



Opening speech

(English translation)

Mr Thierno Hamet Baba LY

Chairperson

Intergovernmental Council of the International Hydrological Programme (IHP) of UNESCO

Secretary-General

Ministry of Water and Sanitation, Senegal



Opening speech by Mr Thierno Hamet Baba LY

Ladies and Gentlemen

Dear colleagues and friends

Dear participants

It is my pleasure to welcome you, on behalf of the Intergovernmental Council of the International Hydrological Programme (IHP) of UNESCO, in my capacity as its Chairperson, to this Showcase session organized by UNESCO-IHP's International Initiative on Water Quality (IIWQ).



Opening speech by Mr Thierno Hamet Baba LY

Water quality is intrinsically linked with human health, poverty reduction, food security, ecosystem preservation, as well as with economic growth and social development. Therefore, water quality degradation directly translates into environmental, economic and social problems.

Moreover, the availability of world's freshwater resources—which is already scarce—is further reduced by water pollution, mainly resulting from the discharge of large quantities of insufficiently treated or even untreated wastewater.



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Improving water quality at the global scale is a pre-requisite for sustainable development of the current and future generations.

It is also key to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals—not only of the SDG 6 on water and sanitation, but also of many other goals that are linked with water quality and water pollution.



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The need to implement sound policies based on solid scientific information and data has become ever more crucial in order to promote appropriate and sustainable solutions to improve water quality at the global level.

Information on water quality at the global level is also needed to better understand climate and anthropogenic changes and their impacts on the environment.



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Yet, water quality data and information at the global level are scarce, except in developed countries.

Water quality data are rarely shared at the regional and international levels, even where such data are available.

Lack of water quality data in developing countries is linked with inefficient, limited water quality networks and poor technical capacities to monitor water quality.



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In response to this challenge and with the aim to improve the global water quality data, the International Initiative on Water Quality of UNESCO-IHP is implementing a very innovative project which aims to provide water quality information of surface waters at the global level by using Earth Observation (satellite data).

This project demonstrates the potential of space technologies in water management and promotes innovative approaches to water quality monitoring.



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In the framework of this project, in January last, UNESCO launched the **UNESCO World Water Quality Portal**, which demonstrates the possibility of obtaining water quality data in different parts of the world using satellite data from ESA and NASA.

This session is organized to demonstrate this Portal. As it will be presented in the presentation that will follow, the Portal is a precious tool to help countries to access to water quality information—especially in remote areas and developing countries.



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In view of obstacles to sharing water quality information, the UNESCO Portal provides data with open access for all users at all levels—from researchers to basin organizations, policy-makers and the public.

It will also contribute to the development of science-based policies and will support national actions for the implementation and monitoring of water-quality related SDG Targets.



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This session also provides an opportunity to share and exchange experience on efforts with similar aims by other partners such as ESA and the GEOSS, INBO and CNES, France.

I hope that it will lead to a collaboration opportunity for better water quality monitoring at the global level.

Thank you!