



WATER POLICIES TO SUPPORT INVESTMENT IN HUMANS AND NATURE

A Compilation of Good Practices in Africa

The African Development Bank, the Water Research Commission of South Africa and Human Right 2 Water are collaborating on a publication that highlights good practice in good governance, incorporating the human rights-based approach (HRBA), across the African Region. It draws upon legislative good practice combined with projects where the HRBA has been integrated into practice, demonstrating improved results.



www.humanright2water.org

Full report available soon



The report includes multiple case studies from Burkina Faso, Senegal, Mali, Kenya, Chad, Uganda, and South Africa, showcasing successful integration of the HRBA in water projects. These examples illustrate practical applications of legal frameworks and policies that support an inclusive approach.

The conservation of natural water resources is linked to the provision of drinking water and productive use. We are under pressure to provide infrastructure development to meet the growing needs of populations in a climate changing world, coupled with the need for higher standards of living to meet the human rights to water and sanitation¹. We cannot ignore the interconnectedness of the environment in which we live, and the sustainability of water and waste water solutions. A really challenging area that is often overlooked in legislation relates to equality and inclusion in water management, as defined by the Human Rights-Based Approach, the HRBA.

Collectively, we are not reacting quickly enough to solve the lack of drinking water and sanitation for the billions of people that continue to be left behind due to marginalisation and vulnerability. The human rights-based approach² (HRBA) is an important part of the solution for reaching all vulnerable groups, helping them to have a voice through a community-based, participative and transparent approach. The extra accountability for governments and society that comes with this inclusion brings more innovative solutions, higher adoption rates, and greater reach. In terms of how this affects the day-to-day operation of water services, industrial and commercial enterprises, and municipal policy makers, the extracts from this paper provide a guide on how to best integrate the HRBA in water laws and policies, and the notice that should be given to international law as it refers to water, wastewater management, and the maintenance of a safe, clean and healthy environment.

¹ General comment no. 15 (2002), The right to water (arts. 11 and 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights)

² United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG), The Human Rights Based Approach to Development Cooperation Toward a Common Understanding Among UN Agencies (UNSDG, 2003)



The publication, to be launched at Stockholm World Water Week in August 2024, is a reference and guide for law-makers and project developers that are seeking more inclusive solutions to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 6 for all people.

The report concludes that integrating a human rights-based approach in water management not only fulfils legal and ethical obligations but also enhances the sustainability and success of water projects. It calls for ongoing commitment from all stakeholders to embrace the HRBA and good governance practices to ensure that future water management initiatives are both effective and equitable.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Importance of Good Governance

Inclusive decision-making should incorporate a diverse range of stakeholders. Involving them in meaningful participation fosters local ownership and encourages innovative, sustainable solutions for water and sanitation services.

2. Impact on investment

By adhering to the HRBA and good governance, the report argues that investment risks are minimized due to increased project sustainability and community buy-in.

3. Gender Inclusion

Focus on gender policies, advocating for proactive measures to include women and vulnerable groups in water management processes. This inclusive approach helps to ensure equitable access and enhances the effectiveness of water governance.