

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the Consulate General of France for tonight's 32nd edition of our Conferences@934.

The Consulate has been organizing this series of French-American debates for more than three years now. We will continue to touch upon a variety of topics in the years coming and contribute to the exchange of ideas between our two countries. Once again, allow me to thank our loyal audience, as well as the newcomers, for being here tonight.

After we discussed Gender equality in France last month with French Minister Najat Vallaud-Belkacem, we are gathered tonight to speak of a different and yet fascinating issue: the environment and our water policies. Last month as the international community celebrated the world water day, UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, recalled that "One in three people already lives in a country with moderate to high water stress, and by 2030 nearly half the global population could be facing water scarcity, with demand outstripping supply by 40 per cent".

We are fortunate to have Professor Laurence Tubiana with us tonight, along with Upmanu Lall, to discuss water scarcity worldwide and the policies developed by France and the United States to address this issue. Laurence, you are the founder and director of the Institute of Sustainable Development and International Relations (IDDRI) in Paris. You are also the director of the Sustainable Development Chair at Sciences Po and a professor at the School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University. I would also like to mention that you are a member of the French White Paper Commission on

Foreign and European Policy and that you served previously as Senior Advisor on Environmental Issues to former French Prime Minister, Lionel Jospin.

Thanks as well to Professor Upmanu Lall for accepting our invitation. Upmanu, you are the Director of the Columbia Water Center, whose mission is to tackle the issue of global water scarcity through innovations in technology, public policy and private action. You are a leading expert on hydro climatology, climate change adaptation, risk analysis and mitigation. You are also a Professor of Engineering at Columbia University and a Senior Research Scientist at the International Research Institute for Climate & Society.

Finally, I would like to thank Alessia Lefebure and Lauranne Bardin from the Alliance Program at Columbia University with whom we have been organising the conference tonight.

Before we begin, allow me to remind you of the rules of the game: each speaker will have about ten minutes before we open up the debate for a half-hour session of Q & A. We shall end this part at around 8:00 p.m. and continue the conversation over drinks. Finally, you may find the photos and audio recording of the conference on our website, as of tomorrow.

With no further delay, I hand the microphone to Upmanu Lall and wish you all an excellent evening.