



**General Assembly
Human Rights Council
12th session**

Agenda Item 3: The Right to Water

“Disarm to Hydrate!”

Thank you Mr. President,

On behalf of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Solar Cookers International, Mouvement contre le racisme et pour l'amitié entre les peuples (MRAP) and CETIM, I would like to thank Mrs. Catarina de Albuquerque for her work in identifying and promoting best practices in access to safe drinking water.

Water is the essence of life. Due to climate change, pollution, underdevelopment and wasteful use, the majority of the world population is lacking sufficient, safe, physically accessible and affordable water for personal and domestic use¹. This is an affront to human dignity.

According to the Committee on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights, amongst multiple international declarations and plans of action, humans have the right to safe water². We urge all governments that have not done so yet, to incorporate the Committee's legislation in their constitution and comply with it. As you, the governments present here, have a duty to respect, protect and fulfill the Right to Water.

Ensuring the Right to Water is just a matter of priorities. Governments worldwide spend \$1339 Billion US Dollars yearly on their military³, but are unable to provide a bare minimum of 20 litres of safe water per day to 20% of the world population⁴. It only costs \$ 2 US Dollars per person per year to be sure that sufficient wells, boreholes and pumps are installed and maintained worldwide⁵, while governments spend \$202 US Dollars per person yearly on their military.

We would like to advise Mme. Albuguerque to recommend governments to look upon disarmament as a means to fulfill Millennium Development Goal 7. Instead of military expenditure, Governments can create an environment conducive for major health improvements, which would occur immediately if Governments took heed of simple water pasteurization techniques, such as heating in a 3 Euro simple solar cooker and made them generally accessible to the public.

The choice is there and to us it is clear: Governments disarm to hydrate, now, not later. It is your human rights obligation!

Thank you very much Mr. President.

16 September 2009

¹WHO (February 2003), “the Right to Water”, retrieved on 05 March 2009: http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/rtwrev.pdf.

²OHCHR (May 2007). “Consultation on Human Rights and Access to Water and Sanitation”. Retrieved on 05 March 2009: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/water/docs/consultationReportmay07.pdf>.

³SIPRI (2008). “Stockholm International Peace Research Institute Yearbook 2008”. Retrieved on 05 March 2009: <http://yearbook2008.sipri.org/05>.

⁴FAO (2007). “Coping with Water Scarcity: Every Drop Counts”. Retrieved on 05 March 2009: <http://www.fao.org/nr/water/docs/wwd07brochure.pdf>.

⁵Clasen, T.F. (2008). “Developing a National Action Plan for Household Water Treatment and Safe Storage”. Retrieved on 05 March 2009: http://www.wpro.who.int/NR/rdonlyres/5B854371-5A5A-4077-8423-0942E3B521A9/0/DevelopingaNationalPlanforHWTS_Final_.pdf.