



DICASTERY FOR PROMOTING  
INTEGRAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

# Governing a common good: access to drinkable water for all

Rome - 8 November 2018

A Conference organized by the Dicastery for  
Promoting Integral Human Development

In collaboration with the Embassies of France, Italy, Monaco  
and the United States of America to the Holy See

With the patronage of the  
Pontifical Urbaniana University

*in collaboration with*



AMBASCIATA D'ITALIA  
PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE



U.S. EMBASSY TO THE HOLY SEE

*with the patronage of*



[water@humandevlopment.va](mailto:water@humandevlopment.va)  
[info@humandevlopment.va](mailto:info@humandevlopment.va)

## CONCEPT NOTE

In 2015, Pope Francis's encyclical letter *Laudato si'* reviewed many of the challenges related to water and reaffirmed that "access to safe drinkable water is a basic and universal human right". A few months later, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) were adopted by the UN; the first target of SDG 6 reads as follows: "By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all".

Indeed, in the last two decades, an increasingly strong emphasis on the access to water has marked the declarations and the activities of the international community, of many UN and governmental agencies, as well as of the civil society and of the Catholic Church.

Recent international summits and flagship publications have wisely underscored that drinkable water needs to be addressed in an interconnected and interdisciplinary approach. The following issues have been increasingly and justly encompassed in the discussions about water: culture, religions and spirituality; responsibility, governance, and due diligence at all levels; education and awareness raising; sustainability; role of local communities; data collection and sharing; quality and affordability. Indeed, too often in the past, the issue of water has been addressed excessively only through the lenses of infrastructure, investments, state-level policies, quantity, and peace and conflicts.

However, despite numerous proclamations and the related efforts, even though water policies are now much more articulated and holistic, the issue of drinkable water remains a top priority. This is because, flagrantly, it has still not been addressed with the sufficient ambition, consistency, determination and universality.

Some societies – because they live in areas where water availability and supply are obvious and taken for granted – demonstrate insufficient awareness and thus compassion about the lack of water experienced in other areas. Truly, lack of adequate access to drinkable water is a daily and terrifying reality for millions of people. At the planetary level, there are big gaps and inequalities in access to drinkable water and related services, such as sanitation and water related data. The World Health Organization observes: "Of the 2.1 billion people who do not have safely managed water, 844 million do not have even a basic drinking water service. This includes 263 million people who have to spend over 30 minutes per trip collecting water from sources outside the home, and 159 million who still drink untreated water from surface water sources, such as streams or lakes". Moreover, at the national and international levels, water-action often echoes with fragmentation.

This said, beyond statistics and major international commitments, the simple fact that water is, and will remain always, an essential element for life deserves to be once more firmly affirmed. Access to water implies clear distinctions: between death and survival, and between survival and various levels of wellbeing.

The purpose of the Conference is threefold:

1. To review the global situation and assess the progress as well as the impasses and the failures in the fundamental task of supplying water to the thirsty.
2. To reiterate, once more, the vision of water as a common good, essential for life, and meant for the whole human family, and underscoring the necessity of an approach rooted in responsibility, without neglecting the contributions of spirituality and culture since the spiritual and cultural dimensions of water are key factors of the social fabric

and of the community's protagonism and therefore these dimensions have to be considered also in the pastoral commitment of the Church.

3. To provide a useful and inspiring contribution to the coming international gatherings and commitments about water.

The Conference will build on previous contributions from the Catholic Church to the international and interdisciplinary discussion and efforts in the field of universal access to drinkable water; it will also benefit from the accurate and up-to-date vision of many experts gathered from different countries, as well as from some diplomats. Special attention will be given to the most relevant factors positively influencing the universal access to water and to the deepest causes, which contribute to the persistency of many problems in this field and the reluctance or difficulty in tackling these causes.

The issues related to pollution and potabilization, health, withdrawals and infrastructure, participation in the decision processes, hierarchization among competing uses of freshwater, investments and cost recovery, and education and culture – among others – deserve great attention and urgent commitment. We need a multi-level and integral vision and action about the challenges related to the universal access to drinkable water. The challenge, in the end, is the governance of a common good.

## **PROVISIONAL PROGRAM** as per 26 October 2018

8:30 Registration opens

9:00 WELCOME WORDS – **Prof. Leonardo Sileo**, OFM, Magnificent Rector of the Pontifical Urbaniana University

OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE AND SETTING THE CONTEXT – **Mons. Bruno-Marie Duffé**, Secretary of the Dicastery

9:15 **Session 1 culture and spirituality**

INTRODUCTION AND MODERATION – **Prof. Luca Pandolfi**, Pontifical Urbaniana University, Faculty of Missiology

BIBLICAL SPIRITUALITY AND THE SYMBOLISM OF WATER IN SCRIPTURE AND LITURGY – **Mons. Bruno-Marie Duffé**, Secretary of the Dicastery

WATER IN SOME AFRICAN CULTURES AND TRADITIONS – **Prof. George Panyin Hagan**, former Chairman of the National Commission on Culture of Ghana

ISLAMIC SPIRITUALITY AND THE SYMBOLISM OF WATER – **Dr. Abdelmajid Tribak**, Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Division of Sustainable Environment and Natural Resources Science and Technology Directorate

HINDU SPIRITUALITY AND THE SYMBOLISM OF WATER – **Svamini Hamsananda Ghiri**, Vice President of the Italian Hindu Union – Sanatana Dharma Samgha

AMAZONIA AND THE SYMBOLISM OF WATER – **Mrs. Keila Marães Giffoni**, Executive Secretary of the “Region North II” of Caritas Brasil

10:50 Break

11:15 Open discussion with the audience

### 11:35 Session 2 An international challenge

INTRODUCTION AND MODERATION – **H.E. Mons. Silvano Maria Tomasi**, Apostolic Nuncio

TESTIMONY FROM MOZAMBIQUE – **Mrs. Lucia M. M. Adamo**, Coordinator of the O Viveiro Project

THE GLOBAL VISION ABOUT THE RIGHT TO WATER – **Prof. Léo Heller**, UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights to safe drinking water and sanitation

Open discussion with the audience

13:15 Lunch (buffet)

### 14:30 Session 3 Governance and responsibility

INTRODUCTION AND MODERATION – **H.E. Mr. Pietro Sebastiani**, Ambassador of Italy to the Holy See

LEGAL PROBLEMS RELATED TO THE RIGHT TO WATER – **Prof. Antonio Herman Benjamin**, Justice of the National High Court of Brazil

THE LACK OF WATER IN HEALTHCARE FACILITIES IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: CURRENT SITUATION AND SOLUTIONS – **Mr. David Douglas**, president of Waterlines, and principal of the advocacy initiative Global Water 2020

POLLUTION, CURRENT SITUATION AND SOLUTIONS IN THE VIEW OF SDG 6.3 – **Prof. Armando Brath**, University of Bologna, Department of Civil, Chemical, Environmental, and Materials Engineering

HOPEFUL EXPERIENCE FROM THE FIELD

- From the Caritas confederation – **Ms. Adriana Opromolla**, International Advocacy Officer, Food Security and Climate Change, Caritas Internationalis
- From the Foundation John Paul II for the Sahel – **H.E. Mons. Lucas Kalfa Sanou**, Bishop of Banfora (Burkina Faso), President of the Board of the Foundation

Open discussion with the audience

16:10 Break

16:30 INTRODUCTION AND MODERATION – **Dr. Milagros Couchoud**, President of the Mediterranean Water Institute, Member of the Scientific and Technical Committee of the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation

FOR AN INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT OF WATER RESOURCES AT NATIONAL AND TRANSBOUNDARY BASIN LEVEL – **Mr. Jean-François Donzier**, Secretary General of the International Network of Basin Organizations

A VISION FROM A MULTINATIONAL WATER COMPANY – **Mr. Frederic Van Heems** CEO of Veolia Eau France

A VISION FROM A MUNICIPAL WATER MANAGEMENT – **Mr. Alessandro Russo**, Chairman of Cap Holding (integrated water service of the metropolitan area of Milan), Deputy Chairman of Aqua Publica Europea

A VISION FROM CIVIL SOCIETY – **Mr. Rosario Lembo**, President of the Italian Committee for Global Water Contract

18:10 Open discussion with the audience

### 18:40 Final Session

MODERATION – **Mr. Tebaldo Vinciguerra**, Official of the Dicastery

MYTHS AND CHALLENGES OF WATER MANAGEMENT. CONSIDERATIONS INSPIRED BY A VISION FROM LATIN-AMERICA – **Prof. Nicole Bernex**, Pontifical Catholic University of Peru, Department of Humanities, Section for Geography and Environment

ENCOURAGEMENT FROM THE UNITED NATIONS – **Dr. Olcay Ünver**, Deputy Director of the Land and Water Division of FAO, and Vice-Chair of UN-Water

CONCLUDING WORDS AND THANKS – **H.E. Card. Peter K.A. Turkson**, Prefect of the Dicastery

19:20 End of the Conference

## PARTICIPATION AND VENUE

The Conference takes place in the *Aula magna* of the Pontifical Urbaniana University Via Urbano VIII, 16 - 00165 Roma - [www.urbaniana.edu](http://www.urbaniana.edu)

Bring your identity document, in case of control, and also if you plan to borrow a headset for the simultaneous translation (the following languages will be used: English, French, Italian). Only diplomatic vehicles are allowed to enter the campus.

Professionals working in the field of water, students, researchers, diplomatic corps, clergy and representatives of civil society are encourage to participate. **The participation is free of charge but a pre-registration via email is mandatory** (participants will be accepted within the limits of available places).

For pre-registration, send a message with name, family name, affiliation, title, to the following email: [water@humandevlopment.va](mailto:water@humandevlopment.va); an answer will be sent in due time, confirming if you are accepted as a participant or if the venue is already fully booked.

## MEDIA AND PRESS

Accreditation is mandatory for camera operators, journalists, and other media representatives. The accreditation has to be required to the Press Office of the Holy See.

For requests of interview only: [press@humandevlopment.va](mailto:press@humandevlopment.va)

<http://www.laudatosi.va>