

# Human Right to Water: CEO Water Mandate



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Summary of the conversation and  
debate from March 16, 2009  
CEO Water Mandate

# What does a human right to water mean?

- Sufficient
- Safe
- Acceptable
- Physically Accessible
- Affordable

-Although not *formally* recognized, implicit in many UN declarations

# What are the roles of various stakeholders? Ruggie Framework

1. Governments' duty to **protect** human rights
2. Businesses' responsibility to **respect** all human rights
3. The need for more effective **access to remedies** to people affected by corporate related human rights abuses

# What does the Responsibility to Respect mean?

- due diligence
- internal integration
- monitoring
- transparency
- accountability
- public participation
- grievance mechanism
- universal service obligation (non-discrimination)

## **Industrial users**

- Comply with laws
- Be efficient
- Dispose responsibly
- Assess rights impact in choosing suppliers and site
- Work with governments and stakeholders

## **Water providers**

- Abide by law
- Include the marginalized
- Ensure affordability (USO)
- Prevent unwarranted connections, don't raise rates.

# Issues Brought Up During Discussion

1. How can business in their public policy engagements do more to ensure right to water? What are we talking about...
  - What can businesses collectively do to do get governments be better at providing these rights?
  - How can businesses better respect the human right to water?
  - **both...**

# Issues Brought Up During Discussion

2. What is the role of business vis-à-vis the government related to basic water needs
  - This is government's responsibility vs. This is a shared responsibility (or the private sector needs to play a stronger role)
  - Should the private sector advocate for a human right to water to the government and international community?



# Issues Brought Up During Discussion

3. The interconnections between different competing “rights” (the right to food, water, and energy)
  - What is more important to respect, provide, or protect?
  
4. The problems of tracking/reporting on supply chain water use.
  - Lack of sphere of influence, or opaque knowledge base (commodity markets)

# Issues Brought Up During Discussion

5. What are baseline responsibilities vs. aspirational goals?
  - Baseline: improving facility water use and community relationships
  - Aspirational: improving supply chain water use
  - Baseline or aspirational: advocacy with the government?

# Issues Brought Up During Discussion

6. Need more clarity on:
  - Who is the community—where I sell, or where I have my facility?
  - Corporations are not the only ones to use/abuse water
  - Where does corporate responsibility terminate/how far does it go?

# Issues Brought Up During Discussion

7. Some success stories/examples from other industries on cases where what seemed impossible was done--
  - Apparel
  - Diamonds
  - Electronic waste

# Issues Brought Up During Discussion

8. What do/can corporations bring to the human rights approach? What do/can they obtain from it?
- Expertise
  - Skills
  - Speed of movement
  - They are already involved in public policy
  - What can companies do on their own regardless of what government has done?
  - Global compact

# Next Steps

9. Next steps from Human Rights discussion
  - Agreement in the room on the existence of a human right to water... but, what is corporate responsibility in this?
  - We need a lot more back and forth on the elements before proceeding
  - We need more input from the beginning
  - We need collaborations with government, and civil society to make this work.

# Thank you

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