



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
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Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

Opening remarks by

H.E. Mr Michael Worbs

Chairperson of the Executive Board of UNESCO

and

**Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of the
Federal Republic of Germany to UNESCO**

**on the occasion of the opening of the 22nd
session of the Intergovernmental Council for the
International Hydrological Programme of
UNESCO**

UNESCO House, Room II

Monday 13 June 2016

Ms. Flavia Schlegel, Assistant Director General for Sciences of UNESCO

Mr. David Korenfeld Federman, Chairperson of the Intergovernmental Council of the IHP,

Distinguished Delegates,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to welcome you to the opening of the 22nd session of the Intergovernmental Council for the International Hydrological Programme (IHP) on behalf of all members of the Executive Board of UNESCO.

Last Year the IHP celebrated its 40th anniversary. Since its creation, the scientific community has benefitted from its work to develop effective scientific and societal responses to the major water-related challenges the world faces today.

I am certain that you will agree with me that the IHP does so with an energy and intensity that has not waned throughout the years. It does so with the help of the Programme's Secretariat, composed of competent specialists, dedicated to supporting the needs of its Member States.

The IHP is committed not only to the protection of water resources, but also to plan and model the landscape for a better world. Its federative role is fundamental at the international level to encourage research and the management of water resources through education, culture, information and innovation.

It is a global network of water-related Category 2 Centres and University Chairs that mobilises international cooperation with a view to help improve knowledge to strengthen the science-policy interface, and to develop institutional and human capacities to reach water security at the local, national, regional, and global levels.

One example of IHP's efforts to foster the potential of water as a catalyst for regional peace and development can be seen in the Programme's contribution in the publication and distribution of the annual United Nations World Water Development Report. The 2016 report, entitled "Water and Jobs", represents one of the most effective water-related advocacy tools today and shows a positive correlation between investments in the water sector and economic growth and highlights the key role water plays in the transition to a green economy.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The 22nd session of the IHP Council takes place at a crucial juncture.

The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda expanded the scope of the previous 8 MDGs to now include 17 SDGs, focussing on a more comprehensive approach to development in all countries of the world, calling for peace and partnership, and the need to leave no one behind.

In this perspective, the Eighth Phase of IHP (2014 - 2021) was conceived to help implement the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda by contributing concretely to the implementation of the SDGs and in particular to all targets of Goal 6 – *Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all* – through its different thematic areas.

To do this, the IHP places strong emphasis on cross-cutting issues, including water education and capacity-building, scientific research, innovative scientific and technological approaches, knowledge sharing, and financing.

The IHP should further explore ways to support Member States with their monitoring requirements originating from SDG 6, especially those related to capacity development of both experts and institutions.

To highlight the support that the IHP can provide, let me share two examples of successful cooperation with my country, Germany.

The first example is the long-standing cooperation established between the IHP and the German Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources (BGR) for the preparation of World Hydrogeological Maps. It provides data and information about the major groundwater resources of the world with a view to their reasonable management and protection. This landmark tool has since become one of the most widely used cartographic aids in hydrogeological mapping projects throughout the world.

A second example I wish to share with you concerns the International Centre for Water Resources and Global Change that was established under the auspices of UNESCO in 2014 in Koblenz.

This UNESCO Category 2 Centre assists Member States and collaborates with other water centres and chairs to facilitate and support research and capacity to help understand the scope of global change impacts on water resources in order to manage them in a sustainable and adaptive way.

By mentioning this second example, I wish to highlight the links between the different components of the UNESCO's water family, which are key in the today's increasingly interconnected world.

Also, speaking of UNESCO Category 2 Centres – I wish to thank Ms Flavia Schlegel for the organisation of the meeting of all UNESCO Natural Sciences Centres that was held in Beijing, China just last month. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss how these Centres can work together towards the achievement of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Environmental damage in one country affects another. Carbon emissions and increasing greenhouse gases are detrimental to large and small states alike. Population displacement because of global environmental change impacts not only the departing nation, but the receiving nation as well.

Promoting change for the '*future we want*' requires knowledge – based on solid scientific facts. The IHP must continue to rely on the support it receives from all of its partners – governments, NGOs, academia and the private sector – to continue to provide the excellent knowledge it supplies.

Your participation today should be seen as a commitment to transform your ideas, intentions and words into UNESCO's common endeavour to implement effective actions that can achieve results.

With this, Ladies and Gentlemen, let me wish you an excellent meeting

Thank you.