

Questionnaire

In order to comply with her mandate, the Special Rapporteur will focus her 2013 annual report on the issues of sustainability and non-retrogression in the realization of the human rights to water and sanitation.

For this purpose, the Special Rapporteur on the right to safe drinking water and sanitation, Ms. Catarina de Albuquerque, wishes to request your Government's views and contributions on this subject, in particular about the following questions and issues:

Measures in Response to the Financial and Economic Crisis

1. What legislative or policy measures have been taken in response to economic or financial crises that have a direct or indirect impact on the water and sanitation sector?
2. If there have been budget reductions, what budget cuts have most affected the water and sanitation sector- both at national and local levels? Have investments in infrastructure been reduced? Have subsidy schemes been reduced? What other budgetary, monetary and fiscal measures have been adopted that have a direct or indirect impact on the water and sanitation sector?
3. If there is a reduction on social expenditure (e.g. related to pensions, unemployment benefits, social security, wages); how does this impact on the affordability of water and sanitation services? Have measures been taken to mitigate these impacts in access to water for domestic and personal use?
4. If there have been changes in the management of utilities, have water and/or sewage utilities assets and/or the operation and management of water and sanitation services been opened to private sector participation? Are there any plans for private sector participation? Have there been changes in the tariff system or in the way disconnections are carried out as a result of these measures? Please explain.
5. If applicable, have any of the above mentioned measures been taken as part of the terms of any debt relief or bailout agreement with international and/ or regional institutions, as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the European Union, the European Central Bank, or regional development banks?

Ensuring Human Rights Compliance

6. Has the human rights impact of measures in response to financial and economic constraints been assessed? How do the measures impact on the enjoyment of the human rights to water and sanitation?
7. Has the particular impact on the most marginalized individuals and groups been considered? What data or evidence is available about the impacts on specific groups? What safeguards are in place to ensure the continued enjoyment of the human rights to water and sanitation in particular for disadvantaged and marginalized groups?
8. What justifications have been provided for measures taken due to economic or financial constraints that might have had an impact on the realization of the human rights to water and sanitation? What alternatives have been considered to these measures?
9. What mechanisms are in place to ensure the maximum of available resources are devoted to protecting human rights in times of economic or financial constraints?
10. How have people participated in the decision-making processes related to any of the measures taken in response to financial and economic constraints?

Sustainability: The realisation of the rights to water and sanitation requires a long-term perspective that aims at ensuring the enjoyment of these rights for present and future generations, as well as adequate use of available resources over time. The impact of some measures in times of economic or financial constraints may be linked with the sustainability of the services, infrastructures or overall investments.

11. What measures and mechanisms are in place to ensure sustainability in the realisation of the human rights to water and sanitation more broadly? How are measures aimed at maintaining access balanced with the aim of extending services to un- and underserved populations and with the aim of universal access?
12. What mechanisms are in place to ensure that water and sanitation infrastructure (networked as well as on-site) is properly operated and maintained? What mechanisms are in place to make the necessary capital investments to replace aging infrastructure? What mechanisms are available to ensure adequate human resource capacity-building and adequate training?