

## The “Blue Group” Declaration to the World Water Forum

The **time for solutions** is upon us.

**Bangladesh, Brazil, Croatia, Egypt, France, Germany, Maldives, Morocco, Slovenia, Spain, Uruguay**, members of the Blue Group, *call upon* all stakeholders of the 6<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum 2012, and the wider international community, to **integrate human rights standards and principles** when finding solutions to support the aim of universal access to water and sanitation, as well as in discussions on the post 2015 international development agenda.

The **recognition of the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation** by United Nations General Assembly resolution 64/292 and Human Rights Council resolution 15/9 is a **momentous step forward**.

The right to safe drinking water and sanitation is a human right **essential for the full enjoyment of life and all human rights**.

The human right to safe drinking water and sanitation provides an **important tool to ensure**:

- *Prioritization* for people without basic access to safe drinking water and sanitation,
- *Adherence* to the principles of non-discrimination, participation and transparency,
- *Inclusion* of national accountability and monitoring mechanisms to the provision of the services and the effective access,
- *Participation* and access to information of all stakeholders in decision making-processes.

The real challenge now is to **implement this human right and turn it into a reality** for the billions of people who still lack access to safe drinking water and sanitation bearing in mind the Principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and the commitments made by the international community to achieve fully the Millenium Development Goals.

*We advocate, inter alia, the following practical solutions:*

1. *We invite **all stakeholders*** of the World Water Forum, as well as the wider international community to **assess whether their existing legislative and policy frameworks are in line with the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation**, and to repeal, amend or adapt them, when necessary, in order to meet human rights standards.

2. *We invite **States***, as **primary duty-bearers**, to protect and to promote this human right through a **robust national regulatory framework** and by monitoring compliance, by **service providers**, in order to ensure a **basic level of service for everyone**.

3. *We call upon **all non-State actors***, while reminding that they have the responsibility to respect human rights, to assess the actual and potential impact of their activities on the realization of the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation before and while undertaking their activities **through the exercise of due-diligence “to become aware of, prevent and address adverse human rights impacts.”**;

4. We invite **States** to integrate human rights in the preparation, drafting and implementation of plans of action aimed at ensuring access to safe drinking water and sanitation for everyone. The planning and **implementation of plans of action which integrate a human rights framework requires, inter alia:**

a) an **assessment** of the current situation of the access to safe drinking water and sanitation, **based on disaggregated data on levels of availability, quality, acceptability, accessibility and affordability;**

b) anchoring the national plans in a **legal framework;**

c) **setting ambitious but realistic targets, in line with human rights standards,** with adequate financing to the maximum of available resources;

d) facilitating a **participatory and transparent process** through identifying relevant actors and institutions, and ensuring a clear designation of responsibilities;

e) paying particular attention to **non-discrimination and equality;**

f) provisions for monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the national plans;

5. We also invite States to sharing good practices and lessons learned.

6. We call upon all **service providers** to **integrate all human rights**, in particular the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation, **into their operation of services.**

7. *Recognizing* that **international cooperation** plays an important role in supporting governments to ensure the realization of the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation, *we call upon* **states, intergovernmental organizations and development partners** to enhance the assistance and cooperation, in particular to developing countries, in order to scale up efforts to provide safe, clean, accessible and affordable drinking water and sanitation for all and to align with and to adopt a human rights based approach when designing and implementing development programmes in support of national initiatives and action plans related to the enjoyment of access to safe drinking water and sanitation.

8. We encourage **all stakeholders** to use this human rights framework as a tool to **guide their work towards meeting the Internationally Agreed Development Goals, including the MDGs and in** the post-2015 development agenda.