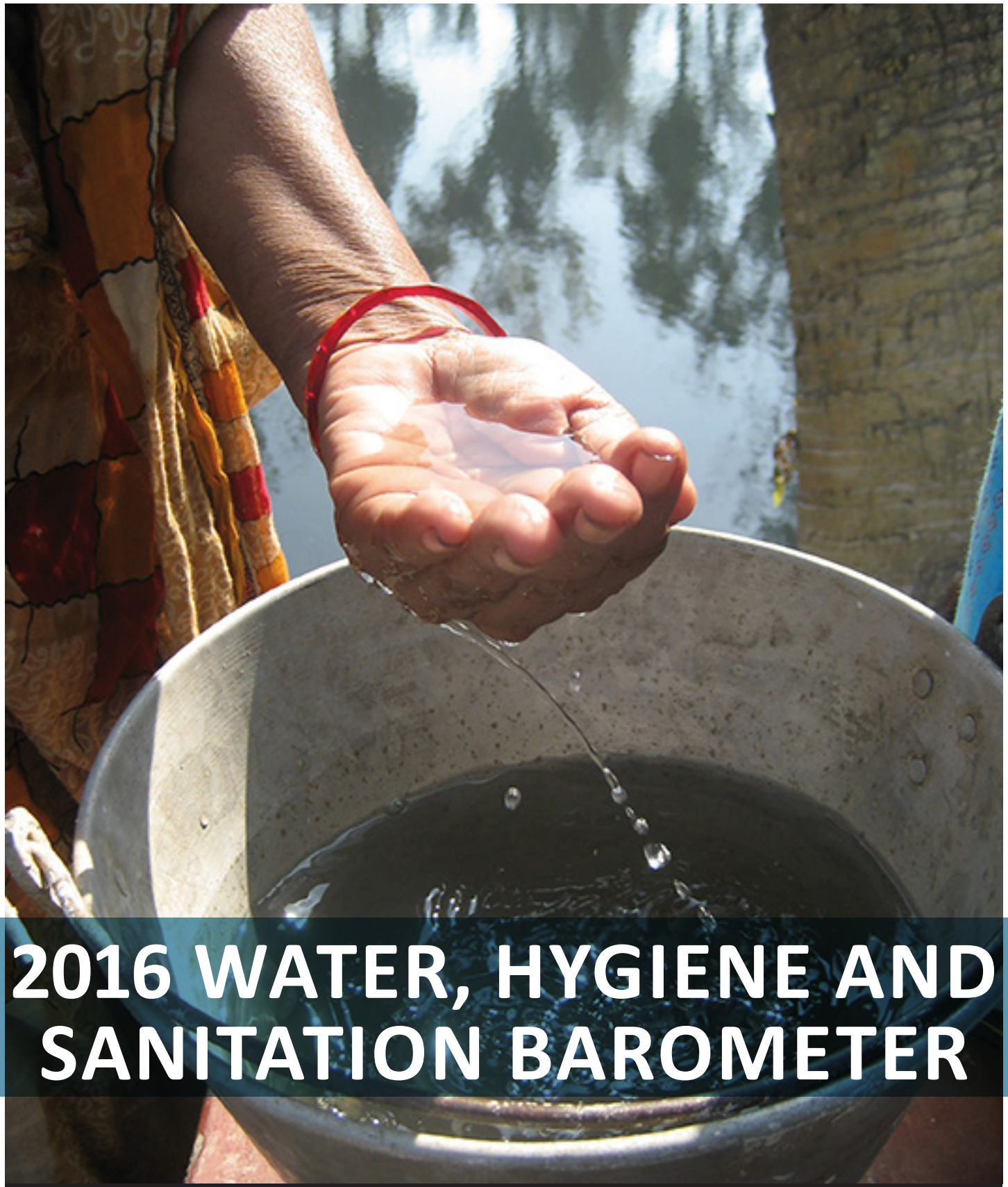

2016 WATER, HYGIENE AND SANITATION BAROMETER

An inventory of access to a vital resource #02 MARCH 2016

WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF DAVID BLANCHON | CÉLINE HERVÉ BAZIN | BRICE LALONDE | GÉRARD PAYEN | DOMINIQUE PORTEAUD | THIERRY VANDEVELDE

Taking aid further.
SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL
35 YEARS

Taking aid further.

SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL
35 YEARS

FOR THIS NEW ISSUE OF THE WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE BAROMETER, SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL ASKED BRICE LALONDE, FORMER FRENCH MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, TO WRITE THE EDITORIAL FOR THIS NEW EDITION.

EDITORIAL

Our planet has the rare privilege of having liquid water for life, indefinitely recycled, unevenly distributed, essential to life, and present in all bodies. Water is good at everything. It houses guests in its marshes, lakes and rivers. It dissolves minerals, humidifies soils, quenches thirst, irrigates crops, waters the animals, carries boats, operates turbines, cools down machines, makes cities more attractive, conducts heat, creates cold, washes what is dirty, removes waste… There is hardly any activity that doesn't need it.

Provided it is respected, nature ensures that there will always be water available on the surface of the planet. But on all continents every day of the year, it is not present, available, accessible or clean. Unfortunately, both its torrents and absences are also devastating. The rich can put up with it. The poor's lives are shattered by the violence of a flood. Their children suffer from dirty or parasitic water. Persistent drought undermines their crops and herds, threatening their survival.

Water has always been the concern of human societies, but was managed locally. Engineers and water agencies have taken over from irrigation canals and aqueducts. Hydrologists and meteorologists have widened their scope. Today, the issue of water takes on a global dimension because the amount of water available for humans is decreasing and because climate change is altering the distribution and volume of evaporation and rainfall. How does one manage water in northern Chile if one does not know that El Niño may occur?

The lamp post theory explains that we look for our keys where the lamp sheds light, but not elsewhere. This metaphor warns us on the risk of focusing on a subject at the expense of the big picture. Our world is rightly afraid of the consequences of fossil fuel combustion. It has created a scientific body on climate change called the IPCC. It conducts difficult negotiations on the issue of energy. Everything is about calories and kilowatt-hours. But there is little agreement on water, except to ask for cooperation around rivers. As if it wasn't just as important to correct the inequality of access to an element even more crucial than energy.

Yet the numbers are staggering. The sheer number of human beings deprived of drinking water is around a billion. As for purification, it is far worse. In overcrowded cities, city dwellers benefiting from the two are fewer than before. Humanity is thus threatened with a regression in its freedom and its capacity for action. This regression may impact all aspects of good water management in the service of men and nature. It could lead to massive population displacements. The emergency is so glaring, but the lamp post is defective. Although the United Nations have proclaimed access to water is a fundamental right and they just confirmed it in the Sustainable Development Goals for 2030, they have little means to boost implementation.

Yet specialists, entrepreneurs, humanitarians and developers are there. They are active, and sounding the alarm. However, politicians, investors and the general public have not yet got the message.

We should therefore be mobilising ourselves on the problem of water supply. A scientific, technical, economic and political mobilisation which we must create and lead to a successful conclusion.

BRICE LALONDE

SUMMARY

SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL

Providing emergency assistance to those affected by armed conflicts, natural disasters and epidemics, followed by early recovery assistance, has been the raison d'être of the humanitarian NGO SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL for 35 years now. Access to water, sanitation and hygiene is the focus of our teams' expertise and the projects they implement in the field. Currently present in almost twenty countries, they provide vital humanitarian aid to over five million people on the basis of their needs, respecting their dignity, and without judging or taking sides, in accordance with the fundamental principles of humanitarian action.
solidarites.org

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Press contact: Tugdual de Dieuleveult - Tel : +33 (0)1 76 21 87 11 - Mail : tdedieuleveult@solidarites.org

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Access to drinking water: an important but underestimated issue

In the context of our Water Barometer published for World Water Day, we asked the Odoxa polling institute to measure the importance of this issue for the French, but also their level of knowledge.

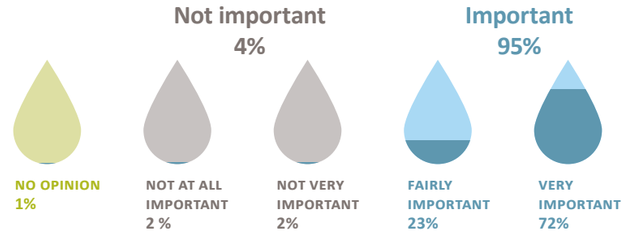
A SURVEY COMMENTED BY JEAN-YVES TROY SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL General Director
With the participation of Céline Bracq, Director General of Odoxa and Alexandre Giraud, SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL Director of Operations

2.6 million people die every year from diseases related to the water and unsanitary conditions. We as humanitarian actors lead a daily struggle against this scourge. In acting on the ground of the most severe crises, but also by allowing the public, the media and international bodies to hear the voice of those who suffer from this lack of access to drinking water and who cannot speak.

If we prepare each year a state of affairs of this vital resource, it is to better follow the evolution, achievements and obstacles, and verify that the commitments made by the international community are indeed met. In our commitment to inform the public on this issue which mankind must seize for his own survival and development, we also needed to measure its interest and knowledge. This poll has made that happen.

1 ACCESS TO DRINKING WATER: AN IMPORTANT ISSUE TO ALL FRENCH PEOPLE

In your opinion, the issue of access to drinking water in the world is...

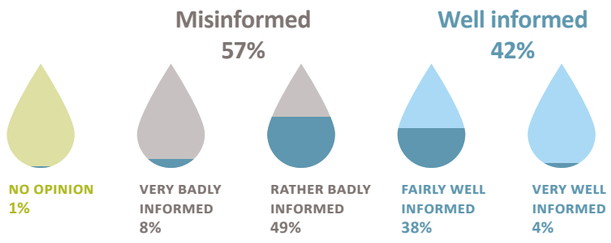


↑ Almost all (95%) French people consider that access to drinking water is an important issue

Access to drinking water is far from being a trivial issue for respondents. 95% of our fellow citizens consider it important. "*This issue is not a "*soft*" priority, says Céline Bracq, Director General of Odoxa, since 72% of the French believe there is even a very important subject. It is therefore clearly a subject, which, if it was more publicized, would retain the attention of the public. All categories of French people also overwhelmingly share this opinion, especially executives and entrepreneurs: 74% versus 62% of workers and employees, as well as pensioners (83%).*"

2 BUT 6 OUT OF 10 FRENCH PEOPLE ADMIT A LACK OF INFORMATION ON THE SUBJECT

About issues related to problems of water worldwide (access to water, diseases caused by ingestion of unsafe water...). Would you say you are:



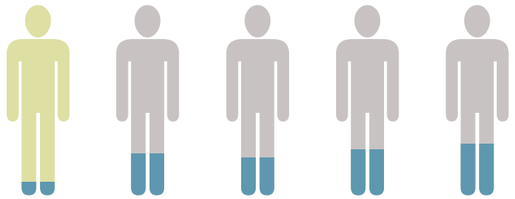
↑ But they are unfamiliar with the topic and greatly underestimate the consequences of the problem of access to drinking water...

The French public is feeling at the moment very largely ignorant on these issues. 57% of the French believe they are misinformed on these topics: 49% "*rather badly informed*" and 8% "*very badly*". Workers and employees would be the least informed (65%) and particularly workers (70%).

3 MORTALITY DUE TO WATER-RELATED DISEASES IS UNDERRATED

In your opinion, how many people die each year from diseases related to the water and unsanitary?

Average estimate
1,035,899 persons



NO OPINION 7%	-10,000 22%	10,000 > 100,000 20%	100,000 > 1,000,000 24%	1,000,000 OR + 27%

IN FACT: 2.6 MILLION PEOPLE DIE EACH YEAR FROM LACK OF ACCESS TO DRINKING WATER AND SANITATION, OR 5 PEOPLE EVERY MINUTE.

← In fact: 2.6 million people die each year from lack of access to drinking water and sanitation, or 5 people every minute.

"*In fact, the small "*test*" we this representative sample take shows that the magnitude of the issue is poorly perceived,* says Céline Bracq. *The French estimate at a little more than one million the number of people who die each year due to lack of access to drinking water and sanitation."* They therefore understate over half this dramatic consequence, since it actually is 2.6 million people who die each year because of this lack of access.
"*It is indeed difficult to us who have had running water for decades, or even for some generations, to imagine that water kills,* adds Alexandre Giraud, SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL Director of Operations. *It is less obvious to consider that this silent and invisible scourge causes more deaths than wars, natural disasters, or AIDS. These are however the dramatic findings that we get every day on the ground and we strive to share each year."*

4 DAILY DRINKING WATER CONSUMPTION: ESTIMATED QUANTITY IS FOUR TIMES LESS THAN REALITY

On average, how many litres of drinking water do you use each day?

Volume average estimate
51 litres

NO OPINION 4%	-10 LITRES 25%	10 > 49 LITRES 34%	50 > 99 LITRES 18%	100+ LITRES 19%

IN FACT: ON AVERAGE, A FRENCH PERSON USES 200 LITRES OF DRINKING WATER EVERY DAY

↑ Few of us know how much water we consume.

Finally, our fellow citizens very strongly underestimate their own consumption of drinking water. The estimated average volume is 51 litres, or four times less than the actual amount consumed by the French (200 litres)! A quarter of the French quote even "*less than ten litres*".
"*With this last question,* Alexandre Giraud continues*, we wanted to make them aware of the glaring inequality of access to this vital resource. The figures on the small amount of water to which sub-Saharan Africa has access (15 litres per day and per person) are less obvious when assessing their own consumption this wrongly."*

Finally, the results of this survey lead us to persevere in our work of information and testimony to raise awareness among the general public.
Away from our areas of intervention on which access to water, sanitation and hygiene is a vital need, this action is no less important. We hope that the general public, whether experts, already sensitized or just curious, will see this Barometer shed light, analyses and information that will help them in turn feel concerned by this great issue; a source of life and development, but also conflicts, poverty, diseases and mortality. And it will be careful, vigilant - and critical when needed - with the progress and commitments that international policy makers and water stakeholders such as ourselves must stimulate, follow and respect over the coming years.

» A Survey conducted with a sample of French people on the Internet on 11 and 12 February 2016
» Sample of 984 people representative of the French population aged 18 years and older.
» The representativeness of the sample is provided by the method of quotas applied to the following variables: sex, age and occupation of the interviewee after categorization by region and type of agglomeration.

» ALMOST 50% OF THE WORLD'S POPULATION
Drinks every day unsafe water or of dubious quality (3.5 billion people).

» 1.8 BILLION PEOPLE
use fecal-contaminated water points.

POPULATIONS WITHOUT ACCESS TO WATER LIVE MAINLY IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA AND ASIA.

» 2.4 BILLION PEOPLE
lack adequate sanitation, 1 human being in 3.

» 946 MILLION PEOPLE
defecate in the open air. A figure that has increased since 1990 in sub-Saharan Africa.

» 40% OF SCHOOLS AND HEALTH FACILITIES
in developing countries lack basic water, sanitation and hygiene facilities.

» 272 MILLION SCHOOL DAYS
are missed each year because of the lack of toilets.

THE POPULATION WITHOUT ACCESS TO SANITATION LIVES MAINLY IN ASIA, SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA AND LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN.

.

» 90% OF ALL NATURAL HAZARDS
are related to water

» 4.2 BILLION PEOPLE
have been affected by droughts, floods and storms since 1992.

SOURCE:
WHO, July 2015 / Report 2015 JMP (who/UNICEF)
Bahareh and Descroix, 2002 / CNRS
Report of the Academy of Sciences, 2006

» 3.2 BILLION PEOPLE
are affected by waterborne diseases or related to water (cf. pages 22-23)

» 1.7 BILLION PEOPLE
are affected by diarrhoea each year.

» 2.6 MILLION PEOPLE
die each year from water-related diseases and an unsanitary environment.

» 842,000 PEOPLE
die each year from simple diarrhoea

» 1000 CHILDREN LESS THAN 5 YEARS
die every day as a result of diarrhoeal diseases.

» 50% OF THE RISK OF DIARRHOEA
can be avoided by washing hands with soap and water.

» ONLY 2.5% OF WATER ON EARTH IS DRINKABLE
68.7% lies in the glaciers and 30.1% in groundwater. In the end, less than 1% of water on Earth is fresh and liquid.

» 15 LITRES
is the average water intake per day and per person in sub-Saharan Africa.
In developed countries, the average consumption reached 250 litres (United States, Australia, Japan).

» TOILETS CONSUME 4 TO 10 LITRES.

» SHOWERS AND WASHING MACHINE, FROM 60 TO 120 L EACH.

» 1000 LITRES ARE NEEDED TO MAKE 1 KG OF BREAD.

» 15,000 TO PRODUCE 1 KG OF BEEF.

» 350,000 LITRES FOR 1 TON OF SUGAR FACTORY.

» BY 2025, 63% OF THE WORLD POPULATION
will be subject to water stress.

The battle of water for life !

BY ALAIN BOINET
Founder of SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL

In humanitarian crises, access to drinking water and sanitation is vital for populations. The cause and effect relationship between unsafe water and mortality, particularly among children, states the obvious. 10 years ago, nobody talked about it. Today, we are seeing significant progress (SDGs, COP 21). But for States and water stakeholders, the challenge is urgent. It is about moving from talk to action.

PRESENT since 1980 on the ground of the most severe humanitarian crises (Afghanistan, Rwanda, Indonesia, DRC, Horn of Africa, Sahel, Philippines, Nepal…), SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL has made the fight against water-related diseases its major combat. A choice motivated by a triple observation: the vital issue of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in crisis situations, the dramatic mortality induced by water-borne diseases, and finally the fact that nobody was talking only 10 years ago about the urgency to combat this major cause of mortality.

Water and sanitation are finally a priority on the international agenda

Today, SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL is recognized as a major player in the field of access to water, sanitation and hygiene. In its actions and in the humanitarian field of course, where we bring, hand to hand, worthy and vital assistance to more than 5 million people each year. But also towards the international institutions, with whom we have made it our duty to influence public policy so that appropriate decisions against the scourge of unsafe water are taken at the highest level: in France, in Europe and at the United Nations.

Our information and awareness campaigns conducted annually during World Water Day on March 22, and in particular our petition for access to drinking water signed by 200,000 of our fellow citizens, contributed actively to the United Nations reviewing its figures on the number of people with access to drinking water: slightly more than half of the world's population , not 89% as announced on the eve of the World Water Forum in March 2012 in Marseille. And with our partners the French Water Partnership (PFE) and the World Water Forum, we have worked for a water and sanitation goal to become finally a full-fledged priority on the international agenda.

The situation

Between 2000 and 2015, tremendous progress has been made: 1.6 billion people have an improved access to water and more than one billion have obtained access to toilets. Unfortunately, nearly 2 billion people still drink water contaminated by fecal material. 1.5 billion more have only scarce and expensive access to often dubious quality water. 2.5 billion still lack access to a toilet. And the worst thing is that each year, about 2.6 million people still die of diseases related to unsafe water and an unsanitary environment. According to the latest estimates, 4 billion people will be subjected to water stress in 2025, compared with 400 million in 1995.

Perspectives

Late September 2015 at the UN, 195 countries unanimously voted 17 Sustainable Sevelopment Goals (SDGs) for 2030, including - finally - universal access to drinking water and sanitation (goal 6). Note here how this progress is remarkable. But we should also remember that these targets are not binding and that each State is responsible for their implementation.
To reach them, we need measurable indicators, a follow-up mechanism, funding, a strong political will and national implementation plans. This is no small thing. Especially because there are no commitments related to hygiene nor funding. Public aid to development (approximately $140 billion annually) will not suffice. Funding and innovative mechanisms are needed to attain the amount estimated by the implementation of the SDGs, estimated between $2,000 and $3,000 billion.

Furthermore, climate change and demographics are to be taken into account. However, the Global Green Fund, which is to finance adaptation measures (up to 20 to $35 billion per year depending on funding) which concern water in 80% of cases, will be operational only in 2020. Sadly a waste of time!

Time for action

To move forward with the States, an international pilot is needed, while no less than 30 international organisations are today in charge of water. A former Prime Minister of Niger recently stated that the budget of the 17 SDGs was ten times higher than the budget of his country. Such are the challenges.

The mission of water access stakeholders will be essential in the coming years. In 2016, World Water Day on 22 March, Global Water Week in Stockholm in August and COP 22, in the fall, will allow us to act and move forward.
Disaster and war situations, involving 93% of the poorest people in the world, will be the toughest. It is the mission of SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL, through its actions on the ground as well as with the media, public opinion and institutions, that water becomes a source of life for all.

2005

SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL decides to bring his fight against the main cause of mortality worldwide with the international institutions and the general public.

2008

SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL delivers its petition launched in 2007 and signed by 50,000 people, to Bernard Kouchner, Minister of Foreign Affairs

2010

The United Nations recognizes access to drinking water and sanitation as a Human right.

2012

SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL delivers its petition to the Minister for Cooperation Henri de Raincourt, at the opening of the Global Water Forum in March 2012, to 142 ministerial delegations from around the world. 103,888 people are committed at our side.

2013

Because the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) related to water are far from being attained, SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL embarks on a new race against time, aiming to deliver its manifesto to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and to influence the vote of the new SDGs in 2015.

2015

SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL delivers its petition signed by 200,000 citizens to Annick Girardin, Secretary of State for development and Francophonie with a message to Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary General of the United Nations, before the vote on the SDGs (2015-2030).

SEPTEMBER 29, 2015
Universal access to water and sanitation becomes one of the 17 SDGs, aiming to put an end to poverty, to fight against inequality and injustice, and to deal with climate change by 2030.

12 DECEMBER 2015
The Paris agreement was adopted by consensus by all 195 parties, a landmark agreement that will help to combat climate change. For the first time, water was taken into account during this COP 21, on climate change.

A new hope: drinking water for everyone in 2030

GÉRARD PAYEN'S ANALYSIS
Former advisor on water to the Secretary General of the United Nations (UNSGAB), Aquafed Honorary President, Member of the think-tank, (Re) sources.

At the September 2015 United Nations General Assembly, UN member States formally adopted a goal dedicated to water as one of the 17 priorities for humanity in the 2015 – 2030 agenda. It brought great hope given the lack of consideration granted to the issues of access to water and sanitation until then. But how can such a challenge be faced within 15 years when, despite the progress made, the number of people deprived of drinking water has not decreased so far?

Access to drinking water is acknowledged as a human right. This right is satisfied if water is accessible, available in sufficient quantity, uncontaminated, clear enough and affordable. In addition, access must be organized fairly and without discrimination. These criteria are not met for almost half of mankind[1]. Nearly 2 billion people – i.e. nearly one in four – use a source of drinking water that is fecally contaminated. Many others do not have a regular access to water or have access to a source of water that is either too expensive or non-transparent.

If the economic weakness of a country may hinder the development of access to drinking water, it is not the main obstacle. Access to drinking water is first a matter of political priority. In fact, only collective efforts can meet the needs. National policies for improving access to drinking water are very active everywhere in the world. From 2000 to 2015, there was even a global goal to reduce by half the proportion of the population using water sources also used by animals. Progress has been significant. Only 660 million people remain in this situation. Over the first 15 years of the 21st century, 1.6 billion people, or more than one in five, have seen their access to water improving and 1.2 billion have been connected to drinking water systems.

"The number of people on the planet who do not have running water on tap has not diminished"

These figures are huge. However, this remarkable progress is not sufficient. Indeed, the world population has increased at the same time by 1.2 billion people. The number of inhabitants of the planet who do not have running water on tap has thus not decreased. It is in rural areas that current needs are the highest, but thanks to the efforts that are being made, access is improving rapidly. Urban needs seem to be less important in terms of quantity but, unfortunately, access to drinking water is deteriorating. Today, the number of urban dwellers without adequate access to drinking water is higher than it was 10 years ago. A strong acceleration of public policy is needed to reverse this disturbing trend.

"Thanks to SDGs, water-related issues have stepped into the spotlight"

The global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which have just been adopted unanimously by all Member States of the United Nations bring great hope. Water used to be a subject which was little regarded by the international community but water-related issues have now stepped into the spotlight – they officially became one of the seventeen priorities for mankind.

For access to drinking water, the new global target is far more ambitious than the previous and much better corresponds to the magnitude of the needs. Indeed, the progress indicator to be used combines, for the first time, several criteria for satisfaction of the human right: it aims at "safely-managed water services"– i.e. universal access to a source of water that is uncontaminated, available almost every day and in the immediate vicinity of the home – as early as 2030. Consequently, the new global objective could eventually change the lives of more than 2 billion people, perhaps even 3.

The existence of global goals is not in itself a guarantee of acceleration of national policies. But the open assessment of progress by The United Nations thanks to the new indicator will weigh on governments that will not be able to avoid taking into account the progress or delays publicly observed in their country.

"Fifteen years to achieve universal access to true drinking water is short. There is no time to lose."

The good implementation of these objectives involves several steps. Firstly, every country needs to revisit all of its national and local policies on drinking water to identify any deficiency in their objectives and/or speed in relation to the global target. This groundwork will be all the better if the different actors of the sector are involved and the public understands the new target and supports the need to speed up on many state policies.

Then, each public authority responsible for access to water in a territory must establish a plan of action setting the legal, institutional, human, technical and financial means to successfully meet the objectives within the agreed time limit. This may lead to alter the traditional sharing of costs between taxpayers, public service users and those excluded from the public service. At the same time, statistical tracking tools should be amended to take into account the definition of the new indicator. Finally, the mobilization of these resources will produce the expected progress which shall be measured regularly to identify the potential need for corrective actions.

Fifteen years to achieve universal access to true drinking water is short. There is no time to lose. So, in each country, it is urgent that active members of civil society grow aware of the issue and pressure their government for action on these four essential elements – adaptation of policies, establishment of appropriate means, adjustment of statistical mechanisms and regular progress assessment. The more the media will relay this concern, the better. But they have not yet started!

The SDGs bring great hope to all those who need drinking water and wait for governments to give them access to it. If governments act in accordance with their international commitments, these needs can be really and sustainably satisfied within fifteen years.

1. *De l'Eau pour tous ! Abandonner les idées reçues, affronter les réalités*, Armand Colin, 2013.

"We need a manifest which commits States to display the share of their GDP dedicated to access to essential services"

*BY PATRICE FONLLADOSA, president of (Re)sources**

In Tangiers, Morocco, where we organized a symposium on urban growth and access to essential services – water and electricity – in developing countries, we insisted on the central mainstay of access to these services – governance, that is to say the fair distribution of responsibilities through a community of interests. When we talk about governance, we talk about the definition of public policies, but we also talk about the role of everyone involved. The operator for example has a share of responsibility in the definition of a public policy. It is crucial because it is the public policy that defines access to water and electricity as a priority. We also propose the adoption of a manifesto forcing states to measure and make public the proportion of their GDP spent on access to essential services, the goal of which would be to allow comparison from one country to another. We also advocate decentralization – granting greater powers and means to local governance. Finally, we push for the integration of digital technologies that will facilitate contacts between people who have access to the services and stakeholders.

*(Re)sources is a think tank that brings together specialists, experts, NGOs and politicians interested in access to water and electricity in emerging countries. For two years, (Re)sources has organized roundtables every two months at the Bernardins in Paris and prepares a great venue for COP 22 in December 2016 in Morocco. www.thinktank-resources.fr

Brice Lalonde: *“ Water stakeholders must now urge states to take action”*

Environmentalist and former Environment Minister, Brice Lalonde* takes part in all international summits regarding the future of our planet. Alain Boinet, founder of SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL humanitarian organization, met him after COP 21. Brice Lalonde attended as spokesman for the French Water Partnership (FWP).

ALAIN BOINET About 3.5 billion people do not have access to real drinking water, 2.6 million people die each year from water-borne diseases and, in ten years, 63% of the population will be subject to water stress. So, is universal access to drinking water and sanitation achievable by 2030 as we hope?

BRICE LALONDE
The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will, in any case, help us to improve the situation. After the success of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), we saw teams getting passionate and mobilizing, funding being focused and many national governments took it upon themselves to say: “*It is also the objective of our country to achieve the MDGs”*when in fact these MDGs were only supposed to be overall goals. It will be same with the SDGs.
We may not be able to make the same effort for all of the 17 SDGs but water will probably be one of the priorities. The job is to ensure that each national government adopts the SDGs as key priorities for the development of their country. As for the United Nations and other international organizations, NGOs such as advocacy agencies, the job will consist in demanding each state a year-by-year account of the implementation of the SDGs.

The Sustainable Development Goals are a huge step forward, especially for water. But will the political determination of states, the funding, and the measuring and monitoring instruments be up to the objectives? What is the role of water stakeholders in achieving this?
Water is so essential to development in all its forms that, anyway, for any government, it has become indispensable. The most complex issue for governments is to decide where they should start. Should they start by bringing water to the city centres? Should they bring it to the outskirts? Or should water be brought to the countryside not to worsen rural exodus? These issues are extremely difficult to solve. One needs to avoid the drift from the land and, at the same time, relieve urban misery one way or another. We must also develop a less water-intensive form of agriculture. There are obviously places where it is more difficult than in others, especially in the diagonal “line of thirst” stretching from Gibraltar to North-East China. The role of water stakeholders will be to push for the implementation of a strategy. This is the objective of the big players: how do you implement the SDGs? And in this, there is a considerable ally – Europe and its 28 Member States which is the largest donor in the world. There is in Europe a quite outstanding expertise. I am thinking for example about the Dutch on the prevention of floods. Such skills must be counted upon.

> *“ For the first time, water was taken into account by COP 21. However, it does not appear in the final declaration.” AB*

Even if, for the first time, water was taken into account by COP 21 on climate change in Paris in late 2015, there is nothing in this regard in the final declaration. This is worrying!
“Water Resources” is written in large letters in the 1992 framework convention. Now, it is this framework convention which sets the tone. The Paris agreement is only an agreement for implementation of the framework convention. COP 21 establishes a whole scheme for the next COP on the question of adaptation. And we know that when we talk about adaptation, water comes first. There’s no escaping it.

Facing climate change, there are two responses – global warming mitigation and adaptation to its damaging consequences. However, nothing is clearly defined concerning adaptation when 80% of the measures that should be taken concern water – floods, water-scarcity, sea-level rise!
Exactly, and the French Water Partnership has begun this work which must now be pursued by the World Health Organisation or the French Development Agency (AFD). However, when they are solicited for financial assistance on adaptation, they ask: “what is ‘adaptation’? What is the ‘bankable’ project?” Therefore, there should be a typology of adaptation programs on water. It is now the work of practitioners and experts. There may be, in this typology, post-emergency cases and crisis situations. This typology is the work of the next COP which is expressly requested by the Paris agreement.

Climate change amplifies the intensity and regularity of natural disasters, in the Sahel and elsewhere. Adaptation measures and population resilience building are urgent. How is this “Green Fund” and its 100-billion annual budget available only from 2020 improving?
If you take into account private investment, we have reached the target already. We are told that we are close to 90 billion euros. This is not only assistance, but also financial flows, loans... Obviously, there is no magic; we must help countries in need. But in the end, it is the countries themselves which develop according to their will and desires.
There are countries which have set an example. Sometimes this is expensive, but take the example of Singapore which, being so intent on being independent from Malaysia, has developed an incredible water policy. They recycle everything. Desalination, recycling, rain, a little importing... it is phenomenal. And this will serve elsewhere, in countries where financial resources are less important. There will be invitations to tender in other countries and the techniques developed in Singapore will be much cheaper since one will already have the expertise. Water specialists agree that one way or another you have to pay for water: in kind, effort, time or money. The OECD uses the phrase “the 3Ts” – tariffs, taxes and transfers. Of course, water is free. What is not free is service – looking for water, cleaning it, conducting it, delivering it, returning it clean. It is already a battle to convince the population that there is no free lunch!

At SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL, we believe in the partnership between the various stakeholders to face the exponential increase in humanitarian needs. If some companies are really committed, are invested resources up to their responsibilities?
I think, first and foremost, these companies need to be made an offer with something. If they are presented with a solution, a project, they will be up for it. One must show enough imagination to find the one innovative idea that will make companies join in. Let us not forget that companies sometimes experience difficulties. If they disappear, they are useless. But large companies must make an effort. They are not here only to increase their turnover, but also to help the whole world with their experience and expertise. Some of the major water companies have found ways to make the first litres of water free.

> *“ If they say that access to water is a human fundamental right, this right must be implemented. Therefore, we need an accountable UN organisation.” BL*

2015 has been a great year of international conferences, especially as far as water and sanitation are concerned. How can this trend be entertained and how to avoid any risk of demobilization in pursuit of ambitious goals of universal access to water and sanitation by 2030?
There have indeed been many venues in 2015. But there is no organization within the United Nations that is dedicated to water. One of the real questions is to decide whether to create or to regroup organizations in order to keep an eye on and run the implementation of SDG 6 concerning water. I think this is the direction we should take. It may require that the United Nations pass on their legitimacy to the World Water Forum or that we create an organization similar to the IPCC. The question needs to be debated. If water is declared a fundamental human right, this right must be implemented. Therefore, there should be an organization in charge

**Secretary of State for Environment then Minister of Environment from 1988 to 1992, Brice Lalonde was notably Ambassador to international negotiations on climate change for France from 2007 to 2011, then spokesman for the French Water Partnership during COP 21. He is now Assistant Secretary-General for The United Nations Organization and Executive Coordinator of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20).*

“Let us make heard the voices of African civil society for water”

BY KRISTEL MALEGUE
*Water Coalition Coordinator **

Access to drinking water and sanitation is at the heart of human development. However, in sub-Saharan Africa, 32% of the population lacks access to an improved water source while 60 per cent has no access to improved sanitation[1]. This dramatic situation is first and foremost a problem of governance in the sector.

Implementation of insufficient public policies, institutional fragmentation, misallocation of resources, lack of capacity of the actors, low participation of stakeholders... are all obstacles to achieve concrete human rights to drinking water and sanitation.

At the heart of this issue, the question of the place of civil society in the water and sanitation sector is fundamental. Because of its knowledge of local realities, it has a key role to play, so that public sector policies are implemented in an operational, equitable and sustainable manner. But it lacks structure and capacity to become a true force of argument and weigh into the debate on the water. Since 2008, the Water Coalition supports African collectives of civil society in the water and sanitation sector, in order to strengthen their voice and their influence and access to drinking water and sanitation for all. It thus leads a program in 8 countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Togo), around three major axes: strengthening the expertise and the strength of the collective proposal, allowing their effective participation in decision-making processes and spaces for dialogue in the sector, improving access to information and sharing of knowledge on water and sanitation issues.

The human right to drinking water supply and sanitation in the constitution of Burkina Faso

Through this program, collectives of these countries have managed to establish a dialogue on water and sanitation with the authorities in their country: on financing, the annual reviews of the sector, the Sustainable Development Goal dedicated to water... They are now recognized as key actors for the sector, strengthened by their expertise and initiative. They have participated in major international and regional events for water in 2015 (World Water Forum, COP 21, Sustainable Development Goals...).

In order to raise awareness on water issues, partnerships with the media have been knotted and successfully organised public mobilisation during World Water Day and World Toilet Day. Finally, the training time allowed collectives to strengthen their expertise on budget intelligence, integration of the link between water and climate, the right to water, etc. Civil society in Burkina Faso succeeded, last November, in including the human right to drinking water supply and sanitation in Burkina Faso’s constitution.

These are major advances. Today, African civil society must continue to strengthen, and structure themselves to influence the implementation of operational and inclusive public water policies. Access to drinking water and sanitation for all will also pass through the action of these groups.

** The Water Coalition brings together 30 French NGOs committed to promote sustainable access to drinking water and sanitation for all, while preserving water resources.*

1. *Progress on water supply and sanitation* Report 2015, Joint Monitoring Program, who/UNICEF, 2015

1% SOLIDARITY **THE FUNDAMENTAL ROLE OF LOCAL FRENCH STAKEHOLDERS FOR ACCESS TO WATER**

The Loire-Brittany water agency

Reaching 3.5 million euros per year in aid for access to water in 2018

BY MICHEL STEIN
International mission officer within the Loire-Brittany water agency

The International cooperation of water agencies is based on the Act of February 9, 2005, Oudin-Santini law, also known as the 1% law. Its dispositions grant water agencies the faculty to provide financial assistance to French communities and associations working for access to water and sanitation for disadvantaged people in the world, and at a maximum of 1% of their budget. These solidarity actions are within the scope of the international and community policy of France, which has committed with the international community to meet the Millennium Development Goals on water and sanitation.

Therefore, since 2006, the Loire-Brittany water agency has supported 160 communities and associations in its vicinity on 300 projects for a total amount of aid of 14 million euros to more than 2 million people to improve their access to safe water and proper sanitation. Missions of regular monitoring and evaluation undertaken by the Agency allowed to show clearly:

» The merits and the real effectiveness of such aid on health, any hardship and the availability, especially for women, by the proximity of the water point;
» The strong involvement of (French and local) associations, the communities of the North and South, as well as the beneficiary population; all of this being a guarantee of success of the sustainability of these projects.

A joint contribution to the SDGs

Following this finding and to respond to the increasing demand of our partners, the agency’s governors have decided to increase the rate of its aid from 2016. It will increase from today’s 50% to 60% if the project leader is an association, and even 80% if it turns out that the project is carried by a community. The agency’s objective is to achieve 1% at the end of its 10th programme, i.e. 3.5 million euros of aid per year in 2018. However, this goal can be achieved only with the mobilisation of all: associations, NGOs and communities in our pool... Like SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL with whom we have been working for years, we rely on all these institutions in order to bring our joint contribution to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals related to water and sanitation.

Saint-Omer municipal agglomerate

“€1 per capita” : a lever to encourage intercultural dialogue

BY NICOLAS ROCHAS
Manager of international action within the Agency of urban planning and development, Saint-Omer - Inner Flanders (AUD)

At the end of World Water Day, on March 22, François Decoster, President of the Saint-Omer municipal agglomerate (CASO), will announce the establishment of a “€1 per capita” water fund. This device worn by the AUD will allow to continue and to strengthen its international activities in the fields of water and sanitation.

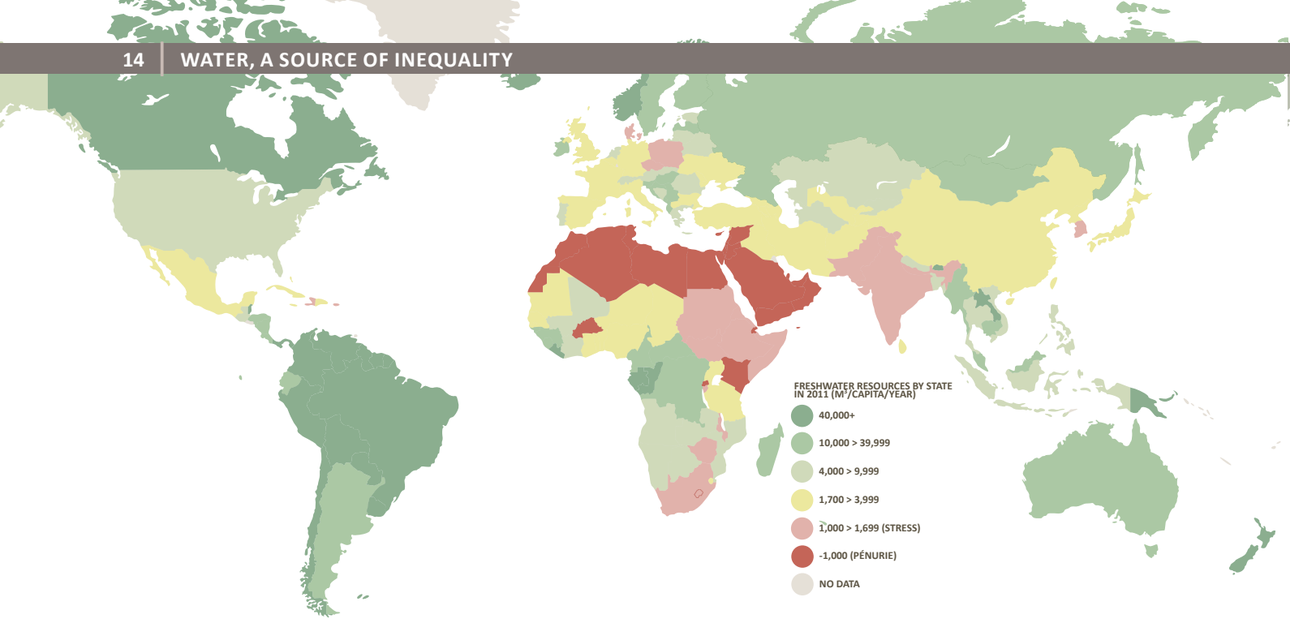
In addition to the impact of these projects for beneficiaries in partner countries, opening up internationally also represents “a lever to strengthen social cohesion, encourage intercultural dialogue and provide new opportunities for the inhabitants of the territory, especially for youth, said François Decoster. Reciprocity is at the heart of this approach.”

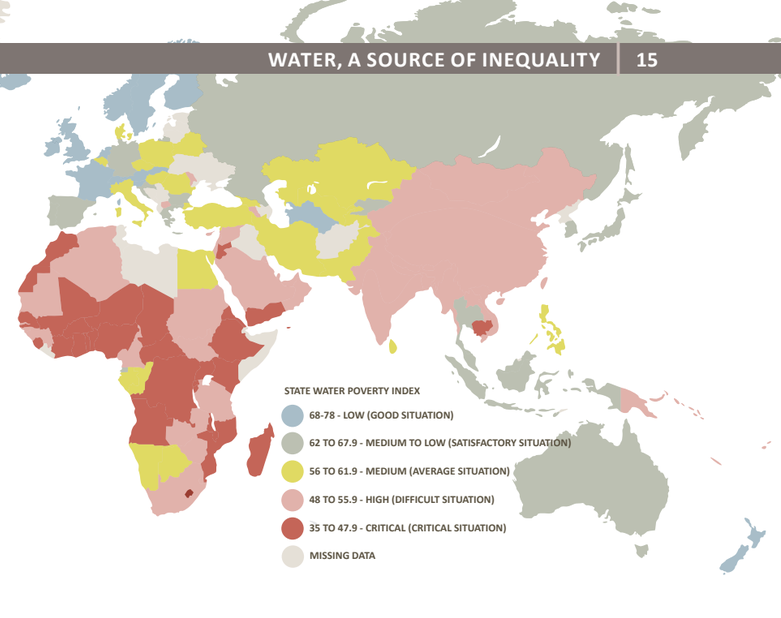
Act internationally around shared issues

With a marsh of more than 9,000 acres certified by UNESCO in 2013 and the presence of the river of the Aa which has played a major role in the development of the territory, water is a strong element of identity in the Audomarois region. It seemed more natural to contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by acting internationally around shared issues. Through established partnerships and supported projects, the objective is also to offer internships for students of the agglomerate, mobility grants for volunteering, or participation in solidarity projects for example.

With more than a dozen actors, the collective gathered for World Water Day in Saint-Omer, sponsored by Madame Sophie Auconie, World Water Council Governor, reflects the great Dynamics currently in motion in the Audomarois.

Since 2010, the AUD, as an operator of international action for the CASO, has accompanied water and sanitation projects in Benin, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Kyrgyzstan and Nepal.





“ Many States suffer more from a severe lack of investment in the field of water than from a physical shortage ”

DAVID BLANCHON'S ANALYSIS
Geographer, lecturer at the University of Paris - Ouest Nanterre La Défense
Author of the World Water Atlas, Éditions Autrement

MAPS
Aurélie Boissière, geographer cartographer.
With the permission of Éditions Autrement

25 years ago today, Swedish hydrologist Malin Falkenmark presented the water shortage index, based on a simple calculation - the division of the available water resources by the number of inhabitants, which allows to determine the States where the risk of shortage is the most important. Therefore, if at the global level, a few States have extremely abundant resources such as Brazil (45,000 m^3/inhabitant/year), Russia (30,000) and Canada (90,000) - the record being held by Iceland, with more than 500,000 m^3 per capita / year, others, on the other hand, have resources close to nothing. This is the case of Kuwait (7) and more broadly all the States bordering the South shore of the Persian Gulf, some islands such as Malta, and Singapore with respectively 89 and 137 m^3/inhabitant /year.

There is no link between the level of development and water availability

At a regional level, a “shortage” belt emerges from Morocco to Saudi Arabia, along the southern shore of the Mediterranean, with an extension on the Horn of Africa, which descends along the Eastern facade of the continent until South Africa.

On the other hand, the Americas appear to be relatively well equipped, for example the States bordering the Gulf of Guinea. In Europe, the situation is contrasting between richly endowed States (Norway - 83,000) and others where the situation is more difficult (Denmark - 1,114; Czech Republic - 1,187; Poland - 1,600).

Certain situations may seem paradoxical. They are often explained by the spatial mesh. Thus a largely desert Namibia has a high availability (8,800) due to the importance of the border rivers that are the Orange, the Cunene, or the Okavango, which flow respectively on its southern, northern and eastern borders. For its part, Australia officially presents abundant resources (24,000 m^3/ inhabitant /year), but these are concentrated mainly in the far North and the eastern fringe of the island continent.

Finally, as we can see, there is no link between the level of development and water availability. There are developed countries and poor countries in potential situations of shortage (Singapore like Burkina Faso, the latter being apparently better off) as in situations of abundance (New Zealand or Laos).

Water-related diseases are almost always due to inadequate water access or failing sanitation networks

Water availability per capita gross figures give only a schematic view of potential problems related to water. They must be weighted by the adaptability of the individual States to their natural hydrological situation. Water-related issues can be apprehended considering the volume of water available, because the capacity of States to bring water where it is needed, when necessary, must be taken into account. Many States suffer more from a lack of investment in the field of water than from a physical shortage. Thus, water-related diseases are almost always due to unsuitable access to water and failing sanitation networks.

This capacity to “produce” water that is usable by users where and when they need it remains more difficult to apprehend. The World Bank uses GDP as a first approximation. Recently, researchers at the Wallingford Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (UK) have proposed a new indicator, the Water Poverty Index, presented in the second card (above).

The Water Poverty Index (WPI) varies from 0 to 100, taking five factors into account:

- the status of all resources, taking variability into account;
- accessibility, particularly for domestic use, but also for the possibilities of irrigation or access to “virtual” water (imported cereals and food);
- its use, and distribution by domain and its effectiveness;
- adaptive capacity, including household spending, GDP per capita (purchasing power parity), infant mortality, investment in the field of water or the existence of laws and appropriate institutions;
- the environment, namely its water needs, safeguarding habitats, water pollution, soil erosion and the risk of flash flooding.

Each criterion is given a score from 0 to 20. The total is given out of 100. The lower the index is, the more critical the situation.

On the WPI map, developed countries appear to be in a favorable situation. Even those who have limited crude resources offset by a strong and often proven adaptability. Thus, the west of United States is proof that with very low resources, but significant financial investments and the use of the most modern techniques, water scarcity can be artificially “resolved”. Lawns in Los Angeles or Las Vegas fountains are the most striking proof of this.

The Water Poverty Index reflects the ability of the States to “produce” water that is usable where and when it is needed

Similarly, the ski slopes built in the Emirates of the Gulf, with almost zero resources, illustrate that extreme water scarcity is conceived only in relation with the technical and economic capacity as well as the political will to produce water, sometimes at the cost of environmental disasters.

However, the WPI highlights the plight of African countries, which is linked as much to the lack of resources as to the difficulty to mobilise. More generally, only the countries of the South where resources are particularly important, especially in Latin America, manage to have a high WPI. This does not mean that they don't know water-related issues, but rather that with sufficient investment and appropriate policies, their problems are potentially solvable.

Pressure on the resource, lack of access, problems related to pollution and to the destruction of aquatic environments: three major issues separating three major groups of countries

With the joint reading of the two maps, three major groups appear according to the dominant issues. In North Africa and West Asia, the pressure on the resource is the most important issue. The issue of water availability, measured by Malin Falkenmark's Water Shortage Index, makes perfect sense in these States where withdrawals exceed on average 50% of the resource and where acute physical shortage problems appear during periods of prolonged drought.

Conversely, the poorest States, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, and secondarily in Latin America and Asia, are facing issues of access to water and sanitation, so that the low control of resources for agriculture, even if the resource is sometimes very abundant, as in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In the formerly industrialised countries, ancient and massive investment allow to bring water where it is needed, when it is needed, but do not prevent the emergence of problems related to water pollution and the destruction of the aquatic environment.

“ Populations must be at the heart of the action”

BY ANNE-LISE LAVAUR
Head of SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL technical and programme quality department

By introducing a specific goal of sustainable development and establishing an open dialogue between stakeholders, a first step was taken in the global fight for access to water and sanitation for all. Go from idea to action and offer sustainable and quality operational solutions remains a real challenge for humanitarian actors.

The major international events of the year 2015 were marked by a strong message: the appeal of populations for water during the global consultation for the UN post-2015 agenda, emphasizing a commitment and accountability of all in this area.
Studies and discussions online, videos, question and answer sessions... A consultation with the citizens of the whole world could be achieved upstream of the vote at the United Nations of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). To everyone’s surprise, water emerged from the consultation as a major challenge for the years to come, “eclipsing even the other 10 themes of the consultation”, according to the report’s summary of the Post 2015 Consultation. (Source: The Post 2015 Water thematic Consultation Synthesis Report).

A shift to action that can occur only with populations

Acting for more than 35 years alongside the most vulnerable populations in this fight for access to water, SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL welcomes the return of water at the heart of the international debate, borne by the appealing populations themselves. By introducing a water SDG, a first step was taken in this global fight.
However, passing from ideas to actions reset the affected populations at the centre of concerns and participation mechanisms - both at the level of the international political agenda and actions on the ground - remains a challenge for humanitarian actors. And this passage can be done only with the populations affected by crises: from emergency to development, through reconstruction.

EMERGENCY

Emergency humanitarian action aims to promote short term access to drinking water and sanitation to protect the health of people affected by a crisis quickly and efficiently, and contribute to their dignity.

ACTIVITIES

- Distribution of filters, containers, hygiene kits, puriiers...
- Conveying and distribution of water (Water or boat trucking...)
- Water purification station (Production, distribution)
- Rehabilitation / (Construction) of infrastructure
- Emergency sanitation (excreta, waste, vector control...)
- Hygiene awareness raising

DISTRIBUTION OF DRINKING WATER IN IDP CAMPS RAKHINE, MYANMAR

Since October 2012, SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL has been leading actions to improve water, sanitation and hygiene in the densely populated camps and host villages affected in Sittwe, the capital of Rakhine, but also in the camps and isolated villages in the municipalities of Pauktaw and Rathedaung. To respond to the emergency, SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL has notably implemented a major water-boating operation to enable displaced persons to have access to drinking water in the dry season.

SOURCES :
- SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL: 4-pages Expertise documents (Drinking Water Supply Networks, DRR, WASH, CTP)
- United Nations (2014): The Road to Dignity by 2030: Ending Poverty, Transforming All Lives and Protecting the Planet. Synthesis Report of the Secretary-General On the Post-2015 Agenda
- United Nations (2013): The Post 2015 Water thematic Consultation - Synthesis Report
- United Nations Secretary-General’s Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation (UNSGAB): report. New York, 18 November 2015
- Brown, d. and Donini, a. (2014) Engagement of crisis-affected people in humanitarian action. Background Paper of ALNAP’s 29th Annual Meeting, 11-12 March 2014, Addis Ababa.

RECONSTRUCTION

Once the basic needs covered, the objective is to improve in the long term: sustainable access to water, sanitation and hygiene to improve the health and economy of populations at risk and to strengthen the capacity for resilience.

ACTIVITIES

- Construction/rehabilitation of wells, boreholes
- Drinking water supply
- Construction of reservoirs
- Source catchment
- Catchment and storage of rainwater (impluvium)
- Sanitation (excreta, waste, vector control...)
- Hygiene awareness raising
- Infrastructure management/maintenance systems (water management committees, repair artisans...).

REHABILITATION OF WATER SOURCE CATCHMENT PETIT GOÂVE, HAITI

Since the Haiti earthquake in 2010, SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL accompanies affected rural communities through pre-disaster existing structure rehabilitation activities. Reduction of health risk (including cholera), resilience capacity-building in the face of new risks, our teams have thus rehabilitated 3 water networks, 2 sources and several drinking water supply points in this region.

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

To better meet the needs of populations affected by a crisis, the answer must be broken down from the emergency to reconstruction by integrating elements of a sustainable response. Thus, SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL integrates a Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) approach in its sectors of intervention. Based on needs analyses and local capacities, it contributes to disaster preparedness, mitigation and prevention.

ACTIVITIES

- Internal (contingency plans) and external (training, alert systems...) disaster preparedness
- Impacts mitigation (dike strengthening, construction of elevated latrines...)
- Livelihood strengthening (community-led natural resource management, diversification of sources of income, promotion of adapted agricultural techniques...)

RETURN TO AUTONOMY

Cash transfer programs (CTP) are increasingly used to meet the needs of the populations affected by crises. When markets are operational, CTPs effectively replace in-kind aid. They are a relevant tool to meet multiple needs - food, water, shelter, education, health - while respecting the dignity of beneficiaries through the free choice of their priorities and supporting the local economy.

ACTIVITIES

- Vouchers for Water
- Cash distribution
- Cash transfer (bank card)

DRINKING WATER VOUCHERS DHOBLEY, SOMALIA

In this arid region, rural populations suffer from a lack of water. Our teams are therefore implementing a coupon program. This process allows the targeted households to access drinking water, while boosting the economy, as beneficiaries can supply themselves from water dealers. This voucher system allows women who are in charge of water to make time to perform economic activities, maintain their home and take care of their children’s health.

COMMUNITY DROUGHT ACTION PLAN NORTH HORR, KENYA

Drought-affected farmers from the region of North Horr are finding it difficult to access pasture and water for their animals, the main source of income, as well as protein from the milk for their children. The situation is also a source of conflict between farmer communities. SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL helps farmer groups to develop action plans to reduce risks. Farmers thus built rainwater reservoirs, cultivated and stored fodder for dry season and participated in trainings to improve their herding practices.

DEVELOPMENT

If the fight against the spread of diarrhoeal diseases passes first through an emergency response, only major programmes aimed at a sustainable improvement of access to drinking water and sanitation allow to eliminate diseases. Despite a crisis context, when the security, economic and political conditions, SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL therefore rolls out longer term projects.

ACTIVITIES

- Water purification station (production, distribution)
- Construction of drinking water networks
- Construction of water taps
- Community-led infrastructure maintenance

A WATER TREATMENT PLANT TO COMBAT CHOLERA KALEMIE, DRC

To contain outbreaks of cholera in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL is implementing durable solutions, adapted to the context. In urban areas, only complex and lengthy interventions (5-15 years), can reduce the risk of epidemics. In Kalemie, in partnership with Regideso, our teams rehabilitate the drinking water supply network. Dating from the Belgian colonisation, it covered only very partially the needs of 250,000 people.

Why do toilets save lives?

Interview with Jean-Marc Leblanc, Water, sanitation and hygiene Advisor at SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL.

What is the current state of access to toilets in the world?

Today, 2.4 billion people do not have access to an improved sanitation facility, i.e. toilets. If this number has slightly dropped compared to last year (2.6 billion), it is still much too important. Barely more than half the population (51%) uses toilets in rural areas and nearly a billion people still practice open defecation.

What are the consequences of the lack of toilets?

They are multiple. In terms of health, having toilets that work correctly help prevent the spread of diseases. Take the example of cholera. In Haiti, if toilets contaminated by vibrio cholerae are clogged and overflow, they contaminate rivers. This causes outbreaks of cholera. Beyond cholera, you should know that more than 375,000 tonnes of faces are deposited daily in nature and that 1.8 billion people drink water contaminated with faeces. However, a single gram of fecal matter contains up to 10 million viruses such as polio and 1 million bacteria that cause dysentery or diarrhoea.

The lack of toilets also strikes in a less visible way...

The lack of toilets indeed has consequences on education, especially of young girls. Lack of health infrastructure is one of the major causes of girls dropping out of school worldwide, millions no longer dare to go to school as soon as they begin menstruation. 272 million school days are missed because of the lack of toilets, according to Unicef. We can also mention the safety of women who lack health infrastructure, and therefore have to walk, hide, and wait for night time to relieve themselves outdoors. Hundreds of thousands of them prefer to deprive themselves of meals and avoid drinking to not go to the toilet, because the lack of latrines would force them to share those of men.

What are the solutions implemented by SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL?

Depending on the situation, we are putting in place 4 types of latrines: defecation trenches in the acute emergency phase, classic single-pit emergency latrines, semi-permanent pit latrines that can be drained by a tanker, and lastly sustainable toilets connected to a network or that enable the implementation of the composting process. Access to latrines reduces one-third of diseases related to diarrhoea. Our teams are also implementing hygiene kit distribution programmes (soap, toothbrush, chlorine...) coupled with hygiene awareness sessions aimed at improving hygiene conditions in order to reduce the risk of disease: washing hands with soap halves the risk of diarrhoea.

Finance: A Sustainable Solution

BY GARY WHITE
CEO and Co-founder
Water.org

What would happen if the world saw people living in poverty not merely as recipients of aid but as potential customers with financial power to define their own futures? Water.org believes this perspective is the solution, and our successful financial approach known as WaterCredit is proving it.

At first the water crisis seemed simple to solve - spend money to provide water for one village and raise more money to provide it for the next. Carrying out our mission one well at a time, it quickly became evident that charity alone would not solve the crisis. We needed something we could scale quickly to meet the urgency of the need. While working within communities on the ground, we witnessed people living at the base of the economic pyramid taking out and repaying loans for things like housing and to start small businesses. So I thought, why not water and toilets? Including water and sanitation loan products in the portfolios of lending institutions to finance safe water and sanitation access seemed logical. We worked closely with select microfinance partners and used smart subsidies to help them build out water and sanitation loan portfolios. We helped them explore the market and found that when given a choice and an opportunity to pay for water and sanitation improvements over a reasonable period, families preferred to finance long-term solutions versus struggle day-to-day to find that next liter of drinking water, use a pay-per-use community toilet, or risk the danger of unexpected physical violence when defecating in the open.

So, for the last six years we have partnered with more than 50 micro-finance institutions (MFIs) and local nonprofits to jumpstart WaterCredit for the purposes of installing or constructing needed water connections, rainwater-harvesting tanks, toilets, and full bathrooms.

Now women like Nureni in Indonesia have access to safe water at home allowing her the ability to recover the lost time and money she once spent in excess just to buy or find water for her family. Eliminating those coping costs gives back to Nureni the time and resources to earn income for her family. Nureni uses fresh water from her kitchen tap to cook coconut rice pudding,

> ***" We will not end poverty without first ending the water and sanitation crisis"***
> *MATT DAMON*
> *Spokesperson*

a dish she sells each morning to others in her village. With her earnings, she has been able to put her son through school. Nureni's story reveals to us that through WaterCredit there is a potential for people living in poverty to re-capture the coping costs of securing water and unleash their economic power in a number of ways. We begin to show that people living in informal communities are not a drain upon the system, but can be and often are the source of systemic improvement.

WaterCredit works by providing funding to NGOs and microfinance providers for capacity building and technical assistance. These partners then leverage funding from banks and capital markets to disburse loans to people like Nureni. Borrowers pay water and sanitation service providers for products and services, like water connections at their homes or construction of toilets. With a repayment rate of 99% WaterCredit has facilitated close to 700,000 water and sanitation loans, impacting more than 3 million people. Over that time, Water.org has leveraged $13 million in smart subsidies to attract $139 million in commercial and social capital.

Through finance, we have found a solution to improve water and sanitation access by helping millions of people living in poverty to become customers, leaving traditional charity for the absolute poor. Going forward, this approach has the potential to scale through various institutions, including small banks, regional rural banks, and cooperative banks, among others - increasing the opportunity for lending within the base of the pyramid and freeing up charitable dollars for the remainder. Poor people are not a problem to be solved; they are a resource and a powerful part of the solution. Mobilizing resources within developing countries is a critical component in achieving Sustainable Development Goal #6, bringing safe water and toilets to all

“ Water, a matter of health, education and security”

BY DOMINIQUE PORTEAUD
Coordinator of the Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) Cluster

The Coordination of humanitarian actors in a crisis is paramount to ensure the effectiveness of aid. Among the 11 existing Clusters, 4 are taken in hand by Unicef.

The Cluster approach dates from 2004, when the “*humanitarian reform*” was implemented and defined who was to manage each sector.

Our work within the Global WASH Cluster is to coordinate the different actors in order to provide a more effective response on the sectors of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). Unicef also coordinates the Child protection, Nutrition and Education Clusters. Our main objective is that the humanitarian response is managed by the Government. But sometimes, because of the context (crises, natural disasters, sheer scope of the response), the Cluster is set up to help and support the Government in its coordination of the emergency response. Unicef has received this mandate because of its capacities: presence in 125 countries and 550 WASH experts. Access to water is a fundamental right. For us, access to water, is preventing diseases: with clean water, children are less sick. Access to water is also education. The closer the water source, the more children can make time to go to school. Access to water is also security because the further the water source, the more the risks of aggression increase, particularly in refugee and IDP camps.

There was very little innovation in terms of access to water, sanitation and hygiene in the past 15 years.

Today, many challenges must be addressed. Take jerry-cans. In emergencies, for example in the Central African Republic, there are small foldable 10 litre plastic, easy to carry jerry-cans. The problem is that they are not solid; they have to be replaced after 3 months. The only strong enough jerry-cans are those of 20 litres. But they are not foldable and are therefore far too expensive to ship. It therefore reflects on a new type of 20-litre, bendable and resistant jerry-can. Innovations also concern the promotion of hygiene with new means of communication, different types of latrines depending on the context (flood zone, hard ground…), or the problem of water desalination that is still too expensive.

By 2016, all projections show that El Niño may be particularly intense in a large number of countries.

El Nino is a large-scale problem. On our side, we anticipate the risks by advocacy to sensitize Governments, funders and donors to have a common line. We contacted countries to identify with them the needs of coordination and to implement programs. Unfortunately, the anticipation and disaster risk reduction issues require funds that do not always follow.

In September 2015, the United Nations voted the Sustainable Development Goals. Among these objectives, there is the Water objective aiming at universal access to water and sanitation by 2030.

I am a little doubtful about the achievement of this objective. Take the example of Ethiopia. In this country that has invested heavily, coverage in terms of access to water is about 63%. From this point of view, it was a fantastic step forward. Unfortunately, when you look at the functionality of the systems, it is down to only 35%. The problem is the maintenance, continuity, even in countries where technical capabilities exist. But thanks to this example of Ethiopia, there are many more discussions today on populations’ resilience, climate change preparedness and resource management.

“ To take an active part in making drinking water accessible is to be at the heart of the main health challenge of our times”

BY GUILLAUME LE LOUP
Medical doctor and doctor of sciences (Sciences Po, Paris). Specialised in infectious diseases and tropical medicine, he is a hospital practitioner in Paris.

“ Non-medical associations committed to giving urgent assistance to fragile populations can, alongside medical NGOs, play a pivotal role, not only regarding water-linked diseases, but also in response to Ebola”

Along with large-scale vaccination, hygiene and water sanitation have contributed, more than any other public health measure, to reducing mortality and extending life expectancy.

More than 150 years have gone by since Snow gave London irrefutable proof of the role of unclean water and the efficiency of hygiene measures by putting a stop to the raging cholera epidemic in Britain’s capital. Yet as the “*Water For Life Decade*” drew to a close in 2015, more than 2 billion people are still unable to benefit from even basic measures regarding access to clean water.

“*Water for life*”, the theme chosen by the WHO shows clearly the vital role of water in populations’ health. Water determines health in many ways. Four large groups of diseases are linked to the availability and quality of water, as well as the efficient management of water resources:

» **Diseases related to acute or chronic lack of clean water.** This unavailability occurs in periods of drought or when infrastructures providing populations with water are destroyed (wars or natural disasters). Ensuing acute dehydration can constitute a life-threatening risk, particularly in young children. Chronic difficulties of access to clean water are responsible for terrible diseases related to lack of hygiene of the hands and face. Trachoma, which is the main cause of blindness in Africa, can be effectively prevented by facial cleansing.

» **Diseases linked to water contamination** by an infectious agent - a microorganism transmitted to humans through contact with or consumption of infected water. It may sometimes suffice to bathe in freshwater, as in the case of bilharzia, to be infected, but ingestion of contaminated water represents the greatest purveyor of serious bacterial and viral diseases.

In this group can be found: particularly cholera, which affects more than 50 countries, typhoid, the rotavirus, Hepatitis A and E, amoebiasis, as well as all the micro-organisms that provoke severe diarrhoea, mainly with children.
The transmission cycle of infectious agents allows us to understand the epidemic potential of these diseases, as well as the role of hygiene measures (mainly hand washing) and sanitation (notably latrines) to stop their spread. Water is initially contaminated by the faeces of a sick person, that contain great quantities of infectious agents. When this water is used or ingested by a person who was until then healthy, the bacteria is transmitted and provokes the patient’s diarrhoea, which is the rejection of contaminated faeces into the environment.

» **Diseases linked to water contaminated by toxic agents,** such as arsenic and fluorine. In this way, chronic consumption of arsenic is the cause of several forms of cancer. Fluorine causes bone and dental diseases.

» **Vector-borne diseases** are the diseases caused by insects, mainly mosquitoes, whose life depends on the presence of water reservoirs where they can develop. Two of the main diseases affecting developing countries, malaria and dengue, are transmitted through a mosquito bite but are water-related because whether in a rural or urban setting, that is the environment where mosquitoes can develop, and it is even fostered with stagnating rain water.

» **Finally, though not a direct source of infection and disease for man, infectious agents can survive for several days in water.** This is the case of the Ebola virus. That is why during the recent epidemic across Western Africa, the WHO recommended strict hygiene and used water management measures in the centres caring for infected patients.

Beyond the geopolitical issues, access to safe water still remains a major and priority international public health challenge. May the figures in the Water Barometer testify to that. A recent report published by the WHO and UNICEF also showed that in 54 low-income countries, some 40% of health centres, mainly hospitals, don’t have an even rudimentary access to safe water within the building or in its vicinity. The data and figures help us understand the key role played by expert NGOs such as SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL in worldwide public health, in responding to large scale health risks such as cholera or Ebola virus epidemics. By putting clean water as the core of its actions, SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL is settling at the heart of the main health challenge of our times.

**With SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL, Guillaume Le Loup has been on humanitarian missions in Afghanistan (1987), Romania (1989) or in Iraqi Kurdistan (1991-1992). He is a member of SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL’s board of governors.*

CHOLERA

1.4 to 4.3 million cases reported, 148,000 deaths every year

AFRICA / LATIN AMERICA / ASIA / EUROPE / OCEANIA

The "dirty hands disease" is caused by the Vibrio cholerae bacteria. It is transmitted by the consumption of food or water that has been contaminated by faeces of infected individuals.

TREATMENT – INTERVENTION

Treatment of cholera consists of replacing lost liquids and electrolytes. The use of oral rehydration salts (ORS) is the quickest and most efficient way of doing this. Propagation of the disease can be avoided by prevention (supplying sufficient quantities of clean drinking water, good personal and food hygiene, hygienic excreta evacuation).

DENGUE

390 million reported cases every year, 96 million of which present clinical manifestations

AFRICA / THE AMERICAS / EAST MEDITERRANEAN / SOUTH ASIA / WEST PACIFIC

Transmitted by infected female "tiger" mosquitoes (the Aedes genus) this serious, flu-like, infectious disease - rarely fatal - affects new-borns, young children and adults.

TREATMENT – INTERVENTION

There is no vaccination for Dengue fever.
The most effective method of prevention is personal protection against mosquito bites: mosquito nets, long-sleeved clothing and insect repellent.

DIARRHOEA

1.7 billion people are affected by diarrhoea every year.

More than 842,000 people – 350,000 of which are children under the age of five - die of diarrhoea.

WORLDWHILE

Diarrhoea is symptomatic of an infection caused by a large number of bacterial, viral and parasitic organisms most of which are propagated by contaminated water. (88% of cases can be attributed to poor sanitation, mediocre hygiene or unclean water) It is more rife where there is no clean water available for drinking, cooking and washing, and where essential hygiene practices are not respected.

TREATMENT – INTERVENTION

To fight this scourge it is essential to have access to clean drinking water, improved sanitation, suitable personal and food hygiene, as well as hygiene education on how infection is spread.

TYPHOID AND PARATYPHOID FEVERS

Around 17 million cases worldwide

MOST OF THE LEAST INDUSTRIALISED COUNTRIES.

Typhoid and paratyphoid fevers are infections caused by Salmonella typhi and Salmonella paratyphi bacteria. People are affected when ingesting food or drink that have been manipulated by infected persons or after having consumed drinking water that was contaminated by faeces or wastewater containing bacteria.

TREATMENT – INTERVENTION

Personal hygiene, hand washing, providing safe water, adequate sanitation… A vaccine is available, though it is not systematically recommended and it does not provide total protection against the infection.

SCABIES

Some 300 million cases reported every year

WORLDWIDE

A contagious cutaneous infection caused by a microscopic mite (Sarcoptes scabiei), scabies spreads rapidly in crowded conditions. Its most frequent symptom is a papular eruption on hands, between the fingers.

TREATMENT – INTERVENTION

Personal hygiene is an important prevention measure, as well as access to an adequate water supply to fight the disease. Treatment occurs with acaricidal ointment after a warm bath with careful soaping. Infested clothes should be sterilised or washed in hot soapy water.

HEPATITIS

WORLDWIDE. STRONG PRESENCE OF HEPATITIS A IN AFRICA / CENTRAL AMERICA / SOUTH AMERICA / ASIA

Two of the viruses causing hepatitis (hepatitis A and E) can be transmitted by water and food. Among the infectious cases, we can mention insufficient water supply as well as poor sanitation and poor quality hygiene.

TREATMENT – INTERVENTION

There is no antiviral drug. Prevention can occur through education on good quality sanitation and personal hygiene, notably hand washing, a sufficient clean water supply and adequate elimination of waste.

MALNUTRITION

795 million people are under-nourished

WORLDWIDE, INCLUDING 20% OF THE POPULATION OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

More than one in three individuals of all age groups suffer from undernutrition although it particularly affects the poorest populations and those who have insufficient access to clean water and inadequate sanitation and a lack of health education.
A major health problem, malnutrition is a general term commonly used as an alternative to the term undernutrition although it also refers to overnutrition (obesity). Given the direct impact they have on health and particularly on the occurrence of diarrhoea, water supply, sanitation and hygiene are critical aspects which should be taken into account in the prevention of malnutrition. The impact of persistent or repetitive diarrhoea on malnutrition, and inversely the effect of malnutrition on the sensitivity to infectious diarrhoea, are elements that reinforce a vicious circle, in particular in children from developing countries.

INTERVENTIONS

Interventions that contribute to the prevention of malnutrition include: improvement in water supply, sanitation and hygiene, education of good hygiene practices, better access to food of adequate quality and quantity, as well as to basic health services.

ONCHOCERCIASIS

18 million people throughout the world are affected

AFRICA / SOUTH AMERICA / CENTRAL AMERICA / ARABIC PENINSULA

The second main cause of blindness of infectious origin in the world, 'river blindness' is a parasitic disease transmitted by the blackfly of the genus Similium which breeds in water.

INTERVENTIONS

There are two principal means of controlling onchocerciasis: the spray of insecticides in blackfly larvae breeding sites and treatment of patients with medicine (ivermectine) which kills the young worms.

Source WHO

MALARIA

Between 300 and 500 million cases and more than a million deaths per year

SUBSAHARIAN AFRICA / SOUTH-EAST ASIA / SOUTH AMERICA

Malaria is the most significant infectious parasitic disease in the world. It is caused by a parasite of the Plasmodium genus and transmitted to humans at night when bitten by an infected female mosquito of the Anopheles genus. Without rapid and efficient treatment, malaria can evolve towards a serious and fatal cerebral form.

TREATMENT – INTERVENTION

There is no vaccine for malaria. Preventive anti-malarial medicine cannot guarantee absolute protection against infection. It is important to protect oneself against mosquito bites: mosquito nets, repellents, malaria prevention during pregnancy, early detection and malaria epidemic control.

SCHISTOSOMIASIS

200 million people infected. 600 million people at risk of infection

AFRICA / CENTRAL AMERICA / CARIBBEAN / BRAZIL / EASTERN ASIA / IRAN / SAUDI ARABIA

Schistosomiasis or bilharzia is water-borne disease considered the second most important parasite infection after malaria. Transmission occurs when people suffering from schistosomiasis contaminate freshwater sources with excreta.

TREATMENT – INTERVENTION

Improving sanitation and drinking water intake minimizes freshwater contamination and reduces contact, therefore limiting transmission. Hygiene awareness is a fundamental component guaranteeing community participation in the fight against the disease.

TRACHOMA

Six million people in the world are blind due to trachoma. More than 150 million people are in need of treatment

MIDDLE EAST / NORTH AND SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA / INDIAN SUB-CONTINENT / SOUTH ASIA / CHINA / LATIN AMERICA / AUSTRALIA / PACIFIC ISLES

Caused by an organism called Chlamydia trachomatis, this infectious eye disease can provoke blindness after repeated infections. It is transmitted by hand contact, clothes or flies who rest on an infected child's eyes.

INTERVENTION

It has been proven that good personal hygiene, as well as environmental health (improving sanitation, access to water, reduction of flies' breeding sites, and facial hygiene with clean water) are efficient to fight trachoma

Access to water for everybody: let's be optimistic!

BY THIERRY VANDEVELDE
Doctor of Science and Executive Director of the Veolia foundation

The latest Joint Monitoring Program (JMP) report, co- published by The World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF proclaims that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) regarding access to safe drinking water have been reached. This success, referred to in the introduction, is even supposed to have been realised five years in advance. However, disturbing water-related issues linger on.

In a Global Risks classification carried out in 2015 and made public at the latest World Economic Forum in Davos, water crises are identified as the number 1 issue, both in terms of impact and probability. Even more disturbingly, there is a resurgence of water-related diseases - in particular the most symptomatic amongst them, cholera. 3.5 million people[1] are affected each year by this disease and it kills between 100 and 120,000.

These apparent contradictions can easily be explained. On the one hand, the true progress that has been made regarding access to safe water varies greatly from country to country. On the other hand, sanitation efforts are starting to stagnate, even regress in many countries[2]. Recent epidemic outbreaks, such as the Ebola fever which affected West Africa in 2014 and 2015 have proved the inadequacy of health systems in the most severely affected countries. They also underlined the importance of investment in sanitation services, access to safe drinking water and, more generally, highlighted the need for reinforcing public hygiene in rural areas and large urban centres.

In the DRC, the correlation between the resurgence of cholera and the cuts in water supply undergone by the population has been proved

The question of financing these priorities is ongoing. The cost of providing the required infrastructures is considerable and to make do with half measures or occasional interventions would be useless. As such, the fight against cholera in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is a striking example. The London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM), the scientific partner in the national strategy of eradication of cholera in the DRC - supported by the Veolia foundation - proved the correlation between the resurgence of cholera and the cuts in water supply experienced by the population. In a study published in 2015, the LSHTM proves the direct link between the provision of poor quality drinking water and the rate of patients' admissions to the cholera treatment centre in Uvira[3]. This highlights a need for improved consideration of the quality of water services via a sustainable and long-term strategy, covering all the zones concerned, to fight the disease.

Indeed a group of actors has formed to support the public authorities of the DRC. SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL has taken its place in a multi-sector based approach programme. The NGO is acting alongside other stakeholders (Médecins sans Frontières, Katanga governorate, International Committee of the Red Cross…) for several years on improving access to water in Kalemie, one of the major cholera sources. Others like Oxfam or the Veolia Foundation are acting in the city of Uvira with support from the French Development Agency (AFD) and the European Union. Others (Mercy Corps, Action Against Hunger…) intervene in the city of Goma.

This contest of effort and funding can favour optimism! It has been irrigating all international stakeholders. In June 2015, the WHO created a water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) working group within the Global Taskforce on Cholera Control (GTFCC). The new sustainable development programme developed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has made access to clean water and sanitation the sixth of its 17 global goals. Finally, the right to water is progressively becoming part of States' constitutions. In Burkina Faso, access to drinking water became a constitutional right in 2015. This gives reason to believe the subject will be better apprehended by future generations.

1. WHO figures
2. As stated in the 2014 GLAAS special report for Africa
3. Analyses reveal that 32.2% of cholera cases reported in the city between 2009 and 2014 can be explained by recurring power cuts at the drinking water treatment station.

RESSOURCES :

- Joint Monitoring Programme Report: *apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/177752/1/9789241509145_eng.pdf*
- Global Risks Landscape (2015) classification: *reports.weforum.org/global-risks-2015/#frame/20ad6*
- Special Report for Africa, WHO, GLAAS 2014: *www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/glaas/2014/glaas-2014-africa/fr/*
- Study, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM): *fondation.veolia.com/fr/media/medias/le-programme-de-lutte-contre-le-cholera-mene-par-la-fondation-au-congo-kinshasa-suscite-une-publication-scientifique*
- Minutes of the May 2015 meeting of the GTFCC WASH Working Group: *www.humanitarianresponse.info/ru/system/files/documents/files/2015.05.18_cr_plate-forme_cholera_wcar_annexe_1.pdf*
- Global Alliance Against Cholera (GAAC) website: *www.choleraalliance.org/*

The importance of water in the fight against the Ebola epidemic

Although Ebola is not a water-related disease, the specific nature of the response to this epidemic has revealed the importance of water, hygiene and sanitation in controlling and stopping the disease's propagation.

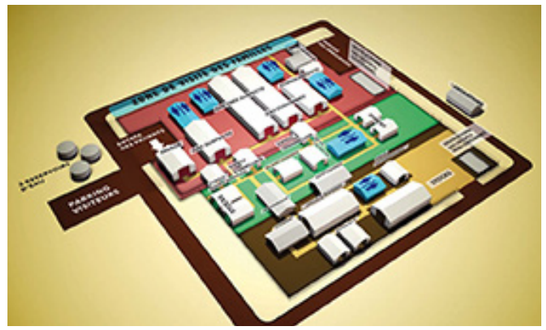
28,636 cases and 11,315 deaths according to data from the beginning of 2016. "*The unprecedented magnitude of the 2014 - 2015 Ebola epidemic highlighted how ill-prepared and lacking in foresight the international community was in treating the virus,*" says Andrea Angioletti, Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) coordinator for SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL's emergency team. In the front line of the fight against the epidemic alongside Médecins du Monde in the Moyamba treatment centre in Sierra Leone, SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL teams have developed a new operational response: "*strengthening their WASH expertise and placing particular emphasis on the prevention and control of the infection in order to back up medical operations.*"

Chlorination and rehydration, indispensable aspects in the fight against the disease

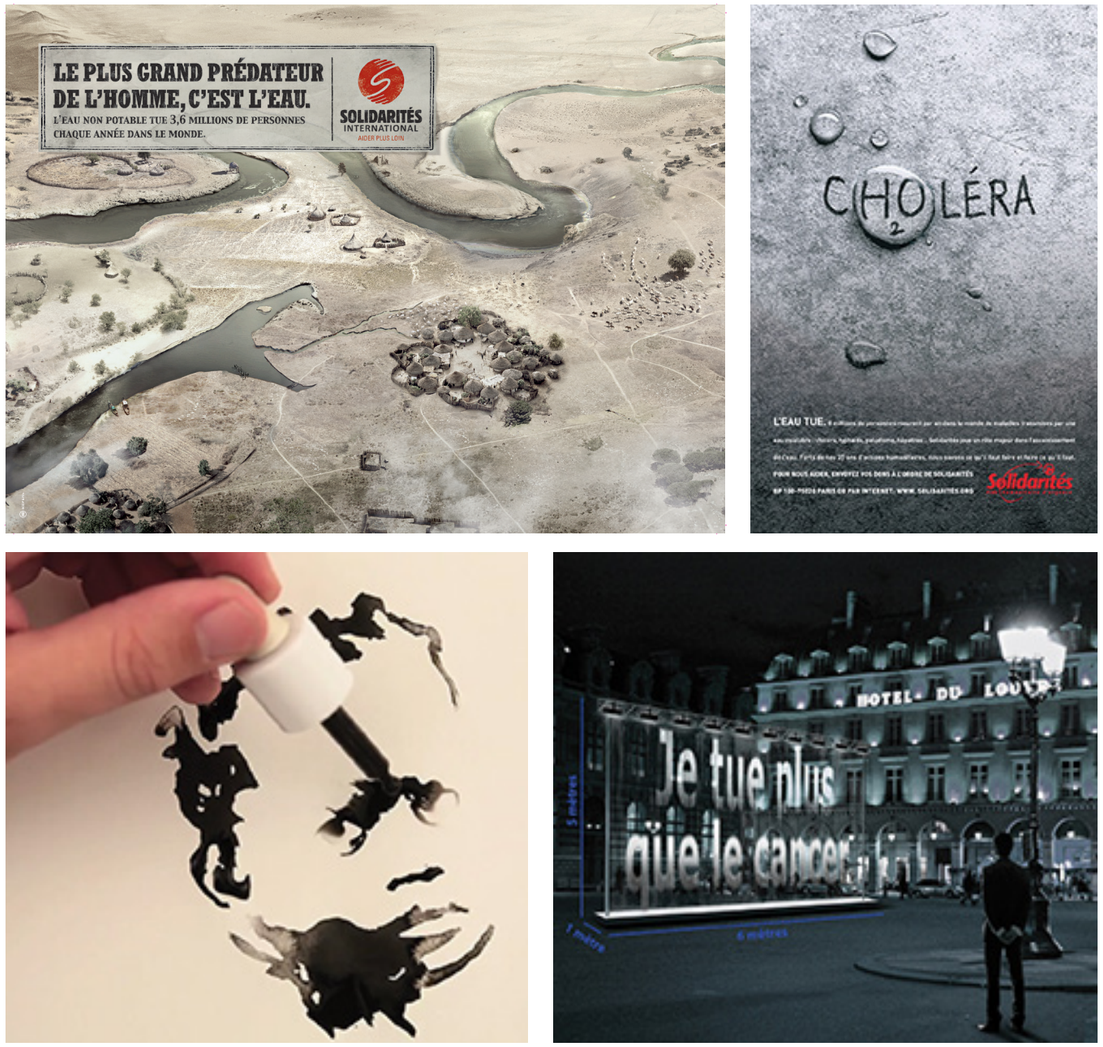
Responsible for the disinfection of medical staff and their material, the daily decontamination of the centre with chlorinated water, as well as waste management and management of the corpses of deceased patients, SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL teams were confronted with significant organisational, logistical and humane challenges. "*Almost 10 trained personnel, 150 litres of water and 1 kilo of chlorine are needed per patient per day. This chlorinated water of various strengths is used to disinfect tons of equipment (overalls, masks, boots) needed to fight the virus. Not to mention drinking water for the patients for whom rehydration is of prime importance in the fight against the disease*", says Andrea Angioletti.

Ebola has strengthened the links between the WASH actors and the medical actors

An exceptional response to an extraordinary crisis, this intervention has undeniably reinforced the importance of the WASH sector in the fight against disease. "*This has led to an understanding of the importance of the complementary roles played by WASH actors and medical personnel in the face of this type of epidemic*, insists Andrea Angioletti. *Thanks to the experience acquired in the prevention and control of infection, we have not only rendered medical intervention possible but also, on occasions, given advice on, even imposed limits on their activities when contamination or infection risks were identified.*"



3D modelling of the Moyamba Ebola treatment centre in Sierra Leone.



SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL's communication campaigns of 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2014 for world water day.

Access denied: communicating on water at a saturated connection time

BY CÉLINE HERVÉ-BAZIN
Author-researcher specialised in water communication

Human beings are more connected to internet and to the telephone than to water and sanitation. In a generation of numerical natives, Facebook likes and infotainment buzz, water faces new communication challenges to attract the attention of the general public, the deciders and the media.

Access to water, a newsworthy achievement

In 2015 the UNESCO "*Water For Life*" decade came to an end. This 10-year long campaign contributed to a structuring of communication on water by UN-Water created in 2004, to the systemisation of media celebration of World Water Day and finally to victoriously meeting target number 7.C in 2012: "*To halve, by 2015, the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation*", announced the UN with great ceremony, not without provoking an outcry from the general public and professionals alike.

That the UN communications agency generated so much criticism is a result of the various realities of access to water… Today, in the eyes of the public, access to safe water as defined by the UN is a vague notion: what is access to "*improved*" water (what potability?) at a reasonable distance (3 km or a tap…) and what about availability (24/7 or 1 hour a day…)?

When the media announces that access to water has been achieved - sometimes meaning access to "*muddy-coloured*" water, having to "*fetch and carry*" water, or access to "*rationed*" water the spotlight is focused on the media's interpretation of water equity… reminding us that people world-wide do not benefit from the same form of access to water and revealing that 'universal access to water' should be perceived as access to water that is not necessarily drinkable, or readily available from a tap.

A reality and the realities of water accessibility

This announcement had, then, a profound impact in terms of communication. Firstly, access to water has become an established media topic. Secondly, it has confirmed inequalities of development. The media explosion has reminded us that we neither benefit from the same rights of development nor from the same rights to water. An unprecedented viral phenomenon highlighted these flagrant disparities: The Ice Bucket Challenge.

Let's rapidly summarize what happened. In the summer of 2014, videos of celebrities pouring ice water over their heads in aid of the ALS charity against Charcot's disease, took the world of social media by storm. Despite this being for a noble cause - an aspect that some failed to realise - it also triggered media outrage over the waste of water. Two opposing worlds exist: the world that plays with water, the world that preserves it. The symbolic dumping of water from a bucket, (the bucket we carry around with us or keep at home), confirms these opposing values and makes us question the universality of water as a cause, when precisely this cause should promote international solidarity since water is the "*source of life*". Water is, indeed, open to disparities of social perception and to inequalities in mobilisation.

A paradox with a cause: visibility versus commitment

The amount of information, campaigns, films and documentaries on water in the world is absolutely incalculable. Social networks are not being forgotten: selfie with a gourd, river photo contests, sharing one's "*blue*" print, and… The Ice Bucket Challenge. Many consumers showed their sensitivity and their interest for the "my water, my struggle" mantra. Every one displays their act to show their commitment, feeding the antagonising values and realities on the ground.

Waste, pollution, overconsumption… Recent episodes in Brazil (Sao Paulo governance crisis, Minais Gerais dam break almost unseen in European media) show it is not easy to mobilise the public on issues that are both global and require an international standpoint, consensus, local and global conscience, individual and personal fundamentals.

Water is present in the media but at programmed (political agendas) or suffered (natural disasters) timescales. It is mainly misunderstood or generates miscomprehensions, scientific debate or scepticism. Water needs the right time to mobilise better, a challenge that NGOs such as SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL know all too well.

Faced with alarming figures on water such as increasingly difficult to guarantee access, water sector professionals who believe water is not covered enough… Citizens are also at a majority convinced they know very little about water. According to the EuroBarometer 365, European citizens feel particularly concerned by issues related to water resource pollution. The French, according to the Odoxa poll for SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL, share the same opinion. So how do we communicate to mobilise and effectively improve water management, or even guarantee access to water for all?

The Water War is dead, long live the Water War!

If the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have declared as Objective number 6 "*Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all*" by 2030 (Goal 6.1), defending this "*cause*" is no longer about convincing new generations to look for fun apps, short formats they can share and laugh about, games in which they play the hero. Having had enough of feeling guilty, of sordid pathos campaigns that use simplistic ideological assumptions, the youth's new media practices reveal a new form of responsibility.

In the age of 5G, communication can no longer content itself with placing hope in the future while forgetting that the problem is happening now. Water communication – in the same right as any other natural resource – is now faced with an unprecedented challenge: inform, convince, change durably and immediately. Water requires communication for the "*now*" generation. From SDGs to social networks, new forms of mobilization, scientific issues and events striking people's conscience, effective water communication is appealing for a fundamental reflex: consider the over-connected communication perceptions, images and practices and other zapping effects to lead a new form of Water War, that of mobilization – all for one – to reach the ambition of an actually universal and equal access to water.

To any one listening, access (to water) agreed for anyone mobilized.

Céline Hervé-Bazin (PhD) is a writer and researcher specialized in water communication for more than ten years. She has published three books:* The Invisible Link, *and* Telling Water *(Autrement editions, 2012), and* Water Communication *(IWA Publishing, 2014), and several scientific articles on the challenges of water communication.

The international community began a new era for water in 2015

The 120 French actors working on an international level within the French Water Partnership (PFE) have fully adopted Ban Ki-moon's declaration. Collectively organised and in liaison with their numerous international partners, they have, for long months, been striving to bring their contribution to the coming five high-level meetings.

BY PHILIP GUETTIER, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE FRENCH WATER PARTNERSHIP

» **THE POST 2015 AGENDA,** adopted by the UN General Assembly in September 2015, incorporates a dedicated Goal promoting an integrated approach: universal access to drinking water, sanitation and hygiene, fight against pollution, water use efficiency, good governance, preservation of aquatic ecosystems, international cooperation and capacity strengthening, and participation of local populations. This also figures in other Goals such as food security, energy, health, sustainable cities...

» **FINANCIAL PLAN OF ACTION IN THE POST 2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA** adopted in Addis-Ababa in July, this constitutes a new reference framework for donors, including those funding water-related projects.

» **THE SENDAI ACTION FRAMEWORK** adopted in March, establishes new orientations relative to natural risks and disasters, with particular reference to the water sector.

» **FINALLY, THE PARIS CLIMATE AGREEMENT,** adopted by 195 countries at the COP 21 conference in December, establishes priorities in adapting to climatic change along with reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Water, which is the first adaptation goal (80% of all adaptation goals concern water), is a key issue in getting this Agreement off the ground, particularly regarding funds for developing countries. For example, between 20 and 35 billion US dollars could be mobilized yearly by the Green Climate Fund from 2020 onwards for water-related projects.

THE KEY WATER EVENTS IN 2016 ON THE INTERNATIONAL AGENDA

MARCH 22 World Water Day

MAY 25-26 HydroGaïa (Montpellier, France)

MAY (TBC) Sesame 4 (Morocco)

JUNE MedCop22 (Morocco)

JULY *"Water and Climate"* preparatory event for COP 22 (Rabat, Morocco)

JULY Adoption of the Post 2015 Agenda indicators during the High Level Political Forum (New York)

AUGUST World Water Week (Stockholm, Sweden)

SEPTEMBER 13 United Nations General Assembly (New York)

OCTOBER 17-20 Habitat III (Quito, Ecuador)

NOVEMBER 7-18 COP 22 (Marrakech, Morocco)

DECEMBER 4-17 Biodiversity Conference (BDC) COP (Los Cabos, Mexico)

"It is now time to implement political decisions and exercise vigilance at all moments."

Although the States themselves are responsible for implementing these decisions, in the framework of their internal politics and should provide regular progress reports, all kinds of actors for water equity should operate on their own level and make sure that political commitments are respected. The challenges, as ever, are huge.

Moreover, voluntary commitments made at the COP21 conference by the countries contributing between 3 and 4°C to global warming and to irreversible impacts on water resources in certain regions of the world constitute an additional alert for ongoing vigilance so that these countries rapidly reinforce their ambitions.

The international water community understands well the sheer size of the challenges ahead, as they have set up a panel of Heads of State dedicated to water and the #ClimateIsWater advocacy and awareness campaign on the link between water and climate change. The French Water Partnership, the platform of French public and private sector stakeholders who contribute to keeping water among the international community's priority actions, brings about many contributions to this new dynamic.