The Human Right to Water and Sanitation

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Inadequate Access to Drinking Water, Sanitation & Hygiene is a Major Cause of:

2.2 Million Deaths

½ of these deaths are from diarrhea

½ of the world’s hospital beds are occupied by patients with a water-related disease

Diarrheal Disease

2nd leading cause of death in children under five

leading cause of malnutrition in children under five

Large Social and Economic Costs

Georgia Kayser,
Water Institute
WaSH & Poverty – A Vicious Cycle

Inadequate water supply
Unsafe sanitation
Inequitable access

Time, financial cost
Disease burden
Health costs

POVERTY
WaSH & Development – A Virtuous Cycle

Time, financial savings
Averted disease costs
Health & education

DEVELOPMENT

Improved water supply
Safe water resources
Universal safe sanitation
HWTS where needed
WaSH Interventions
Reversing the Cycle

The Role of Human Rights

The adequacy of water, although variable, is determined by:

1. Availability
2. Quality
3. Accessibility

General Comment 15 (2002)
Human Rights Accountability for Water and Sanitation

**WaSH & Human Rights**

- International Law
- Human Rights
- Water & Sanitation

**Accountability through Implementation**

**Policy**

**Litigation**

**Indicators**
Developing Water as a Human Right

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

1945
1965
1985
2005

a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services.
Developing Water as a Human Right

all peoples, whatever their stage of development and their social and economic conditions, have the right to have access to drinking water in quantities and of a quality equal to their basic needs.
Developing Water as a Human Right

the human right to water is indispensable for leading a life in human dignity. It is a prerequisite for the realization of other human rights.

entitles everyone to sufficient, safe, acceptable, physically accessible and affordable water for personal and domestic uses
Implementing Water as a Human Right

UN Resolution on the Right to Water and Sanitation (2010)

“the right to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation as a human right that is essential for the full enjoyment of life and all human rights.”

From Independent Expert to Special Rapporteur

“Measuring whether Governments are making efforts towards the realization of the rights to water and sanitation to the maximum of available resources is an important budding area of work.”

- Catarina de Albuquerque
Application of the Right to Water & Sanitation

- **Salman M.A. Salman, LLB, LLM, JSD**
  - Development of the Right to Water and Sanitation Under International Law

- **Ralph P. Hall, MEng, MS, PhD (Virginia Tech)**
  - Assessing the Right to Water and Sanitation

- **Eric Tars, JD (National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty)**
  - Reforming Policy to Realize the Right to Water and Sanitation