

Improving access to clean water for all

Issue Background

Water is a basic and essential need for survival. This source of life is critical when discussing sustainable development as well as human and the ecosystem's survival. By definition, safe water is "the water required for each personal or domestic use must be safe, therefore free from micro-organisms, chemical substances and radiological hazards that constitute a threat to a person's health. Measures of drinking-water safety are usually defined by national and/or local standards for drinking-water quality" (Human rights to water and sanitation). Clean and safe water is a requirement for a healthy life, being "20-50 liters of water per person, per day" (Why We Must Never Take Clean Drinking Water for Granted) needed following the World Health Organization statistics. However, populations where clean water is not a granted good, being their human right to clean water denied, diseases and premature death rates are exceptionally high. The lack of access to clean water could come from a bad economic state of the country at hand or poor infrastructures that are a result from those dreadful economies (Improving Access to clean water for all). Clean water resources are one human right that sadly millions of people do not have access to. Even if lack of fresh water is not the issue, there is problem with balancing commercial demands and actual needs for survival (Water, United Nations). Sorrowfully, child mortality due to diarrhea is the clearest consequence of lack of clean water, having 297,000 deaths of children under 5 years, every year, numbers which have been only aggravated due to the current pandemic (Water, United Nations). Other diseases, such as Cholera, Typhoid Fever, Guinea worm disease, Buruli ulcer, Trachoma, and Schistosomiasis, are a result of lack of clean water in which an enormous number of deaths emerge, surpassing the thousands (Access to

Clean Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene). Furthermore, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the UN has put into practice a covid-19 response to prevent and contain diseases through the accessibility of clean water in “the urban poor living in slums, who don’t have access to clean water” (Goal 6: Ensure access to water and sanitation for all). Moreover, the Sustainable development goals created by the United Nations are to “Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all” (Water, United Nations). These goals will both help in terms of health and gender equality, once the investment in the research of water will include women (Access to Clean Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene). Also, clean water will aid in the ease of possible infections that women could suffer due to the lack of clean water.

Delegation’s position

Greenpeace is an international organization which is dedicated to “preventing environmental abuses and heightening environmental awareness through direct confrontations with polluting corporations and governmental authorities.” (Greenpeace, Britannica). This organization founded in British Columbia in 1971 had as its main goal of existence, combat the “US nuclear testing at Amchitka Island in Alaska” (Greenpeace, Britannica). Throughout the years, Greenpeace has developed a tactic of “direct, nonviolent actions” (Greenpeace, Britannica), massively supported by the media. Greenpeace defends the human right of everyone being able to access clean water. However, the delegation is also aware that a large amount of the world’s population does not have access to this good which is granted for many (Why We Must Never Take Clean Drinking Water for Granted). Nevertheless, clean water, or the lack of it, is an issue that affects every single individual, once it can prevent the emerge and spread of contagious diseases. Greenpeace has estimated that 800,000 children die from diarrhea under the age of five each year as well as

88% of those deaths are a result of lack of clean water (Why We Must Never Take Clean Drinking Water for Granted). In Cape Town, water is not a granted for every citizen. In 2019, Cape Town suffered “the moment at which a city runs dry, taps are turned off, and citizens are to queue for their daily water allowance” (Why We Must Never Take Clean Drinking Water for Granted). This crisis mainly developed due to the high population growth and overdeveloped cities which makes supply and demand increase at distinct rates, which cannot be supported due to the weakness of the country’s infrastructures. However, this problem is felt worldwide, including countries like Australia or the United States of America (Why We Must Never Take Clean Drinking Water for Granted). Since water laws are ineffective at ensuring clean water, Greenpeace has created a project called “Project: Clean Water”. This program aims to protect Philippines clean water sources, by combating water pollution, once the country has a great number of water sources, but very little freshwater availability. The project shows how clean water which is accessible to the population can be damaged by pollution (Greenpeace launches ‘Project: Clean Water’). Along with the project, Greenpeace has stated the following important points, based on research of clean water: “1. the quality of fresh water sources is steadily declining while the costs of obtaining clean water is rising; 2. although many laws have been enacted to protect water, such as the Clean Water Act, these are among the most blatantly abused environmental laws because of poor enforcement; and 3. although government agencies monitor water quality, the parameters are severely limited and do not include many toxic substances from new technologies, including some of the most harmful compounds known to humans, such as persistent organic pollutants or POPs; and 4. declining water quality is compounded by the problem of water scarcity which is now a very palpable threat, making access to clean water more and more difficult.” (Greenpeace launches ‘Project: Clean Water’). Regarding the current

pandemic of Covid-19, Greenpeace emphasizes that clean water is critical in reducing the risk of transmitting diseases, more specifically Covid-19. In Kenya, due to the lack of clean water supply, it will be harder to prevent the spread of the virus, since there is a lack of water to wash our hands. Concluding, Greenpeace agrees that “Water is a renewable resource but it is not an inexhaustible Resource (...)” (Let’s Save a Little Water for Everyone). Moreover, water is a fundamental human right that everyone should have access to.

Works Cited

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