

Informal Hearings Meeting with representatives of
non-governmental organizations, civil society, major groups
and the private sector on the
Post 2015 Development Agenda.
United Nations, New York 26th of May 2015

My name is Nathalie Seguin from Mexico. I am speaking on behalf of Freshwater Action Network in Latin America and End Water Poverty – Both working to ensure the realization of the Human Right to Water and Sanitation at the local level.¹

Excellences,

Human rights were **at the core of creation** of the United Nations Organization. **Who else** is going to advocate and **be accountable** for Human rights commitments?

We **must** learn from MDG².

The agenda **has to be framed by human rights, and** water and sanitation **is a fundamental** human right. **Any developmental agenda is urged** to consider the availability of freshwater resources and sanitation, and **indicators must fill** the gaps existing on goals and targets .

But **How?**

The **increasing** competition to access water is already creating conflicts in the world. **Extractive industries** are threatening availability and quality of water. Inadequate legislation and the **private sector's neglect** of human rights, **is resulting in water and land grabbing**. We need **priorities of use of water** to **effectively safeguard** water for the environment and people's essential needs on health and food.

SDGs, targets and indicators, must not be blind to these predicted and existing conflicts and **must ensure the SDGs are not less ambitious than existing commitments**

¹ At national level on behalf of Mexican Civil Society to ensure that national perspective and civil society participation are considered in the elaboration of indicators.

On a regional level on behalf of Freshwater Action Network in Latin America, that advocates from local experiences and challenges to the global level, to promote the human rights to water and sanitation and improve sustainable water management.

And at global level on behalf of End Water Poverty, a global civil society coalition from more than 65 countries across Africa, Asia, Latin America, Europe and North America advocating to end the water and sanitation crisis

² "... were not adequately aligned with human rights and did not give sufficient attention to discrimination and inequalities"
Statement made by the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR)

We call on member states **to consider cross cutting indicators and explicitly safeguard** human right principles³ and contemplate **all standards** of the human right to water and sanitation⁴ **to effectively target** the most marginalized and **end inequalities**. .

As SDG are linked to ECOSOC⁵ rights, from a regional perspective we call on member states to **consider the indicators methodology** of the working group for the **analysis of the national reports** included in the San Salvador Protocol. This model **presents the advances** made in the realization and effective fulfilment of each right⁶. Its methodology **considers civil society advocacy efforts**, and proposes that quantitative indicators should be complemented **with qualitative progress signals** that contribute to put in context the statistical information.

Besides, goals, targets and indicators **must have clear definitions** aligned with concepts that have **already been defined** in human rights instruments **to avoid undesirable results**.

To illustrate this lack of clarity, the current government of Mexico is trying to approve a Water Law **that violates the human right** to access water and **completely omits** the human right to sanitation. This omission is supported by the definition that Mexican Institutions gives to the right to sanitation⁷ where access to a toilet **is not even suggested!**

Another crucial example that needs a clear definition is “**Clean and modern energy**” from goal 7⁸. In many countries extractives industries, such as **mining or fracking are threatening** the lives of people and ecosystems because of the amount of water they use and the pollution they create. **The tolerance** of these extractive activities could severely put at risk goal 2, 3, 6, 13 and 15, **resulting in the violation** of existing human rights.

Water is central for life and development, **and has strong interlinks** with other SDG and targets. Any energy solution **must respect** human rights and **protect** water sources and its ecosystems. But the **actual model** on water management has resulted in the **destruction** of ecosystems, high **pollution** and high **inequalities** in access to water and sanitation. **We call** on member states to

³ Human rights principles of non-discrimination, equality, participation, accountability, universality, interdependence, indivisible, transparency and access to information

⁴ Human rights standards availability, affordability, quality, acceptability and accessibility for both access to water and access to sanitation

⁵ Economic, Social, Cultural and Environmental Rights

⁶ it evaluates the structural conditions of the State’s actions, processes, context of implementation and its achievements.

⁷ “Right to Sanitation: the right of a person to have water in quality, safe and acceptable for personal and domestic consumption” Gaceta parlamentaria, 5 de marzo 2015 número 4228-II Dictamen en sentido positivo que presentan las comisiones unidas de agua potable y saneamiento y de recursos hidráulicos de la cámara de diputados, con proyecto de decreto por el que se expide la Ley General de Aguas

⁸ targets 7.1 and 7.a

recognize the urgency to change this model and ensure **human rights based approach for sustainable, resilient and equitable water management**.

To achieve SDG citizen collaboration, the design of indicators, implementation of targets and follow up of the agenda need to be **done with the people**.

To date, the development of indicators has been led by an **exclusive minority** of academics and UN agencies. And **this is not acceptable**; participation **must be guaranteed** throughout all aspects of the Agenda.

Member States should also set a **transparent and inclusive process guideline** at the national level to **guaranty human rights** standards and principles **in the establishment of indicators** that capture the national realities.

Indicator's process is complex **but no indicator should be excluded** due to difficulties arising from the different levels of statistical systems in each country. The Agenda has to be ambitious and the indicators should follow this ambition.

Some indicators do **not respond** to the need of measuring the **different dimensions**, some are **centered** on the effect **instead of the structural causes**, others measure external environmental conditions, that won't let us know actions put in place to achieve the target. It requires a **complex discussion** of stakeholders **to foresee collateral** effects that one indicator could have in the fulfilment of other targets and goals.

Furthermore, **some indicators reflecting human rights principles could be crosscutting for more than one goal**, but we also need them to be **disaggregated** to ensure that disparities and inequities in progress are visible, and that the **benefits** of the SDGs, on the poorest and most marginalized people **are monitored**.

We are **concerned** with the current indicators proposed by the UN Statistical Commission in February⁹. Indicators for goal6 **must go further**. Under the current proposals, indicators will not direct government action towards those who need it the most **replicating one of the failures¹⁰ of the MDGs**. Some targets have insufficient indicators to **truly measure** whether people have real access to safe, affordable and equitable, water, sanitation and hygiene.

We have specific proposals for indicators for targets of goal 6 and 7 that **we will submit** to the secretariat.

⁹ 'List of proposed preliminary indicators', Feb 2015

¹⁰ While target 7.3 of the MDGs has increased access to water and sanitation - the greatest increase has been among the upper economic quintiles. Vulnerable and marginalized individuals and communities still lack access to this fundamental human right. Progress on drinking water and sanitation 2014 update' World Health Organisation and UNICEF, 2014

Thank you,

Nathalie Seguin Tovar
Executive Director
Freshwater Action Network-Mexico
+5215511288747
www.fanmexico.net
nathaliesequin@fanmexico.net
@nathaliexelagua
@fanmex