



SOCIAL FORUM 2022 (3-4 November 2022)

Interactive Dialogue on: Water for Health: Access to safe drinking water, hygiene and sanitation

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

Check against delivery

We thank the moderator and the panellists for this interesting discussion.

We could have started our intervention by displaying the high numbers of people impacted by issues regarding water and health, but sometimes numbers are not needed, and moreover, it looks like we have become indifferent to high numbers like they are the new normality.

ONE life taken because of denied access to safe drinking water should be more than enough to do whatever is possible to assure water is a real common good for all. Should we not strive for that ONE child that dies of water-borne diseases? And yet in 2022, we know there are many women walking kilometres to fetch water for their families and having to decide between drinking and hygiene: this can't be normalized, it is not admissible if we talk about human rights, if we say we don't want to leave anyone behind.

There is also an urgent issue regarding water in hospitals or healthcare facilities around the world. Many people around the world suffer because at their healthcare facilities there is no water service.

How can we think about water as life if exactly where is most needed to fight diseases is not available? Can we even imagine the feeling of helplessness of many health workers facing avoidable deaths caused by a lack of access to safe water?

Deaths associated with unclean birth, water-borne disease, water pollution, and deaths that will come because of wars on water.... We don't want to give numbers today, we would like instead to be able to bring here the faces of millions, billions of people that are suffering and will suffer because water is not in practice a human right!

We need companies in different sectors, investors, politicians, and governments, to understand that safe drinking water is not a privilege or a commodity to be commercialized. People die because of lack of safe water; families lose children because of lack of safe water...

Taking the opportunity of this distinguished panel we have 2 questions for all of you: first, there are 3 legally binding documents in discussion now in the UN system: the convention on the right to development, the one on transnational corporations, and the new pandemic treaty. What would be their role in advancing the enjoyment of the right to water for everyone and for the benefit of health and life of all? And second, what can civil society do, not only to speed up those processes but to make sure that the importance of determinants of health, among which water and sanitation play a crucial role is adequately considered? Thank you!