

Ladies and gentlemen, dear Lions, dear friends,

I am delighted that I will be celebrating my eightieth birthday in 2024 and I have a heartfelt wish. I need your help to fulfil it: I wish for more clean, drinkable water in the world, because water is life. I would like to take a brief look back together and look to the future.

My name is Reinhold Hocke. Many of you know me from Lions through the PAUL water filter rucksack and as a member of the European Lions WaSH working group, which is committed to improving the supply of water, sanitation and hygiene, especially in poorer regions of the world.

Regular transfers and relocations to new places of work meant that I often had to change clubs. I have also enjoyed the hospitality of clubs in Germany, Europe and the USA time and again. I have internalized that our neighbors are not just family, friends and the community. "We serve" also means that we take care of our fellow human beings in countries that do not live in peace, prosperity and health, but in abject poverty and disease.

Very often there is not only a lack of drinkable water, but also sanitary facilities and any awareness of hygiene. According to a UN study, 4,000 children worldwide die every day from diarrhea. That's 1.6 million children a year.

After my retirement as a professional soldier in the German army, I returned to our home in northern Hesse with my wife. I quickly made new friends at the Melsungen Lions Club. I feel at home there.

Many of you have accompanied me in recent years and given me opportunities to organize my life as a pensioner in a meaningful way.

This has helped me to continue living the values that have characterized me in my profession: "We serve". "We serve"- How often have I travelled the country with the PAUL water filter!

When I was elected founding president of the Lions Europe Forum's "Water, Sanitation and Hygiene" Working Group, or WaSH for short, I was delighted to have reached a point where I could work with like-minded Lions on structural methods to combat poverty, hunger and death and campaign for better living conditions and education.

This is how I found my favorite theme: "Water is life".

Lions Germany agreed to my proposal as chairman of the organizing association MDV Kassel 2013 to choose "Water" as the main theme of this congress. We were able to win our former Minister of the Environment and long-time Director of the United Nations Environment Program, Prof. Klaus Töpfer, as a guest speaker.

In Kassel, he made the following appeal to us, the assembled congress participants. -

I quote:

"You alone will not solve the world's water problems, but you (as the world's largest service organization) can set examples that it takes the cooperation of many to tackle a major problem."

That really moved many of us. And we have tackled projects! Successfully!

Shortly before reaching the age of eighty, I gave up all my honorary posts. Nevertheless, the topic of The European Lions WaSH Working Group is developing outstanding aid projects under the chairmanship of my successor (PDG) Hans-Ludwig Rau. THANK YOU, you are on the right path into the future!

On the occasion of my birthday, instead of personal gifts, I would like to ask for donations for the "Water is Life" projects supported by the German Lions Foundation. Please think of the many people who gratefully accept our help!

I look forward to receiving generous donations. Thank you in advance!

Donation account of Lions Germany is shown

<https://stiftung.lions.de/spenden>

Foundation of the German Lions

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