

The right to development and the ability to develop along with all human rights is dependent upon the human right to freshwater and food. The right to clean water has been recognized as an international human right, which countries are obliged to adhere to. It needs to include all the conditions essential for making universal access to clean freshwater and sanitation possible for all human beings regardless of income, for present and future generations. To truly implement the right to clean drinking water and sanitation for all in present times and inclusive of future generations, an adequate quantity of freshwater is required. How to potentially achieve this is a vital factor, which needs to be addressed as a central issue to all human rights and even within the context of 'A Stand Alone Water Sustainable Development Goal'. This is critical in realizing Sustainable Development Goals and in achieving a successful Post 2015 agenda, which accords with the Millennium Development Declaration.

Issues of water quantity and quality, scarcity and access are of paramount importance to all communities throughout the world. Food security is utterly dependent upon this. If there is insufficient freshwater available it will naturally infringe on the human rights to water and food by undermining the availability of a sufficient and continuous water supply for personal, domestic and agricultural needs. This issue needs proper attention and immediate action taken to avoid the crisis, conflicts and suffering that will inevitably occur otherwise. There needs to be legislative action taken which protects all freshwater sources from all harmful, polluting and abusive endeavors such as mining and certain large scale hydro-dams. There also needs to be actions taken that increase the recharge functions of freshwater.

Unlike resources such as coal, oil and gas the freshwater cycle is a renewable and regenerative one. Rather than being a limited resource it is an infinite renewable and has the ability of being replenished. However this cycle is utterly dependent upon healthily functioning ecosystems such as mountains with their snows, glaciers and mixed forests. The critical importance of this issue was acknowledged as the central factor in achieving water security in the United Nations Water Security Analytical Brief, which was produced by the UN Water Task Force and released on World Water Day 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2013. It states:

***"Ensuring that ecosystems are protected and conserved is central to achieving water security – both for people and for nature. Ecosystems are vital to sustaining the quantity and quality of water available within a watershed, on which both nature and people rely. Maintaining the integrity of ecosystems is essential for supporting the diverse needs of humans, and for the sustainability of ecosystems, including protecting the water- provisioning services they provide."***

2013, The International Year of Water Cooperation reflects the global recognition that freshwater is an absolute necessity for achieving internationally agreed upon Sustainable Development Goals. These include the nexus between water security, food security, poverty eradication, gender equality, human health, equity, peace and prosperity. It also reflects the emerging global understanding that the safeguarding of ecosystems and their life-supporting functions, needs to be implemented to resolve current and future water challenges. This issue has generally been overlooked, although it is a key factor in successfully achieving the human right to water. This matter was given recognition and highlighted at the United Nations Sustainable Development Conference in Rio in 2012 and was endorsed in the government signed document: 'The Future We Want'. Paragraph 122 states:

***"We recognize the key role that ecosystems play in maintaining water quantity and quality and support actions within the respective national boundaries to protect and sustainably manage these ecosystems."***

The same Analytical Brief noted that nature's ecosystems and cycles could reach a tipping point and cease to function.

***“Maintaining the integrity of ecosystems before they become compromised is an essential component of achieving water security and reducing the potential for conflicts. The continuous pace of human development is threatening the capacity of ecosystems to adapt, raising concerns that ecosystems will reach a tipping point after which they are no longer able to provide sustaining functions and services, and will become unable to recover their integrity and functions.”***

Given this understanding and these conditions government obligations need to include legislation that both protects and restores the environments, which the hydrological cycle is utterly dependent upon within the contents of the human right to water and sanitation. These include mountains (the water towers of the world), mixed mountain forests, rain forests and wetlands. This has already been acknowledged by some of the world's leading authorities as central factors in achieving National and International security. This is a major security issue and needs to be given appropriate attention to ensure world peace and stability. This is essential to both secure human development to date and to continue in accord with Sustainable Development principles.

The Human Rights Council as an inter-governmental body within the United Nations system is responsible for the strengthening, promotion and protection of human rights around the globe. As such, it is of paramount importance that it acts as a model of excellence for ethical and effective democratic processes through its work. It is vital that those elected to the Council on November 12 2013, (Algeria, China, Cuba, France, Maldives, Mexico, Morocco, Namibia, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, United Kingdom and Vietnam) ensure open and honest procedures during their term on the council, allowing democratic sovereign states to take principled and independent stances. It is also imperative to bring the contents of the human rights declaration and Conventions up to date with present day reality, incorporating environmental rights essential for living a life in dignity, so that all human rights can be truly implemented and enforced with no exceptions.

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