

Thematic Consultation on Water in the post -2015 development agenda

Cross-cutting discussion on human rights and inequalities

Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation

Human rights and WASH, water resources and wastewater

1. Introduction

This short paper seeks to illustrate the importance and contribution of a human rights perspective for some key issues in the ongoing discussions in the water sector. My aim as Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation is to offer a cross cutting view to the Thematic Consultation on Water, underlining some questions and concerns that need to be addressed taking into account the full spectrum of rights. I seek to encourage a vision for the post-2015 development agenda that is both ambitious and comprehensive, firmly anchored in human rights for all, without discrimination.

The link between water and human rights is not new. Ensuring the protection of various human rights has had significant implications for how water resources and wastewater have been managed, whether in relation to health or agriculture, to mention a few areas. Since the 2010 UN General Assembly resolution explicitly recognizing the human rights to water and sanitation, these rights have mainly been discussed in the context of domestic water supply and sanitation. However, the rights to water and sanitation and other interdependent human rights are increasingly present in the broader water sector discussions, and have significant implications for how water resources and wastewater are managed.

All human rights share a common international human rights framework, in which a number of principles are central.

All human rights are both linked and indivisible from one another, and cannot be considered in isolation. The human rights to water and sanitation are derived from other rights, notably the right to an adequate standard of living, which is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human

Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). The ICESCR also includes the right to food and freedom from hunger, and these cannot be realised without access to safe water, free from pollution, and in sufficient quantities. The consequences of water use for agriculture on communities who face hunger, and their right to food, is an essential dimension of the discussion on water use and water prioritisation, whether considering small-scale subsistence farming or large-scale farming, for example of fruit for export. Likewise, water quality and quantity are intimately linked to the enjoyment of the right to health, with poor water quality and lack of sanitation among the main causes of disease and death around the world. Pollution of rivers

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, followed by two Covenants; the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Other treaties focus on the human rights of specific population groups such as children, women or persons with disabilities. Together, these underpin all human rights as recognized by the member states of the United Nations.

and poor wastewater management are as critical an issue for the right to health as for the right to water or to sanitation. The right to adequate housing cannot be guaranteed without ensuring infrastructure such as water and sewage systems, available and affordable to all. The interconnection of human rights also highlights the importance of a comprehensive approach: when one human right is not effectively protected and promoted, other rights are endangered.

Equality can be defined as being the state of being equal in the enjoyment of all human rights. However, under human rights law, equal doesn't mean the same. Equality does not indicate identical treatment in all cases, or that everyone benefits from the same technical solutions or the same type of service, but rather that a "leveling up" must occur, so that levels of service must be improved for individuals or groups that lag behind. **Non-discrimination** means that no one must be excluded or impaired from exercising his or her rights on the basis of race, colour, sex, ethnicity, age, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, disability, property, birth or other status. Multiple discrimination refers to the compound impact of two or more of these grounds in the same person, such as when someone faces discrimination on the basis of gender and ethnicity at the same time.

People have different needs as a result of inherent characteristics and therefore require different services, structures or support. International human rights treaties recognize that marginalized groups, such as racial and ethnic minorities and persons with disabilities, as well as women and girls or children more generally, face discrimination and have the right to receive special attention. States must hence take additional measures to address all forms of (direct and indirect, deliberate or unintended) discrimination in law and in practice. Governments must take pro-active measures to eliminate discrimination, reduce barriers and allocate resources in a way that promotes both access and opportunity.

Under human rights law, States have immediate obligations as well as the obligation of "**progressive realisation**" of economic, social and cultural rights. Together, these principles take into account that the full realisation of human rights requires time and numerous steps, and that these cannot be completed in a short period of time, nor can they be postponed indefinitely. Progressive realisation means that States must take adequate steps in a timely and effective manner, without unnecessary or unjustified delays, and with due consideration to the use of the maximum resources available at a given time.

Participation and **accountability** are also overarching human rights principles. Participation requires that meaningful opportunities are provided for people to take part in decision-making on policies and programmes that have an impact on their lives. This applies in particular to generally under-represented and marginalized groups and individuals, such as women and ethnic and racial minorities. Accountability relates primarily to the requirement that the state be held accountable for meeting its obligations to realize human rights. Accountability can take many different forms: from monitoring, through complaint mechanisms, to, as the last resort, formal judicial proceedings. Accountability is also essential in relation to third parties (as private companies, informal sector, nongovernmental organizations, among others), whether involved in the provision of services or using water resources.

Sustainability is also key to the uninterrupted and long-term enjoyment of rights related to water; it is essential to ensure that not only present generations enjoy the benefits of water and sanitation, but also that future generations are catered for. Sustainability has economic, environmental, and

social dimensions. It requires looking beyond simply providing people with access to water and sanitation services, but also ensuring that planning and budgets take into account the need for infrastructure to last, and for effective institutions and personnel for operation and maintenance to be in place over extended periods of time. At a broader level, sustainability can only be ensured through the protection and conservation of ecosystems to ensure water quality and safeguard people's health. In the case of sanitation, in particular, ensuring sustainability also involves changes in behaviour such as moving away from open defecation.

In developing a vision for the post-2015 agenda for water, there are interesting lessons to be learned from the evolution of the drinking water and sanitation sector. Although they are protected in several human rights instruments at the national and international levels, drinking water and sanitation were only explicitly recognized as human rights at the international political level in 2010. Furthermore, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) established in 2000 include targets for both drinking water and sanitation, but the targets are silent on eliminating discrimination, inequalities and unjustifiable disparities. Twelve years after monitoring of the MDGs began, we can see that despite good progress on extending water coverage – in fact, the MDG water target was met in 2010 – huge disparities remain. Even though 89 per cent of the world's population uses "improved" water sources, analysis shows that the poorest are far less likely to have water services and to use "improved" sanitation, and rural areas have much lower coverage than urban areas. Sanitation lags far behind, and two and a half billion people are still without "improved" sanitation (37 per cent of the global population), almost three-quarters of whom live in rural areas. Open defecation is still practiced by 1.1 billion people (15 per cent of the global population), predominantly the poorest. (WHO/UNICEF 2012)

While these figures indicate lower coverage figures, on average, for rural areas than for urban areas, there are concerns that the situation in informal urban settlements is hard to ascertain accurately, and that averages and data gaps mask important intra-urban disparities. Current data sources may paint an inaccurate picture for a variety of reasons: due to the way administrative boundaries are drawn, many informal settlements are counted as "rural" while, in fact, being urban or peri-urban living environments; informal settlements are notoriously difficult to enumerate properly in household surveys; and people in these localities may be counted as "served" by urban piped water networks when in fact they receive water infrequently and in insufficient quantities. Qualitative evidence suggests that people living in informal settlements are often discriminated against, and face significant barriers in accessing or retaining services; a common reason being that local laws require that they have legal tenure in order to access services, while human rights law requires access to water and sanitation for every person, regardless of property or tenure status.

Inequalities extend beyond wealth and geography: girls and women are more likely to bear the burden of water collection; women without access to sanitation suffer the indignity of being forced to defecate in the open and are at risk from rape and assault; and the widespread lack of menstrual hygiene management facilities limits the participation of women and girls in education and the workplace. Global and national averages mask these disparities, and the available data are often inadequate to bring to light other forms of discrimination which occur along lines of ethnicity and socio-economic status. For instance, Dalits in South Asia suffer discrimination in accessing water and sanitation, and Roma communities in Europe often lack water and sanitation facilities. Likewise, persons with disabilities are disproportionately represented among those who lack access to water and sanitation. (de Albuquerque 2012a).

One clear lesson for the sector is that targets that do not explicitly encompass equality and non-discrimination will not result in the realisation of human rights. From a human rights perspective, the objective to be achieved is that everyone's rights are realized on the basis of non-discrimination. This has broad implications for the water sector: inequalities in access and use must be reduced with the ultimate goal of everyone using safe water and sanitation; water resources must be allocated in a way that allows for everyone's human rights to be met; water resources must be managed in a transparent and participatory way; people must have the opportunity to hold States to account and claim their rights; and no one must be harmed through wastewater discharged by others.

2. Drinking water, sanitation and hygiene

Drinking water¹, sanitation and hygiene, often shortened to the acronym WASH, are relevant to a wide range of human rights including education, health, work, decent working conditions, housing, food, life, physical security, prohibition of inhuman or degrading treatment, and equality of men and women.

In addition to the principles of non-discrimination, participation and accountability, the human rights to water and sanitation require that services are available, safe, acceptable, accessible, and affordable. These criteria are further described a leaflet prepared by the Special Rapporteur which is available at: www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Water/LegalObligations_en.pdf

Right to water: "The human right to water entitles everyone to sufficient, safe, acceptable, physically accessible and affordable water for personal and domestic uses. An adequate amount of safe water is necessary to prevent death from dehydration, to reduce the risk of water-related disease and to provide for consumption, cooking, personal and domestic hygienic requirements." from General Comment No. 15 (2002) by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Right to sanitation: The UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights to Water and Sanitation has defined sanitation from a human rights perspective as a 'system for the collection, transport, treatment and disposal or reuse of human excreta and associated hygiene. States must ensure without discrimination that everyone has physical and economic access to sanitation, in all spheres of life, which is safe, hygienic, secure, socially and culturally acceptable, provides privacy and ensures dignity.' (A/HRC/12/24) This definition has been endorsed by the United Nations Human Rights Council and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

The principle of progressive realization, in the case of drinking water and sanitation, relates to both moving towards universal basic access, improving the level of services, and ensuring that these services are sustained (avoiding retrogression). Human rights obligations do not imply only settling for minimum standards such as access to a latrine or a well at a particular distance from the home or workplace. Fulfillment of human rights ultimately requires achieving an adequate standard of living, which could, for instance, require drinking water and sanitation services supplied within the home. In that context, progressive realization means that States that have already achieved basic access have to move beyond this in order to ensure the full realization of the human rights to drinking water and sanitation.

While the ultimate goal to be reached is a level of service that corresponds to an adequate standard of living for all people, the human rights framework also requires setting priorities in a way to meet the most basic requirements for all first. Hence actions by States have to start with and focus on the un-served and the underserved. This means that basic access for all must be achieved before moving to higher levels of service. Once a basic level of access is met, States are required to improve the standards achieved, for instance, by moving to service provision at the household level.

¹ In this document, the term "drinking water" is used to specify water for domestic purposes

In order to fully realize human rights, WASH must be provided in all spheres of life, including detention centres, health centres and schools (the latter in particular to ensure girls have equal opportunities) as well as for households.

Inequalities must be eliminated. What little data are available show that the burden of water collection, for instance, is unfairly distributed between males and females; women and girls are the primary water collectors in 71 per cent of households in sub-Saharan Africa (WHO/UNICEF 2012). There is little data on discrimination within the household, but there are indications that women, children, older persons, and persons with disabilities do not always enjoy the same access to water, sanitation and hygiene facilities as other family members.

3. Water Resources Management

Water is one of the world's most valuable finite resources. Water resources are critical to socio-economic development and for maintaining healthy ecosystems. Water resources are directly linked to livelihoods (fishing, farming, navigation, industry, livestock care) as well as being intimately linked to drinking water, sanitation and wastewater. All these human activities also have an impact in the quality of water. Water demands differ widely - globally, 70 per cent of water used is in agriculture, and only eight per cent of water is allocated to household use – but each fraction needs careful consideration. Sound water resource management is essential to managing competing demands and resolving conflicts as well as to eradicating poverty and hunger, and achieving the full range of human rights.

Water resource management has been the subject of many international instruments over the last 30 years, including the Agenda 21 emanating from the Rio Earth Summit. The Millennium Declaration calls for UN member states “to stop the unsustainable exploitation of water resources by developing water management strategies at the regional, national and local levels, which promote both equitable access and adequate supplies”.

Management of water resources must recognize not just the rights of people alive today, but also those of future generations, as over-extraction of surface and groundwater, poor flood control, destruction of ecosystems, pollution, and other types of water resource mismanagement will have devastating long-term human rights impacts.

Agricultural water use can be (at least partially) linked to the human right to food, which is enshrined in the International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights as part of the right to an adequate standard of living. More broadly, water used for agricultural and industrial purposes, and to economic development in general, contributes to the realization of many people's right to work. Other human rights treaties protect the rights of indigenous people to water sources for a number of purposes, including religious and cultural practices (ILO, 1989). The right to a healthy environment is also recognized in a range of regional and national human rights instruments as well as being referred to in many political declarations.

Establishing these linkages, however, does not imply that all water used in agriculture is directed to the realization of the human right to food, or that all household water use is protected under the human right to water. Luxury uses such as watering lawns, filling up swimming pools or washing cars do not fall under human rights guarantees. Similarly, water-intensive production of some

agricultural goods, such as high-value fruit, goes beyond realizing the requirements of the right to food for instance; instead, these uses increase competition for water resources.

Many competing uses make claims on water resources. Finding approaches to manage and allocate water resources is essential. Among these approaches, Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) has gained traction internationally over the last decades. The Global Water Partnership defines IWRM as “a process which promotes the co-ordinated development and management of water, land and related resources, in order to maximize the resultant economic and social welfare in an equitable manner without compromising the sustainability of vital ecosystems.” (Global Water Partnership, 2000). IWRM aims to optimize the benefits obtained from freshwater resources, and to sustainably meet the competing needs of multiple users.

The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 endorses the concept of IWRM. Article 25 of this Plan calls for “the development and implementation of IWRM and water efficiency strategies, plans and programmes at national and at regional levels, with national-level IWRM plans to be developed by 2005”. The Plan of Implementation recognizes water resources as being inextricably linked to the eradication of poverty and to the achievement of sustainable development. The satisfaction of basic human needs and ecosystem health were identified as the main priorities.

IWRM recognizes that there are many users of water: the consumptive users (such as agriculture, domestic water supply and some industries), the non-consumptive users (such as hydropower, recreation and transport), and the users of water’s natural waste assimilation capacity (producers of wastewaters that are released into water bodies as part of the treatment process, such as cities or industry). IWRM treats water as a resource for fundamental human and ecosystem activities, as well as protection of people from water (flooding, for instance) and water-borne contaminants (wastewater management). Management tools go beyond building infrastructure and controlling pollution to include resource allocation, multi-user planning and economic instruments such as pricing. A key aspect of IWRM is that water resource are managed based on river basin boundaries, not political or administrative boundaries, thus ensuring that upstream and downstream issues are comprehensively considered.

IWRM ideally balances “3Es”: environmental sustainability, social equity and economic efficiency. From a human rights perspective, balancing the social equity pillar against economic efficiency is of particular importance to ensure that basic human needs are met. In practice, however, this does not always happen. Market mechanisms may excel in ensuring economic efficiency, but often simply allocate available water resources to the highest value users, who are unlikely to be the poorest and most marginalized (UNDP, 2012). For instance, market mechanisms may result in the allocation of large amounts of water to “high value” uses such as cultivating flowers or producing beverages, crowding out users who want water to satisfy basic human needs, such as for growing food. Likewise, large-scale agricultural enterprises may have the resources and capacity to drill deeper wells or use more powerful pumps to abstract groundwater, leaving small-scale farmers and households reliant on shallow wells without access.

The legal framework which underpins the allocation of water resources – water law – is a complex web of local, national and international law, which is constantly evolving, as are all bodies of law. Water law can serve as a tool to ensure implementation of the human right to water, but in some instances, it may also contradict human rights principles. Every person, simply by being human, is

entitled to water for his or her personal and domestic use, for the fulfillment of human rights. Water law has a different purpose, being designed to control or grant water rights, permits or licenses for a range of water uses.

Legal frameworks governing water have resulted in vastly different outcomes in different contexts. On the one hand, they may entrench existing power and wealth inequalities. For instance, riparian water rights are based on the legal title held by landowners for property directly adjoining a body of water, and result in only the landowner having the right to use that water. On the other hand, laws that protect traditional water rights (such as those enjoyed by indigenous peoples, who have a collective right to the protection of their way of life, linked to their use of water) may prevent those rights from being infringed. Regardless of the legal framework, weak enforcement, for instance of extraction limits and pollution standards (where they exist), lack of access to justice, or corruption may lead to the violation of human rights. Many small landholders, rural communities and indigenous peoples have been shown to be particularly disadvantaged - their human right to water may be unfulfilled while other users exceed their rights to use water, either through illegal use or sanctioned by permits issued by the State.

These challenges signal a need for both stricter enforcement of existing regulations and legal reform. As states revise their constitutions, legislation, and water policies, many are explicitly recognizing the human right to water. Such recognition needs to be translated into concrete reforms of existing legal framework in all sectors directly or indirectly linked to the use of water resources. From a human rights point of view, it is crucial to ensure that everyone's basic human requirements are met, whether or not historically existing water rights support this. States have an obligation to regulate water use in a way that prioritizes basic human requirements before allocating water to other uses. Water availability and quality, and the fact that these may be variable, such as in times of drought, must be taken into account. Alternative mechanisms for water allocation need to be explored, for instance the notion of variable or temporary water rights, administered through systems of regulated licensing and permits, may offer scope for regulating extraction in an equitable and sustainable way.

Moreover, all stakeholders and, in particular, the people affected by decisions, must be given opportunities to participate in decision-making about use of water resources. States must put into place particular mechanisms to ensure participation of those traditionally lacking voice, including people living in poverty, women, indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities. States must also ensure access to remedies – providing for redress mechanisms in the law as well as addressing the physical, linguistic, economic and other barriers that may prevent access to justice in practice – in order to ensure that States and other actors can be held to account to meet their obligations under human rights law.

4. Wastewater management

The subject of human rights and wastewater management has received very little attention, even though the human right to sanitation includes safe and hygienic collection and disposal of human faecal matter. Little data are available on who benefits or does not benefit from wastewater management, and in fact surprisingly little information is

Wastewater has been defined as “a combination of one or more of: domestic effluent consisting of blackwater (excreta, urine and faecal sludge) and greywater (kitchen and bathing wastewater); water from commercial establishments and institutions, including hospitals; industrial effluent, storm water and other urban run-off; agricultural, horticultural and aquaculture effluent, either dissolved or as suspended matter”. (Corcoran 2010)

available on the global wastewater situation at all. This is despite the fact that unmanaged and untreated wastewater spreads disease and has a direct impact on aquatic ecosystems, disrupting drinking water supplies, food production, urban development and industry. (Johnstone, 2013).

The urgency of this situation is being recognized, particularly in the light of the focus on the water and sanitation MDGs, and on the growing emphasis on improving household sanitation: “If the wastewater challenge is not tackled, there is a danger that the potential health and other benefits from the investments being made to meet the MDGs will be negated by the pollution that ensues”. (Bahri,2009).

Many cities lack adequate wastewater management and treatment due to aging, absent or inadequate sewage infrastructure, rapid and unplanned urbanization as well as poor operation and maintenance of the existing facilities. An underlying cause may be lack of effective planning, and a reluctance to address an unpleasant topic that is not considered central to policy-making. As a result, the majority of wastewaters are discharged into the environment without any form of treatment; this is compounded by illegal dumping of wastes. An estimated two million tons of waste, estimated to equal two or more *billion* tons of wastewater, are discharged daily into rivers and seas spreading disease to humans and damaging key ecosystems such as coral reefs and fisheries. This dirty water is a key factor in the rise of de-oxygenated dead zones that have been emerging in the marine environment across the globe. (Corcoran, 2010).

There is concern that while the focus of the MDG targets on improved sanitation was on increasing access to improved toilet facilities, far less attention has been paid towards ensuring that waste streams are adequately collected and treated prior to discharge into the environment.

The measures required to ensure wastewater management are very different from those required to increase the use of sanitation by individuals. The nature of wastewater means that the problems it creates seldom stay with the people who produced the waste in the first place, but end up with those downstream. One area of a city may be flooded by drainage water from another, for instance, or toxic wastewater flows to a river may contaminate the drinking water of downstream communities.

This raises human rights questions, especially if the people on the receiving end are the poor and vulnerable, which is often the case. There are many cities in which slum areas are regularly flooded by contaminated water. Poor and marginalized people are more likely to live in less desirable housing locations which are near industrial zones and waste outfalls, or on land where agricultural runoff has contaminated drinking water supplies. Poor countries and those with emerging economies often house industries that use processes that are banned in other parts of the world, and which discharge highly toxic substances. The poor seek their livelihoods in ways that are extremely vulnerable to the damage caused by unmanaged wastewater – small scale fishing, subsistence agriculture, etc.

A small community in Argentina called Chacras de Merced suffered when a malfunctioning and overstretched sewage treatment plant operated by the City of Cordoba allowed raw sewage to be dumped into the river, polluting the river and the groundwater in the locality. The community successfully used the courts to prompt the provincial government to provide them with safe drinking water. The city was ordered to both provide Chacras de Merced with alternate sources of drinking water in the short term, and to reduce the contamination of the river. (Najle, 2010)

A major challenge is the fact that wastewater treatment is expensive. Committing to better wastewater management means making difficult decisions regarding resource allocations – where

In California, aquifers in the San Joaquin Valley have become heavily contaminated with nitrates as a result of runoff contaminated with nitrogen-based fertilizers from intensive irrigated agriculture. Research has revealed that small communities in the valley which house relatively high proportions of minority Latino residents are more likely to be served with water that is high in nitrates, in some cases exceeding the legal threshold limit allowed in public water systems under the US Safe Drinking Water Act. (Balazs, 2011)

should wastewater treatment be on the priority list compared to the immediate needs of people for such needs as drinking water and household sanitation? Who should pay for wastewater treatment? How can investments in wastewater be targeted such that the benefits are realized in an equitable way? While the costs present a major challenge, this does not mean that no action can be taken. While the transition from no treatment to full treatment might be significant, a phased approach can be taken, starting with basic preliminary or primary treatment of wastes and building from there. In this regard, the human rights principle of progressive realization also applies to wastewater management.

As the focus of wastewater management shifts from wastewater as a liability to wastewater as a resource, other rights issues may emerge. Wastewater is of value both because it is largely water, and because it contains valuable chemicals and organic material. With increasingly scarce water resources and massive increases in population, mostly in the urban environment, wastewater will become an increasingly important water resource, and recovered wastewater will become a recognized part of the water cycle. The sludge that is produced when wastewater is treated has many valuable uses. It can be used in agricultural land as a soil conditioner/fertilizer (and is thus linked to food security and the right to food). Energy can be generated from sludge, it can be used to manufacture building materials, and chemicals such as phosphate can be recovered from it. (Johnstone, 2013).

It is unclear, however, who has the rights to use wastewater. Small scale farmers, in many cases the urban or rural poor, sometimes use wastewater for irrigation of their crops (often informally or even illegally), but if wastewater flows start to be seen as valuable they may find their access to them taken away.

5. Conclusion and summary

The challenge offered to the water sector in the post-2015 era is significant, but so is the opportunity. There is valuable learning to be gained from the MDGs and the targets for drinking water and sanitation: in order to ensure human rights are realized, goals and targets must be focused on reducing inequalities and eliminating discrimination. The other components of the water sector - water resources and wastewater – present similar challenges of unequal distribution of benefits, intentional or inadvertent marginalization of some people, insufficient participation, and troublesome choices. Difficult decisions must be made about allocation and use of water in a world in which water resources are put under increasing strain due to rising and competing demands. Not all demands can be met, and so it is imperative that people's basic needs are met first, before water is allocated to other uses. In terms of domestic water, these needs may account for a very small share of overall use – the human right to water specifies only the most fundamental needs, such as drinking, cooking and personal hygiene – but allocation issues related to water for agriculture may be more significant.

A clear obstacle is the lack of data and information on inequality and discrimination, but this must not be an excuse for inaction. Measurability must be increased, and new data sources developed. Better reporting systems will allow the existence of more data to foster greater transparency and accountability and will draw the attention of policy-makers to areas that have been neglected.

The human rights framework requires that human rights are fulfilled first, whether these are related to drinking water, sanitation, water for food, or protection from contaminated wastewater. While this is a simple principle, it is clear from experience that priorities are not always set with basic human requirements in mind, and that has resulted in inequality and disparities. As the water sector strives to be more integrated, human rights issues must be addressed and tackled in a comprehensive manner, across the three heavily interlinked subsectors of WASH, water resources and wastewater. The post-2015 agenda gives us a unique opportunity to revisit the issue of human rights in the water sector, and to ensure they are reflected in new goals and targets. The rights of both current populations and future generations must be taken into account – the decisions we make today about the water sector reflect both our respect for the rights of our neighbours, and our concern for the legacy of our children.

Questions for discussion:

- ***How can we reduce or eliminate inequalities in access to water and sanitation in the post-2015 agenda? How can those under-served or un-served be reached?***
- ***How can we ensure that the post 2015 agenda reflects the need to improve service levels inside the home, and expand service beyond the household, including to schools and health centres?***
- ***How can we set a post-2015 agenda so that water for basic human requirements, such as domestic and personal uses, are prioritized in water resource allocation?***
- ***How can the human rights principles of equality and non-discrimination be applied to the post-2015 development agenda to explicitly deal with water resource management and allocation? How can these principles also be applied to wastewater management?***
- ***How can the post 2015 agenda take into account the need to ensure present and future quantity and quality of water for human consumption?***
- ***How can the post-2015 development agenda reflect the imperative to balance immediate needs of people with the long-term need to protect ecosystems?***

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For core international human rights treaties see:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CoreInstruments.aspx>