

## Opening Speech by Sarantuyaa Zandaryaa, International Hydrological Programme, UNESCO

Honorable Professor Junichi Yamagiwa,  
President of Kyoto University, the host of  
our Symposium,  
Honorable Professor Shuichi Kawai, Dean  
of the Graduate School of Advanced Inte-  
grated Studies on Human Survivability of  
Kyoto University,  
Honorable Mr Patrick Okafor, Deputy-Per-  
manent Delegate of Nigeria to UNESCO,  
Distinguished Experts,  
Dear participants of the Symposium,  
Representatives of UNESCO IHP National Committees and UNESCO-affiliated water  
centres,  
Ladies and Gentlemen!



It is my honor to welcome you, on behalf of UNESCO, once again to this UNESCO INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM on Scientific, Technological and Policy Innovations for Improving Water Quality in the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals Framework, organized under the International Initiative on Water Quality of UNESCO's International Hydrological Programme, and hosted by Kyoto University and the Lake Biwa Environmental Research Institute.

As we all know, water is essential for life on Earth, for human survival, and for ecosystems which provide fundamental life-support services. Even more so, water of good quality is essential for human health and well-being, as well as for ensuring water resources sustainability because water quality degradation is becoming a major factor limiting water resources availability in many parts of the world, for maintaining ecosystem integrity, and for enhancing food security and reducing poverty, hunger and inequalities, which are key development issues. Because of these multiple dimensions of how water quality touches upon on different aspects of our lives and societies, water quality is one of the fundamental basis of sustainable development. This crucial importance of water quality in sustainable development has been recognized not only at the local and national levels, but also at the international levels.

The United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are ending in 2015 and the global community is already setting the agenda for sustainable development for the post-2015 period by defining a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which will be built on the MDGs and will also address new and broader sustainable development issues, not addressed by the MDGs. The post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals places a higher priority on water issues by dedicating a stand-alone goal on water—Goal 6 on “ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all”, whereas water was part of a broader goal on environmental sustainability under the MDGs. Under this goal, water quality is explicitly addressed in Target 6.3 on “improving water quality and wastewater management”. This is a demonstration of the increasing political attention on water quality issues and the recognition at the highest political level of the crucial importance of water quality in sustainable development. As the implementation of the SDGs will start, it will be required to monitor and evaluate progress in the achievement of SDG Target on water quality. Yet, at both national and global levels, water quality data and information is very scarce and often not reliable to provide a basis for sound decisionmaking. This problem is due to lack of national capacities to effectively monitor water quality both in terms of technical and human capacities, which is a common problem in developing countries. Even in developed countries, effective water quality monitoring requires significant investments in terms of expensive laboratories and tools required the ever-growing diverse types of pollutants such as emerging pollutants.

Our Symposium is therefore a very timely and important event, contributing to the strengthening of national capacities on water quality monitoring through the sharing and dissemination of scientific, technological and policy approaches and practical cases of best practices to improve water quality monitoring. Yesterday during our field trip organized by the Lake Biwa Environmental Research Institute, we have learned from the Japanese experience of addressing water quality problems in Lake Biwa over the past 4-5 decades, as well as of the modern technologies used in Japan for drinking water purification and water quality monitoring. It is the purpose of this kind of meetings—like our Symposium—that UNESCO organizes to facilitate the sharing of knowledge, experiences and technological and policy approaches, as well as to promote scientific collaboration among countries. We expect that this Symposium will serve this purpose.

We also expect that through your contributions to this Symposium with your research results and practical cases on innovative approaches to water quality monitoring, UNESCO helps to bridge the science and policy interface to improve national policies and strategies on water quality because our Symposium participants do not only include scientists and researchers. It is a pleasure to have among us today, as participants and contributors to this Scientific Symposium, policy makers and diplomats (Deputy-Permanent Delegate of Nigeria to UNESCO), government officials from ministries, practitioners representing national water agencies and also regional basin organizations.

I also hope that this Symposium will help you—Dear Participants—to build collaboration and partnership opportunities with your peers from different parts of the world so that the exchange and dissemination of the knowledge, expertise and experience will continue even after the Symposium and for many and many years in the future. That will be the true and long-lasting success of our Symposium, in addition to, of course, the immediate result of the Symposium—of what we will achieve during the next two days in this meeting room to share the knowledge, experiences and best practices.

With this, I would like to conclude that we look forward to a successful Symposium with rich discussions and experience sharing and lots of opportunities for future collaboration and partnerships.

Thank you for your attention!

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