Überschrift/Titel:	Welcome Address
Untertitel:	
Redner/in:	Thomas Stratenwerth
Anlass:	6th Water Research Horizon Conference
Ort:	Botanischer Garten, Berlin
Anzahl Zeichen/Worte:	5777/ 1044
Voraussichtl.Rededauer:	10 min (Zuschlag: 0 %)

Dear Prof Krebs, dear Dr Kraus, dear Dr Wachter, dear Members of the Water Science Alliance, dear participants,

It's a pleasure for me to welcome you to this 6th Water Research Horizon Conference. These yearly conferences are showcasing the vitality and scientific capabilities of the interdisciplinary water research community in Germany and how this community is integrated in international research networks. The success of this conference format also underlines the need for such a platform where researchers from

different scientific disciplines can exchange on their respective approaches and jointly identify elements for common research agendas. But providing such a platform is more than organizing a conference. It is also about building and maintaining an infrastructure which supports networking among researches, identification of research topics and communicating research needs to the political arena and to decision makers at various levels. This is what the Water Science Alliance was founded for in 2013 and has been striving for since. This is certainly a huge challenge having in mind the diversity of research institutions and

scientific disciplines engaged in water related research in Germany and the complex frameworks for research funding. The Water Science Alliance had a good start but to be able to stand the challenge of its mission statement it needs to establish a critical mass of water researchers and water research institutes and institutions as active and/or supporting members. It will therefore be critical for the further development of the Alliance that it is accepted as a collective, bottom up initiative with the ability to create overall added value for the water research community. Only with an increasing membership the Water

Science Alliance can mobilize the resources required for providing services for its internal networks and relevant inputs to political processes. Therefore it would be nice to see a doubling in the number of members by the date of the 7th Water Research Horizon Conference in June next year and I hope that today´sconference will motivate some of you to join. Visibility as an organization is certainly an asset in this context and the BMUB is surely open for joint activities which may help the Water Science Alliance in this regard. The membership of our Federal Environment Agency which intends to host the 7th WRHC at its premises

in Dessau next year is also to be seen in this context. Just last week I discussed with members of the board of the Water Science Alliance options for joint activities at international events such as the Stockholm World Water Week.

Ladies and gentleman,

In September 2015 the Heads of States and Governments of the Member States of the United Nations are going to decide on a new global development agenda and a set of Sustainable Development Goals

for the time until 2030. This set of goals will entail a specific goal on ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all. With its 6 sub targets the goal will cover universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all, access to adequate and equitable sanitation, improvement of water quality by reducing pollution, inter alia through halving the proportion of untreated waste water, increasing recycling and safe reuse, increasing water-use efficiency, implementing integrated water resources management and protection and restoration of water-related ecosystems. In addition some

of the other goals will also address water management issues such as water related disasters, water-borne diseases or the pollution by hazardous chemicals.

These targets focus on the most urgent global water management issues and at the same time shall contribute greatly to the achievement of other SDGa, such as those on energy and food security, health and gender equality.

The SDGs will set the scene for prioritizing implementation activities nationally and internationally for the next one and a half decade and inevitably will also have an impact on research agendas and research programs around the world.

Against this background it is good to see that a number of the themes selected by Water Science Alliance for this year`s conference program are closely linked to implementation aspects of the SDGs, namely “water and urban infrastructure”, “water and food”, “water resources and

health". This is a clear indication that the Water Sccience Alliance wants to address politically and practically relevant topics and to highlight contributions the research community can provide to finding solutions. As I am representing one of the co-organizing ministries of the Bonn 2011 Water-Energy-Food-Security Conference I am certainly particularly interested in the interfaces among water and other policy fields.

These are themes where the solutions are not to be found in natural science and engineering alone because social and economic aspects

need to be taken into due account for defining applicable approaches. Societies are different and so are the conditions under which solutions are to be implemented. I therefore appreciate that these societal challenges are also mirrored in the program – although I would like to recommend more of this for future conferences.

Closing gaps in the availability and quality of water related data will be a key for developing efficient and effective strategies for implementing the SDG on water and sanitation in many parts of the world. Again the challenge is quite different for developing and developed countries. In

Europe for example we are struggling with ever more sensitive monitoring approaches for detecting potentially harmful micro-pollutants whereas in other parts of the world – such as Sub-Sahara Africa – even basic water quantity and quality parameters are not sufficiently monitored. Both are relevant topics for research as well while the latter may be more a matter of capacity development through research cooperation. However there might be also opportunities for new approaches including involvement of civil society groups and organizations in monitoring campaigns. Are there options for

leapfrogging the classical monitoring systems – like mobile communication technologies did with landline communication in many developing countries - and which kind of new technologies would be required?

Beyond these more practical and implementation related research themes there are certainly many open questions with regard to a better and more comprehensive fundamental understanding of the aquatic systems themselves as well as of their interactions and interlinkages with

other natural systems such as the atmosphere and terrestrial ecosystems. Adding anthropogenic effects on these systems to the picture enlarges the list of open questions even more. Similarly we often do not understand very well the mode of functioning of the policy measures we chose to mitigate anthropogenic effects and the potential side effects of our interventions. Do we for example know whether the programs of measures we are now deploying to achieve good ecological status of water bodies according to the WFD are the most appropiate

ones considering that climate change may alter the ecological conditions of our water bodies in the coming decades?

I am looking forward to a well selected program and I wish all participants to days of a fruitful and forward looking exchange which may result in some new ideas for research initiatives and partnerships.