As far as the issue of participation in realizing the human right to water and sanitation is concerned, there are three different but complementary approaches that we have addressed in our research and technical advisory activities.

1. First, our particular concern is with efficiency in the provision of drinking water supply and sanitation services. This depends, among other things, especially on regulation, since in public utility sectors, efficiency is determined more by regulatory framework than by, for example, property structure. Regulation is often defined as a problem of control under asymmetric information. So access to information (objective, comparable, etc.) is of paramount importance for regulation, and hence, for efficiency. One useful source of information that is often ignored is the participation of consumers in the regulatory process. We developed this issue in a number of studies, first, in brief, in an English-language study available at <http://www.cepal.org/publicaciones/xml/7/8407/LCR2032-I.pdf>, and later and in more detail in a Spanish-language study available at <http://www.cepal.org/publicaciones/xml/5/13245/Lcl1954e.pdf>

2. Second, our research points to, as a further source of inefficiency, the limits of the traditional corporativization approach to water utilities (state- or municipally-owned). To address these concerns we developed a concept of "open" as opposed to "closed" public corporation, which is characterized by public participation both in internal utility management as well as in external control, supervisory and regulatory agencies and processes. All these issues are addressed in our Spanish-language study available at <http://www.cepal.org/publicaciones/xml/4/42864/Lcw381e.pdf>

3. Finally, to address the specifics of public participation in the provision of drinking water supply and sanitation not only as a public utility service but also and fundamentally as a human right, we developed a further Spanish-language study, available at <http://www.cepal.org/publicaciones/xml/8/49558/Elderechohumanoalagua.pdf>, which argues that the recognition of these services as a human right implies additional requirements in terms of public participation, as for example, consulting the public on the ways, modes and strategies in which this right is to be satisfied.

Natural Resources and Infrastructure Division
Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)