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Item 3: Interactive dialogue with Special Rapporteur on safe drinking water and sanitation

Oral statement delivered by: Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII (APG23)

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Mr. President,

APG23 welcomes the Report of the Special Rapporteur on safe drinking water and sanitation. We want to draw attention to the exploitation of Mapuche ancestral lands, one of the most consist indigenous communities in Chile. In their land, business entities often operate in irresponsible ways, contaminating the environment, disrupting the ecosystem, and jeopardising natural surroundings and Mapuche's livelihood.

The preservation of natural elements in ancestral lands is an essential part of Mapuche's spirituality and culture, in which water is not just a commodity, but a generator of life.

The development of large-scale projects, as well as hydroelectric power plants and dams, expose the Mapuche communities to the risk of being deprived of water, further undermining the possibility of their economic and social development.

Furthermore, the lack of recognition as original indigenous people, the denial of their cultural identity and the criminalisation they endure, exacerbate the condition of vulnerability and marginalisation in which Mapuche communities have been forced to live.

As a matter of fact, the Mapuche people's fundamental individual and collective rights, including the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation, keep being seriously endangered by different invasive construction projects in their ancestral land.

In this regard, APG23 reaffirms that water is a universal common good, fundamental to the health and life of all people; as suggested by the Special Rapporteur, "the worldviews of indigenous peoples [...] offer valuable lessons in the sustainable management of aquatic ecosystems and the democratic governance of drinking water and sanitation."

Mr. Special Rapporteur how can NGOs contribute to the recognition of those lessons, I quote "as ways to resolve the challenges facing humanity in the present global water crisis."?

Thank you!