



**INTERACTION
COUNCIL**

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Humankind is faced with the danger of a water crisis. Without water, energy cannot be produced, crops cannot grow, sanitization is compromised, and human health is put in jeopardy. Clean and reliable access to water is integral to maintaining and supporting a life full of dignity.

Reflecting the interdependence of the world and the importance of multilateral solutions, the InterAction Council assembled for its 29th Annual Plenary Session in Québec, Canada in May 2011 to focus on the global water crisis and address present challenges of the world: the unrest in the Middle East and nuclear disarmament.

With regard to the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disaster in Fukushima, the Council expressed its deep condolences to the Japanese people, the victims of the disaster, and their families.

The Council expressed its gratitude to the resigning Secretary-General Mr Isamu Miyazaki and welcomed its incoming Secretary General, Dr Thomas Axworthy.

Present State of the World

North Africa and the Middle East are undergoing great change. The enthusiasm of crowds calling for democracy and human rights is a demonstration that the desire for freedom is universal. At the same time, these dramatic changes bring the possibility of prolonged instability in their wake. While military interventions can prevent massacres and provide short-term order, they are no substitute for the hard, long, local learning necessary for democracy's roots to take hold. The leaders and peoples of the Middle East must prepare now their pathways to reform.

How the new regimes of the Middle East will affect the Israeli/Palestinian conflict is yet to be seen, but what is certain is that the region will remain unstable until there is a peaceful settlement of this conflict. Recent efforts by US President Barack Obama to reinvigorate the peace negotiations and his calls to stop the expansion of Israeli settlements in Palestinian territories are welcome steps. They need continued support.

The world's economy remains in severe disarray, even if it is slowly recovering from the financial meltdown. The present situation has been brought on by excessive risk-taking by financial institutions, greed, and inadequate regulation of the financial markets. While a coordinated approach by the G20 has prevented a depression, the financial crisis is not yet over. The previous accumulation of fiscal debt, effect of the recession on fiscal revenue and the stimulus measures have created escalating debt, which will lead to inflation and a reduced capacity of states to respond to evolving crises.

Inflation disproportionately causes hardships for the poor and the vulnerable. The lives of the one billion people already struggling to survive on less than a dollar a day become even more difficult as commodity and oil prices continue to increase.

Recent events have reminded us of the devastating force of natural disasters and their immediate effects on mankind. No continent is immune to the effects of intensification of natural phenomena caused by climate change as demonstrated by floods, hurricanes, earthquakes and tornadoes ravaging the globe.

The experience of Japan raises dramatically the issue of the risks and rewards related to energy production. Many countries have turned towards nuclear power as a means to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions to meet the challenges of climate change. However, there are potential safety issues with nuclear energy. Japan's experience highlights the necessity of moving towards renewable energy and developing a model of sustainability.

Furthermore, in dealing with climate change, reducing black carbon and methane gas from farm waste and urban landfills should be priorities.

Responsible solutions to global issues should be anchored in mutual understanding of global ethics. What is required in the global architecture is a document which outlines core principles of moral responsibility, a code of ethics which places a premium on truth, respect for every individual, and concern for the security and well being of all. In this regard, the InterAction Council reaffirmed its commitment to the Universal Declaration on Human Responsibilities and considered pathways for its advancement.

The future is shared by us all. We need multilateral solutions and an exploration of new ways to address issues that reflect the interconnected world in which we live. Global progress is possible, but it takes time and it is never easy. It includes both a risk and a reward: a solution to a problem today contains equal risk in creating a new task tomorrow. In global policy we sometimes fail, occasionally succeed, but mostly we cope.

Therefore the InterAction Council recommends:

1. *Pursuing* a truly multilateral world order in which decision-making structures reflect the interconnectivity of the global village in which we live, in order to address common challenges most effectively.
2. *Supporting* the processes for peaceful transition in the Middle East to embrace democracy, liberty, and human rights.
3. *Urging* regimes in the Middle East to recognize that sustained freedom requires commitment to order, the rule of law, tolerance of dissidence and a culture of liberty.
4. *Recalling* that a primary issue preventing stability in the Middle East is the Israeli/Palestinian conflict and its influence on terrorism.
5. *Demanding* that Israel cease construction and expansion of new settlements in Palestinian territories and East Jerusalem.
6. *Supporting* US President Obama in his renewed efforts for seeking peace in the Israeli/Palestinian conflict.
7. *Demanding* Israel conform with the 2004 Advisory Opinion by the International Court of Justice on the wall constructed on Palestinian territories and comply with the 1949 Geneva Conventions.

8. *Recognizing* that terrorism is a threat to the world and that while there are many causes of terrorism, states should make every effort to understand these causes and, where possible, remedy them.
9. *Calling* for strong leadership to manage the world economy, so as to reduce debt, avoid depression, and address poverty.
10. *Urging* all heavily indebted countries to take significant action to deal effectively with their national debts.
11. *Encouraging* the implementation of the agreements reached at the G20 Summit in Pittsburgh in 2009.
12. *Welcoming* the work done by the United Nations High Level Panel on Global Sustainability to address global challenges.
13. *Making* internet coverage accessible and open to all and incorporating online learning into education policies especially on the subject on ethics.
14. *Reaffirming* the Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities and urging states, regional associations, special agencies of the United Nations and the UN General Assembly to adopt the Declaration.

Global Water Crisis: Addressing an Urgent Sustainability Issue

Water is life. It is essential in our daily lives: to quench our thirst, grow our food, for sanitation to keep up health and to produce the energy that drives our modern age. However, more than 97 per cent of the Earth's water is salty, while 2 per cent remains frozen in ice and snow. This leaves less than 1 per cent to meet the increasing demand for freshwater. We will either fight over water or use it collaboratively.

Lack of clean water is interlinked with disease, poverty and inequality, with women often being disproportionately affected. There is an annual expenditure of over 10 million

person-years of time and effort by women and children carrying water from distant sources.

One billion people never get a glass of clean water and more than two billion people lack basic sanitation. In addressing water issues, we address economic and public health woes, while also advancing capacity to adapt to climate change and thus, reducing the pressures of climate-related migration.

As global energy demands rise, the energy sector is being placed into greater competition with other water users. This will impact regional energy reliability and energy security. Until our thinking about water and energy can be integrated, sustainability will continue to elude us.

The Millennium Development Goals strive to halve the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation by 2015. Advancements have been made on the water target, whereas on the sanitation target progress is lagging far behind. Solidarity needs to be shown with those needing assistance in attaining basic sanitation systems.

Nowhere is the water crisis as imminent as in the Middle East, where several states contend over the use of the Euphrates and Jordan River basins. Joint efforts will be vital in making water-sharing part of a peaceful Middle East. However, the effects of the water crisis reach far beyond the developing world.

A growing number of rivers do not make it to the sea and surface and groundwater contamination make valuable water supplies unfit for use. Despite this, meaningful solutions for water management are impeded by jurisdictional fragmentation and institutional territoriality. Political jurisdictions have created artificial boundaries for shared resources around the world: water and rivers flow without worrying about political boundaries drawn on a map.

Instead, a watershed based approach should be pursued. International examples suggest that watershed-scale management of water resources can generate increased economic

benefits. The European Union provides a positive example of a successful agreement on water management standards and the linkage between agricultural and water policies.

Solutions to the water crisis need to be sought from the perspective of development, energy, technology, international law, gender equality, migration, economic progress, public health conservation and environment. International water leadership is virtually nonexistent. Political will, financial resources, good governance and public education are lacking. It is for that reason that the InterAction Council will establish a panel on the global water issues, building on the positive examples of the Singapore International Water Week, the Stockholm Water Conference, the World Water Council and other similar initiatives.

There is only a finite amount of water in the world. The water we drink today is the same water we will drink tomorrow and our grandchildren will drink generations from now. This necessitates the promotion of an ethic of water usage and a realization that water is simply too valuable not to manage appropriately.

The Council endorsed the Chairmen's Report of the High-level Expert Group Meeting "The Global Water Crisis: Addressing an Urgent Security Issue" chaired by Mr Jean Chretien, Dr Franz Vranitzky and Mr Olusegun Obasanjo in Toronto on 21-23 March 2011.

Therefore the InterAction Council recommends:

1. *Placing* water at the forefront of the global political agenda and linking climate change research and adaptation programs to water issues.
2. *Urging* national governments to price water sources to appropriately reflect its economic value, while making provisions for those in poverty.
3. *Urging* national governments to stimulate private and public sector innovation to address the global water crisis and capitalize on the economic opportunities that arise from finding solutions to these complex challenges.

4. *Asserting* that where water supplies are threatened, water used to grow food should not be substituted for water to grow crops for biofuel production.
5. *Encouraging* increased investment in urgently needed sanitation coverage and improved access to safe water supply globally.
6. *Welcoming* the work done by the Clinton/Bush Haiti Fund, which aims to rebuild housing in Haiti with adequate sanitation to avoid public health disasters through water contamination.
7. *Supporting* ratification of the UN Watercourses Convention and the development of the draft articles on transboundary aquifers.
8. *Supporting* and advancing the UN international water protocols.
9. *Encouraging* a discussion on water security at the UN Security Council.
10. *Linking* of agricultural and water policy with energy policy locally, nationally, and globally.
11. *Encouraging* the development of materials and water treatment approaches to enable non-traditional water use in domestic, industrial, and in energy generation and refining applications and in particular research on more cost-effective desalinization integrated with renewable energy resources.
12. *Renewing* local, national, and international focus on monitoring hydrological processes and increased attention to mapping and monitoring of groundwater.
13. *Urging* national governments and multi-national companies to improve water availability assessment, energy and water systems analysis, and decision tools
14. *Urging* national governments to reduce the loss of water in public networks through adequate monitoring and infrastructure development, as well as the per capita consumption in municipal use.

15. *Supporting* the conservation of the world's intact freshwater ecosystems, the establishment of ecological sustainability boundaries, and investment in ecosystem restoration.
16. *Encouraging* high-level dialogue and cooperation on water-allocation in major transboundary rivers such as discussions between Indochina states on the Mekong River.
17. *Welcoming* the role of NGOs in the further development of water governance solutions and particularly emphasizing the role of women, given their special responsibility for water.

Weapons of Mass Destruction

The continuing existence of nuclear weapons is an unacceptable and disproportionate threat to every living thing on the planet. The only enduring solution to this threat lies in the verifiable and irreversible elimination of these weapons.

As long as nuclear weapons exist in the hands of any state, they will be sought also by others. As long as nuclear weapons exist they will be used one day, either by deliberate action or by accident. Any use of nuclear weapons would be a human, ecological, economic, political and moral catastrophe. States continue to seek nuclear weapons for a number of reasons. The question of proliferation needs to be recognized and addressed.

The new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) between the United States and Russia is a positive step forward in that it will over the next ten years reduce the number of warheads by 30 per cent.

To mark its continued commitment to nuclear disarmament, the Council reiterated its Hiroshima Declaration of 19 April 2010 and its Communiqué of the 29th Annual Plenary and in the process reaffirmed the need for action to seek full implementation of these recommendations.

While nuclear weapons are extremely dangerous, the Council recalled that small arms and light weapons kill over 500,000 people annually, approximately one person per minute, day and night.

Lasting peace remains just out of reach, despite all our efforts. It is up to us to ensure that our children do not experience the horrors of nuclear weapons.

Therefore the InterAction Council recommends:

1. *Taking* into account the Hiroshima Declaration of 2010 as well as the Communiqué of the 29th Annual Plenary of the InterAction Council.
2. *Welcoming* the entry into force of the new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty between the United States and Russia.
3. *Implementing* the UN Secretary General's Five-Point Proposal on Nuclear Disarmament as well as the decisions of the 2010 Review Conference on the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty.
4. *Issuing* as an immediate first step a commitment to non-first use of nuclear weapons by all states.
5. *Initiating* discussions on a framework of mutually reinforcing agreements or a convention on nuclear weapons, in order to develop without further delay 'a comprehensive nuclear treaty architecture aiming at the elimination of nuclear weapons'.
6. *Concluding* a convention prohibiting nuclear weapons, in the same manner as conventions prohibiting biological and chemical weapons.
7. *Calling* on nuclear weapon states to confirm and implement their obligations under article VI of the NPT, to negotiate and achieve nuclear disarmament.

8. *Emphasizing* that all states possessing nuclear weapons should reduce and eventually eliminate their arsenals.
9. *Restricting* and regulating international production and trade in small arms by supporting the draft International Arms Trade Treaty and in this regard, continuing constructive negotiations on the treaty.

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Governments

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