

# HR<sub>2</sub>W

June 2023

## Our Newsletter

---

The first half of 2023 has shown promise and action on water and SDG 6 through many in-person events. Our collective individual responsibility now needs to carry forward the commitments that have been made, and to integrate them into policy and national action plans. Our organisation has an important role to play in terms of keeping the human rights to water and sanitation, and the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, uppermost in people's minds and actions.

Our research, outreach, and country programmes combine to bring evidence-based policy design to a reality. We are also grateful to the support of our growing network of experts, led by the Expert Committee, for keeping the research that we do on the cutting edge.

## Inside this issue

---

**P 2**

**Message from Expert Committee Chair  
Trifinio Project**

**p 3**

**Masterclass on Institutional  
Responsibility  
Citizen Science and Local Water Forums**

**p 4**

**Human Right to a Healthy Environment  
Research and human rights  
2023 Events**



# Message from Expert Committee Chair



Figure 1 Martha Davis, Expert Committee Chair

Having supported the Expert Committee at HR2W from its inception, I am very proud to summarise some of the important research resulting from the collaboration of our expert members with the HR2W team. Over the last three years, HR2W has embraced new thinking related to the human rights to water and sanitation, first in terms of resilience to extreme events linked to climate or pandemics, and more recently to search for a connecting link between the rights to water and sanitation and a healthy environment in national legislation. HR2W is gradually building a strong reference library of laws and analysis. In addition, supported by the tremendous pro bono support from lawyers in academia and practice, we are creating a dynamic repository to support researchers in the sector. I invite you to explore this library and the website pages on our projects and partner research.

Martha Davis

## Trifinio Project

Early this year, HR2W joined the Organization of American States and the Inter-American Bank for a project in the Trifinio Region, a transboundary river basin bordering Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras. People living in close vicinity to the river are dependent on its management for access to safe and improved water and sanitation services. HR2W was invited into this project to bring the human rights-based approach (HRBA). Water accessibility and quality is dependent on the laws and treaties ratified in each country and if government entities uphold the standards set by these laws.

Our role has been to review current governance baselines in the region, a legal gap analysis, and to make a preliminary situation analysis. This covers not only the human right to water and sanitation, but it also focuses on the human right to safe, clean, healthy, and sustainable environment and other human rights related to water. For this project we have updated our LNOB Tool (Leave No One Behind) to include other relevant human rights, with a focus on vulnerable groups. It serves as a starting point for the development of human rights indicators for monitoring progress towards realising these rights.

## Masterclass on Institutional Responsibility

This May saw the first of our Masterclass series on Institutional Responsibility to SDG6 and the human rights to water and sanitation, in partnership with two of our members organisations, the International Water Research Association (IWRA) and the Water Research Commission (WRC). Each module consisted of a public lecture, led by expert members of our organisations, and followed by a workshop for members to explore the topic.

The series was designed to provide insights, tools and case studies on the role that institutions can and should play in protecting, respecting and fulfilling human rights. It covered topics starting from an introduction into the human rights-based approach, the specific rights to water and sanitation, corporate due diligence, understanding the root causes of the situation analysis, stakeholder mapping and meaningful engagement. It concluded with a module on how to monitor progress through the use of human rights indicator. We attracted over a hundred attendees each week.

Learn more about the Masterclass [here](#).



*Figure 2 Integrated Water and Climate Solutions Side Event at the UN Water Conference*

## Citizen Science and Local Water Forums

Water quality is one of the standards and critical elements of the HRWS. It continues to be one of the areas with insufficient data and attention, with the result that 2.2 million children and another 1.3 million vulnerable people lose their lives each year due to water-borne disease ([www.theworldcounts.com](http://www.theworldcounts.com)). HR2W has collaborated with the World Water Quality Alliance to support citizen science projects to set up local water forums to test water quality in local rivers and water sources. We will soon be hosting a webinar and workshop to inform and train people interested in setting up their own local water forum in their own country. If you wish to know more about the project, click [here](#).

## UN Water Conference

The historic UN 2023 Water Conference took place in March. Beyond creating a huge wave of interest and commitment from organisations and governments globally, there is hope that there will be a landmark breakthrough to ensure that everyone has access to safe drinking water and sanitation. Pledges to develop resilient infrastructure, water pipelines, wastewater plants and early warning schemes for natural disasters still need to be supported by legally binding legislation.

HR2W was able to contribute to the event through co-convening, presenting and participating in events each day. We contributed to commitments in the areas of resilience to climate extreme events, the link with the right to a healthy environment, and the rights of children and women in particular.



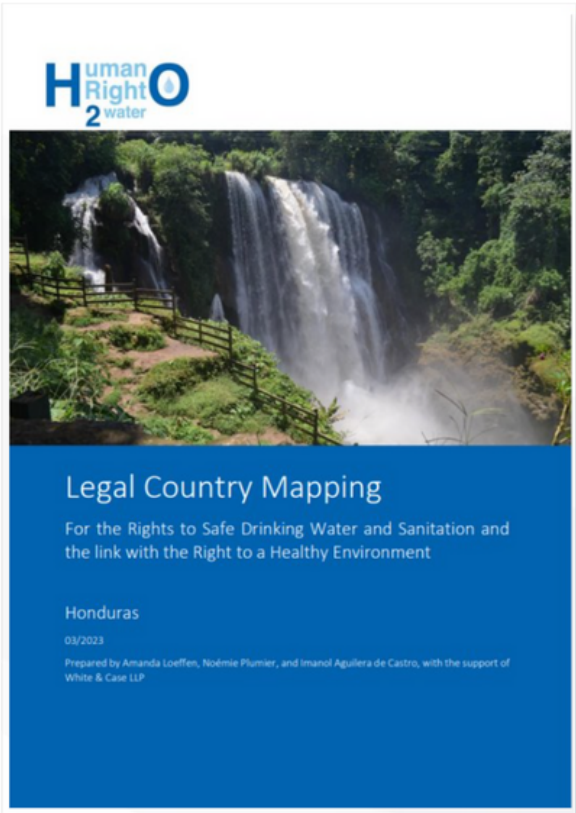


Figure 3 Legal Country Mapping of Honduras for the Trifinio Project

## Human Right to Healthy Environment

The recognition of the right to a clean and healthy environment emerges in response to the increasing environmental degradation that endangers the ability of future generations to enjoy a variety of human rights, not only water. HR2W has developed a series of 16 national studies in the assessment of the integration of the human rights to water and sanitation plus the human right to a safe, clean, and healthy environment (HRHE) into law and policy. Based on a refined HR2W methodology, teams of lawyers from White & Case completed the studies, with reviewers from our team, the expert committee and Northeastern University. Final publications are available now on our website [here](#).

## Research and human rights

Under the leadership of the Expert Committee (EC) Chair, Martha Davis, and Vice-Chair, Pedi Obani, our EC has helped to steer our organization towards new projects and initiatives. Current and recent research programmes include the review of Voluntary National Reviews, and how they have included water and sanitation; references for all the countries that have included HRWS in their constitution; and a judicial review of the countries that have not. We now publish executive summaries of our members research and projects related to HRWS on Our Partner Research webpage. We encourage all interested members to send us new publications that feature water-related human rights to share on [this page](#).

## 2023 Events

Jun 14	Annual Global Meeting
Jun 29	Citizen Science Webinar
Aug 20-24	World Water Week
Sep 18-20	WWQA Event
Sep 18-19	SDG Summit
Oct 9-13	AGUASAN Meeting and Workshop
Nov 19	World Toilet Day
Dec 10	Human Rights Day