

“Financing the Human Right to Water”

Side event to the 60th session of the UN-Human Rights Commission on the World Water Day

In its General Comment No. 15 (Nov. 2002), the UN-Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights expresses the normative demand for water as a human right. The aim is to secure that all people have a non-discriminatory and fair access to safe, sufficient and affordable drinking water. Yet, the implementation and the fulfilment of internationally agreed targets aiming at the improvement of drinking water and wastewater infrastructures require considerable financial funds.

With a growing world population and the already existing lack of access to water and sanitation services to everyone on the one side and ever shrinking public budgets on the other, there is need for alternative solutions in how to achieve the required investment.

Can privatisation, the public-private-partnership model and foreign direct investment in the water sector deliver the solution? Or does the Human Right to Water run the risk to be commercialized in a way that it becomes a luxury product, a privilege, affordable just to those who can pay for an adequate water and sanitation service? Is water really a commercial product like any other and the Human Right to Water conditional on available resources? How to define the amount of resources to meet the Human Right to Water for all and what role do the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) play in this respect?

The challenge for the international community is a huge one. A panel discussion of representative experts ought to respond to the outlined and further questions on:

Monday, 22 March Palais des Nations, Room XXVII (Door 40) 1:00 – 3:00 PM

Panellists:

- **David Boys**, Public Service International (PSI), Utilities and Pensions Officer
- **Silvano Silvério da Costa**, ASSEMAE, President (Brazil)
- **Joseph K. Ingram**, World Bank, Special Representative to the UN and the WTO
- **Nils Rosemann**, Friedrich-Schiller-University Jena, Attorney/Consultant, Facilitator of the panel discussion
- **NN**, Veolia Water, *requested*
- **Prof. Jean Ziegler**, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food

Comments:

- **Rosmarie Bär**, Swiss Coalition of Development Agencies
- **Antonio Miranda Neto**, Head of Municipal Water and Sanitation Services, Recife (Brazil)

Portuguese/English translation, sandwiches and refreshments will be provided.