Rapport du Rapporteur Spécial sur les droits humains à l’eau potable et à l’assainissement

Risques et impacts de la marchandisation et de la financiarisation de l’eau sur les droits humains à l’eau potable et à l’assainissement


Dans ce rapport, il constate que l’eau est de plus en plus traitée comme une simple marchandise, voir même comme un actif financier, ce qui porte atteinte aux droits humains à l’eau potable et à l’assainissement et à la durabilité de l’environnement. Selon lui, le commerce des droits d’utilisation de l’eau sur les marchés a érodé la notion d’eau comme bien commun et l’État comme garant de l’intérêt général.

Retrouvez le communiqué de presse officiel du Comité aux Droits de l’Homme ci-dessous, en version anglaise.

Une version synthétique du rapport est disponible en anglais, français et espagnol.

La déclaration est accessible ici.

COMMUNIQUÉ DE PRESSE OFFICIEL

Water is not a commodity and financial asset to be exploited, says UN human rights expert

GENEVA (20 October 2021) – Water is increasingly being treated as a mere commodity and even as a financial asset, a UN human rights expert told the UN General Assembly today, undermining the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation and the sustainability of the environment.

Pedro Arrojo Agudo, the Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation, said in a report that trading of water use rights in markets has eroded the notion of water as a common good and the State as a guarantor of the general interest.

The UN expert also pointed out that water trading tends to treat the environment as just another user, and not as the basis of life, forcing States to purchase flows for environmental needs, and failing to address the roots of unsustainability.

“I call on States to re-think the usefulness of water trading as a tool for managing scarcity, and to consult the public to determine whether water trading markets should be abolished or more strictly regulated,” Arrojo Agudo said.
On the other hand, the recent entry of water as a commodity derivative on Wall Street futures markets aggravates the situation by subjecting water to the forces of financial speculation and to risks of speculative bubbles, not taking into account the demands of human rights and the sustainability of ecosystems, he said.

“States should urgently take legal measures to prevent water from being subject to financial speculation in futures markets, potentially causing far-reaching consequences similar to those of the food and housing bubbles,” the expert said.

Rather than implementing water trading markets and allowing the trading of water on futures markets, States should manage water as a public good, ensure sustainable management, and develop participatory climate change adaptation plans (as recommended by experts and the UN), in order to guarantee the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation, he said.

« The harsh experience of the pandemic reminded us that water and sanitation are the cornerstone of public health. It is essential that States, the World Bank and the International Community understand that we are facing a democratic global challenge,” the UN expert said.
“This challenge requires a public investment effort, not for profit, that guarantees leaving no one behind, drawing on the funds made available to implement the Green New Deal of the 21st century. »

A simplified version of the report is also available in English, French and Spanish.

Yesterday, a group of human rights experts issued a joint statement on the threat that financial speculation poses to the enjoyment of a range of human rights.

Mr. Pedro Arrojo Agudo (Spain) is the Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation, appointed in September 2020. He is Emeritus Professor of Economic Analysis at the University of Zaragoza and previously, served as an elected member of the Spanish Parliament during its eleventh and twelfth legislature from 2016 to 2019.

The Special Rapporteurs, Independent Experts and Working Groups are part of what is known as the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council. Special Procedures, the largest body of independent experts in the UN Human Rights system, is the general name of the Council’s independent fact-finding and monitoring mechanisms that address either specific country situations or thematic issues in all parts of the world. Special Procedures’ experts work on a voluntary basis; they are not UN staff and do not receive a salary for their work. They are independent from any government or organization and serve in their individual capacity.

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