



European Union

Water and Beyond

EU transformative approaches
for international partnerships



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS



European
Commission



UNEP



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FOR WATER
PARTNERSHIP

Session 7 - Water as a human right: working towards implementation with all partners

Content

Session 7 - Water as a human right: working towards implementation with all partners....	1
Session 7 - Water as a human right: working towards implementation with all partners....	2
Introduction	2
• Facilitator: Lesha Witmer, Steering Committee, Women for Water Partnership (WfWP).....	2
• Keynote by Pedro Arrojo-Agudo, UN Special Rapporteur on human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation.....	3
Panel discussion	4
• Luisa Ragher, Head of Human Rights Division, European External Action Service (EEAS)	4
• Tseguereda Abraham, Head of Sector Strengthening, WaterAid Ethiopia	5
• Mariet Verhoef-Cohen, President, Women for Water Partnership.....	5
• Neil Dhot, Executive Director of Aquafed, International Federation of Private Water Operators.....	6
Interaction with the audience	7
Question and Answers	8
Conclusions	9
Comments on the chat:.....	10

Session 7 - Water as a human right: working towards implementation with all partners

Pillar 5: EU International Partnership Priority on 'Governance, Peace and Security'

12:30 - 14:00

338 participants signed up for this session

Introduction

- Introduction from moderator: welcome to the last day of "Water and Beyond". Water is a human right, a right from a decade ago. Where are we now? Where is our glass, half-empty? half-full?

- *Anecdote about his first experience with water: "Water and Beyond" in Somalia in the 80's how they managed to save people with the idea that water can save people. So we must improve the profile of water.*

- *He talks about the idea that we need to develop water as a key to everything else. There is a need to justify that. That's what will be discussed about today.*

- *Tips about networking and today's sessions. (it is about building partnerships)*

- *Explanation on the networking procedure.*

- **Facilitator:** Lesha Witmer, Steering Committee, Women for Water Partnership (WfWP)

- *Introduction from the moderator: Slido presentation.*

An Introduction of the session: water and governance and implementation of water as a human right. Governance is about institutions, laws, resources, information sharing, about economic models, all these things make governance. During this week we have been talking about it, but today we will focus on human rights. It is not an easy topic.

So we are welcoming Mr. Arrojo, a specialist on the water and human rights.

- **Pool 1:**

From which country are you coming from: (Mostly from Europe, Asia, Latin America)

- **Pool 2:**

Presentation of the pool:

In one word, what do you think is the most important barrier to achieve SDG6 (beyond the importance of the financial barrier)?

- **Keynote by Pedro Arrojo-Agudo, UN Special Rapporteur on human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation**

In my presentation, I will summarize some of my convictions and concerns and explain what I want to do in my mandate. I want to present 2 thematic reports. First, analyze the current context: a global crisis on 2.2 billion people with no access to water. This situation is transforming our world, our blue world. The second is the failure of inequity: we are talking about 2.2 billion poor people. We have also a problem with democratic governance of water: the need to assume water as a simple economical good, useful and scarce, and manage it with the logic of the market. This means transforming citizens into clients, and the 2.2 billion poor clients. We have to take care of it. I will analyze the impact of climate change on the pandemic acceleration of this deep crisis. The second thematic report will focus on the risk and water. Water begins to be traded in the market of Wall Street, it has been demonstrated in the food market that this issue will damage human rights aspects.

We must develop an approach based on human rights and environmental sustainability and not on economic logic. Business and market will have their space. The challenge will be democracy and sustainability in this stoic era we are facing.

Regarding the round table, there are 3 issues to consider: 1. the challenge that the EU assumes after receiving the initiatives for water. 2. the municipal funding of WASH in the Green Deal and 3. the role of EU worldwide on climate change.

Today the reform of the drinking water directive is already approved and the right of water insists that its demand has not been met. So a question, we need to ask ourselves and EU countries is: are they really going to develop drinking water directive in national transposition process and assume the human right of water and sanitation? Focusing on municipalities the experience with the pandemic has shown the need of strengthening our public health system. As a collective democratic effort, and operating on the principle “leaving no one behind” meanwhile the poor are suffering a lot of prestige. So another question, why not assuming water the way the public of Health assistance does, the approach to getting out of the crisis are changing, with strategies that are not with public funds. Relaunching the EU economy with the Green Deal mobilized a lot of funds. So another question, are we aware of the importance of strengthening the financial capacities of municipalities to fulfill their competencies ending with the financial anorexia where they were pushing?

Let's keep in mind that water and sanitation are the foundation of public systems: the adaptation strategies in the same way as mitigation strategies. Climate Adaptation Summit can be crucial to enrich the EU adaptation strategy to be presented and will link to the human right to human sanitation.

From the moderator: you ask a couple of crucial questions for us to think about it. Another question: how do you envision working with them (EU Delegations) to go further with the agenda on water and sanitation issues?

It is not enough to have funds and to mobilize them, but it is important to reinforce the municipal and community approach in the plans for collaboration with other countries with more vulnerable people. This is a democratic challenge and it is crucial to assure transparency. Public participation, citizens participation, gender approach must be in the

central access of this policies, corporation partnerships around the challenge of the human right to bringing water as well.

- Last question: did you have the chance to look at the EU Guidelines for implementation of the EU right to water that was published in 2019?

I am overwhelmed with meetings and comments to read and study, I know them but it is important to reinforce more what the UN wants to do, not what the UN does. Because we created the human right council as a very powerful institution but without the means and capacities to accomplish the agreements we agreed on a worldwide level. So, we need to reinforce in this new era, we need to reinforce democratic and legal capacity of the agreements we do with the UN and in the same way to water and sanitation as a human right.

Panel discussion

- Luisa Ragher, Head of Human Rights Division, European External Action Service (EEAS)

Question from the moderator: how can we implement EU guidelines?

I will start to show the guidelines, this is a political document (*she shows the document on the camera*). The guidelines implement the EU policy on economic and social rights. What do we do with these guidelines? We reform the use to the right of water and sanitation and pursue the implementation of SDG6. The most important element of these guidelines and topic of this day is the fact that access to drinking water and sanitation has to be guaranteed without discrimination.

Why I do say that this is particularly important now? Because, with no sanitation services, in developing countries, there is no water to wash. Another element is human rights cover on the protection of the environment.

Now, what we can do with these guidelines, keeping in mind the importance of the issue on a political level, we ask our EU ambassador in the ground to pursue these policies. Our people on the ground, EU Officials should pursue these policies in partnership with the partner countries. We need to approach WASH and sanitation and to address the COVID crisis. The most important issue and activity are strengthening the water and sanitation system to mitigate the social-economic impact. It is a priority in the way the funds are channelled.

What we can do: on the political front; we can engage partnerships with partners, support partner countries with exchange of best practices, supporting human right defenders and give policy support through the multilateral level, support mandate of the special rapporteur. We can support more technical assistance expertise.

- *From the moderator:* it is important to make sure that this issue is in the new program cycle.

- Tseguereda Abraham, Head of Sector Strengthening, WaterAid Ethiopia
 - *Introduction from the moderator:* we will talk about what happened on the ground and how other issues like nutrition, food safety and climate change influence that?

We will look on the one hand at human rights regarding water and system strengthening efforts. As part of our system approach, we look at a system wide approach and the WASH system and the interaction and institutions are necessary to deliver inclusive WASH. So as part of our approach, we have what we call building blocks: different parts of decisions that support the entire cycle. Through this strengthening program we have been able to have local government capacity to respond and monitor and improve this situation. On the other hand, we work with local government on the demand side and these are open spaces for community feedback.

Staff applied approaches and material to make human rights projects. From a practical level, the material is used. Different stages in planning, it is motivational, the demands come from communities but there is no motivation from the government to respond to this demand. From our side, we continue the dialogue on human rights without being confrontational. We made the human rights approach very practical for the government.

- *From the moderator:* really important your explanation about the involvement of local governments.
- Yael Mason à Conférenciers et participants (12:52 PM)
Are these talks recorded? if yes, can you please send a link? Thanks

Yes, if you do not want to be recorded please leave the session.

- Mariet Verhoef-Cohen, President, Women for Water Partnership
 - *Introduction from moderator:* Women for Water Partnership has offices in the Netherlands but works worldwide. We will have a look at the stakeholder's side, especially women and young women's points of view.

Ever since all states agreed that water is a human right. "Women for Water" works for water for all and focuses on equality.

“Water and Beyond” will create partnerships, but do not forget to involve women. Maybe you can set quotas in involving women. SDG6 needs to be on the agenda with the national governments and international partnerships. EU can assist and even create horizontal coordination between the “DGS Water for women” and “gender issues” for sectors as human rights. Targeting women alone is not enough specific; actions to include women in all the stages are necessary. There is a gap in all these stages. When addressing governance and leadership, women should be involved in all the phases of the program cycle. When tackling resources, the EC should consider how to guarantee data collection, when dealing with gender information.

- *From the moderator:* that is a holistic view to implement.
- Neil Dhot, Executive Director of Aquafed, International Federation of Private Water Operators
- *Introduction from the moderator:* Aquafed is an umbrella organization, based in the UK that has a lot of presence in Africa. So the question is, how private organizations are doing with human rights?

Some words of Aquafed. It is an international but also a family organization. Serving sometimes a town of 100 people. We fully believe in our mission and we promote human rights.

What are we doing? All the contracts are related to maintain one or more of the primacies of the human right, it is under control under stick contracts and criteria. The public authority is in control and it is their job to manage it.

PPP also helps in technical assessment. Sometimes our intervention is not an economical solution and a public operator is a better option. One of the policies from the private operators is non-discrimination, operators are trying to upskill.

Annelise, from Suez, gave 2 examples at least we know something in Suez but we do not know everything. We are just trying to upskill and increase local capacity. Donor's managers have to really test themselves to be sure that they are scaling local capability and not only being in an approach of giving, only giving, but putting them on not a more sustainable situation. We have to get out of this charity mindset. We should be thinking about water reuse and help the communities to stand up for themselves.

Another principle is access to information. Private operators are more open to transparency, we are used to it because of the contract rules. Aquafed proposes to make a set of indicators that demonstrate that human rights are really delivered, but most of the government did not go for it. Europe needs to set the example on transparency.

Ultimately what the private sector is doing is that we are delivering human rights every day.

→ Pool:

In one word, what do you think is the most important barrier to achieve SDG6 (beyond the importance of the financial barrier)?

Word cloud:

poor governance
SDG Silos
Political will
Knowledge sharing
Access
visibility of water
security

pollution
political priorities
no long-term view
lack of sound policies
international law
distribution
accessibility
Women Involvement
Poverty
Partnerships
Lack of knowledge sharing
Governance and Goodwill
Funding
Fragmented governance
Awareness
Governance
Unawareness
Addressing the poverty impact

The problem with fragmented governance is that some of the tasks are divided so much that people do not know what the left hand is doing. The main one here is that if you made plans, you have to see if it does not compromise other parts.

Interaction with the audience

- Lars Skov Andersen à Conférenciers et participants (1:20 PM)
Again: Water pricing according to affordability is the key to ownership and sustainability. Excellent.
- Mariet Verhoef-Cohen à Conférenciers et participants (1:19 PM)
Totally agree Neil. It's not only giving/charity, it's having them own the sustainable projects.
- Question to Mr. Neil Dhot about pricing: pricing in a political decision. The users that are not consulting and it has been like that for years. There is enough expertise outside and the EU needs to take the decision and help locals to start using it. What happens in England is that they have to consult the consumers and have their support before having the governmental support.
- Question for Mariet Verhoef-Cohen, what is the role of women in terms of strategy?
“Change is a chorister and not a solo”, we have to support, not only women but everybody. Starting from the bottom up, to support women with capacity building. Of course, EC bigger organizations can do this to get everyone involved.
- There is no direct funding for women, so can you put yourself in a function if you cannot get yourself doing something for payment. Women are working on a voluntary basis. The youths work for free also. There is a lot to be done: like setting quotas of participation.
- Question for Luisa Ragher:
Unfortunately, the human rights elements, the equality elements, seem to be forgotten when designing a project? And projects have been monitored also? The discussion with the new programming has included this? Is that part of the guidelines? And how do you envy that to happens?

- When we publish guidelines we also monitor that they are being applied. We do have the funds that go with the policy documents. We are working on our programming for the next period, we can match the political priorities and the budget. We are asking for information on the ground of what is going on and there are a number of projects that are taking place that is implementing the guidelines (I.E in Gaza on desalinization of water, in Sudan to give access to water sanitation to migrants, in Burundi) that already implementing the policy that is in the guidelines. We pay attention to the implementation. It is not policy action but implementation as well.

Question and Answers

- Sara Ahrari 01:02 PM
do the guidelines also advise how to monitor and report on realising principle of non-discrimination and equality principle of HRWS ?

This question was answered live.

- Roel 10:12 PM
where can we find the guidelines on the web ?

This question was answered live.

- Neil Dhot 01:31 PM
<https://www.avrupa.info.tr/sites/default/files/2020-01/EU%20Human%20Rights%20Guidelines%20on%20Safe%20Drinking%20Water%20and%20Sanitation%20%282019%29.pdf>

- Question to Tseguereda Abraham Bangladesh: in WaterAid, we try to understand more deeply the values and we use social tools to know what are the values and we include women participation in WASH, sexuality, harassment that women face. We work in supporting systems and we are more inclusive, we work with communities along. It requires a long time commitment, and we work with the so-called “gatekeepers” that are always involved. This is important in terms of human rights and development. Also gender issues and equality.

- From the moderator:

You made 2 points here: a process to change behavior, to make people aware of another way of managing and basically, there is a problem when you look for financing. There is financing for the hardware but not for the follow-up, which is not only a technical issue but a governance issue.

- Question to Mr. Pedro: some of the answers you've heard from the other panelists answered your questions?

Yes, actually it is not a white or black answer. I strongly agree with the other interventions. We must press on the priority of involving the local level. Of course, the relationship is between governments and institutions, but the implementation is through community

involvement, community approaches, and I insist we have to change our mind regarding funding. We are not in 2008, we are in another political, economic context, the global crisis is not anymore a local or national crisis, it is a global crisis so we have to look for another approach under public responsibility on a human rights-based approach. That is what the UN is promoting; the principle of “no leaving people behind”.

- From the moderator: speaking of the report of his previous predecessor about how to process the implementation.

The report of HR to Water report of special rapporteur was published in 2016.

- Right on water is a human right and we are pushing now that right and the quality in this context.
 - The way we communicate our convincing and commitment to pursue this policy.
- Question to Mr. Neil Dhot: we got a lot of questions about pollution and drinking water? And of the quality issue?

It is difficult to get the governments to talk; sometimes it is the bottleneck of government, so we must go to municipalities. So it's time to step up and move forward.

On pollution, we have enough policies, it is in implementation and it happens in several places, not in others but the government is willing to implement them.

- Question to Mariet Verhoef-Cohen: some final observations for today?

I was thinking of a Tweet: Including women, men, and gender. The tweet is to highlight these steps we have to make.

- Mrs. Tseguereda Abraham: a final comment: it is really critical to help people to understand their human rights since they are not really aware, to find ways to make it practical and get to communities to hear the voices of women and men about human rights.

Conclusions

- Pool to conclusions:
What should be the number one priority of the EU to contribute to strong water and sanitation systems that deliver the services needed in particular by the most vulnerable communities?
- Involving authorities, operators, users, and CSOs in the programme's implementation to ensure they are sustainable and targeted
70%
- Ensuring that EU funding for water and sanitation supports smaller-scale programmes, based on the most vulnerable communities' needs
40%
- Ensuring a participatory EU programming exercise looking at water through a cross-sectoral lens
35%

- Engaging in political dialogue with local and national authorities to ensure laws and policies on water and sanitation are implemented
15%
- Mrs. Sophie Aujean - WaterAid conclusions:

We heard a lot from the stakeholders, and it is great that we all agreed that delivering water is a human right and it is a priority.

We all agreed also that it is not black or white. It is more about partnerships and governance. It was really a priority, and it is great that this event is organized by INPA because it is about partnerships.

The EU is developing great instruments but they are a need of a good implementation. Governance must go also to local and they need to be supported. The private sector, may not be always the solution, we need also to build investors' confidence.

Accountability in the water sector is very big. There is some failure in the democratic practices so we must think of rising older voices. Capacity development in local and good practice and private plays a role in there. Capacity building and vocational training are key as well in involving women.

All stakeholders need to get together in all the steps of the project cycle. To achieve all this, all partnerships approach much change, we need to move to empower all the key stakeholders to work through a shared vision of transforming people's lives.

Thanks to the EU for having strong leadership to organize this conference and thanks to the participants, to the Slovenia presidency and everyone else.

- Back to Chris and final results on slido and some explanations about the networking session.

Comments on the chat:

- Niclas Gottmann - DG INTPA à Conférenciers et participants (12:40 PM)
Please join the Sli.do here: <https://app.sli.do/event/ezonkdn2/embed/polls/34fdc16e-26fa-4344-946b-7944be2479c5>
- Niclas Gottmann - DG INTPA à Conférenciers et participants (12:50 PM)
You will find a wealth of 'Water and Beyond' background information on our dedicated Capacity4Dev water space. For today's session, please visit: https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/public-water_and_sanitation/discussions/water-human-right-working-towards-implementation-all-partners

- Sophie Aujean à Conférenciers et participants (12:50 PM)
Feel free to ask questions to Mr Arrojo. He cannot stay for the whole session, but will speak also at the closing.
- Yael Mason à Conférenciers et participants (12:52 PM)
Are these talks recorded? if yes, can you please send a link? Thanks
- Niclas Gottmann - DG INTPA à Conférenciers et participants (12:53 PM)
Please find more information on today's speakers in their bios on the event website: <https://waterandbeyond.b2match.io/page-3481>
- Niclas Gottmann - DG INTPA à Conférenciers et participants (1:01 PM)
@Yael Mason: To follow up, you will find information relevant to the 'Water and Beyond' event on our dedicated Capacity4Dev space in the coming days: https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/public-water_and_sanitation
- Niclas Gottmann - DG INTPA à Conférenciers et participants (1:04 PM)
We would love to get your input! Please remember to answer our Sli.do poll - Question 2 will be open for another 15 minutes: <https://app.sli.do/event/ezonkdn2>
- Mariet Verhoef-Cohen à Conférenciers et participants (1:19 PM)
Totally agree Neil. It's not only giving/charity, it's having them to own the sustainable projects.
- Lars Skov Andersen à Conférenciers et participants (1:20 PM)
Again: Water pricing according to affordability is the key to ownership and sustainability. Excellent.
- Ashwin Seetal, CSIR à Conférenciers et participants (1:26 PM)
The "human right" element in water is quite often relegated to second place when issues of finance and pricing of water enter the discussion. This diminishes the social dimension and amplifies the economic dimension of water. Most impoverished communities find it extremely difficult to engage in such discussions/dialogues for a number of reasons.
- Sophie Aujean à Conférenciers et participants (1:26 PM)
Thank you for your questions. Please post them in the Q&A, so that we can better deal with them.
- Nina Hjortlund à Conférenciers et participants (1:31 PM)
Agree Lars, pricing according to affordability. Locally setting up 'water committees' and create responsibility and ownership locally
- Mariet Verhoef-Cohen à Conférenciers et participants (1:40 PM)
The report of HR to Water report of special rapporteur was published in 2016
- Niclas Gottmann - DG INTPA à Conférenciers et participants (1:43 PM)
Please participate in our final poll on Slido at: <https://app.sli.do/event/ezonkdn2>
- Amanda Loeffen à Conférenciers et participants (1:47 PM)

Difficult to choose only 2 answers to the poll as all are crucial

- Mariet Verhoef-Cohen à Conférenciers et participants (1:49 PM)
I agree, I think all answers are as important.
- Amanda Loeffen à Conférenciers et participants (1:49 PM)
Critical to integrate the human rights based approach across the board, as Pedro insists

Q& R:

- Sara Ahrari 01:02 PM
do the guidelines also advise how to monitor and report on realising principle of non-discrimination and equality principle of HRWS ?

This question was answered live.

- Sara Ahrari (Simavi, NL) 01:23 PM
One of the issues that I have encounter in Kenya, was about Kiosk operator, not selling water to people with disability, any experience on how such the attitude barriers of operators can be influenced?
- Neil Dhot 01:40 PM
during covid, some of the Kenyan municipalities took over the role of distributing water and it automatically got rid of these Kiosk operators who don't care about certain people. This is what is needed - the municipality taking control
- Roel 10:12 PM
where can we find the guidelines on the web ?

This question was answered live.

- Neil Dhot 01:31 PM
- <https://www.avrupa.info.tr/sites/default/files/2020-01/EU%20Human%20Rights%20Guidelines%20on%20Safe%20Drinking%20Water%20and%20Sanitation%20%282019%29.pdf>

Niclas Gottmann - DG INTPA à Conférenciers et participants (1:55 PM)

Before organizing a 1-on-1 meeting, it is crucial you first sign up to a 'networking session' in the agenda tab: <https://waterandbeyond.b2match.io/agenda>

Niclas Gottmann - DG INTPA à Conférenciers et participants (1:55 PM)

Join the conversation on Slack: https://join.slack.com/t/water-and-beyond/shared_invite/zt-ks36f4us-2ZNJVDblyJB00R78y_14~w