



Addressing inequalities in the post-2015 development agenda for water, sanitation and hygiene

New York, 21 February 2013, 1:00 to 3:00 pm.

North Lawn Building, Conference Room 5, UN-Headquarters

Background

The Permanent Mission of Finland to the United Nations in New York, the Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation, Ms. Catarina de Albuquerque, UNICEF, UN Women and WaterAid will hold a Special Event to focus on how to address inequalities in the post 2015 development agenda, including women's rights and gender inequality, for water, sanitation and hygiene.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) target for water and sanitation was set to halve, by 2015, the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation. While the target for access to improved drinking water sources has been met 5 years ahead of time, the Special Rapporteur has witnessed in her country missions that aggregated results mask the lack of water for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people in the planet. Furthermore, the sanitation target remains one of the most off-track of all the MDGs.

The consultations on the post-2015 development agenda provide an opportunity for a critical analysis of the gaps in the current MDG architecture. Their outcomes will provide sound basis to influence the crafting of the future development framework. Building upon the knowledge and experience that has been accumulated, the post-2015 consultations and debates constitute a fertile ground to address a number of significant blind-spots of the MDGs, notably their silence regarding non-discrimination and equality.



In her report to the General Assembly (A/67/270), the Special Rapporteur argues that the post-2015 development agenda must advance while integrating equality and non-discrimination, including a global and generic stand-alone goal on equality. Ms. Albuquerque also emphasizes that water, sanitation and hygiene must have specific goal, target and indicators, on equal footing with other key priority areas for development.

In a similar vein, UNICEF and UN Women are heading the global thematic consultation on addressing inequalities, including a focus on girls and women's rights, and promoting an equality agenda for global development. It is now crucial to set goals, targets and indicators that explicitly encompass these dimensions, based on the human rights framework which entails legally binding obligations for all the United Nations Member States. The human rights to water and sanitation serve as an exemplary illustration of the importance of these principles in any future human development agenda.

Main objectives

1. To raise awareness on the equality gaps of the current MDG framework and promote the integration of equality and non-discrimination and the human rights to water and sanitation in the post- 2015 development agenda
2. To present and discuss the recommendations made in the Special Rapporteur's report including that:
 - Equality and non-discrimination must be at the core of the post-2015 global development agenda.
 - A stand-alone goal on water, sanitation and hygiene, must be included, to ensure that universal access to these services will be treated as a vital feature of social and economic development.