

ANNUAL REPORT 2023

Contents

Introduction from the president	1
Comments from the Chair of the Expert Committee	1
2024 - 2026 Strategy	2
1. RESEARCH	3
Legal Research	
Human Right to clean, healthy and sustainable environment	
2. APPLICATIONS	3
Human Right Indicators	
Trifinio Regional Programme to develop human rights indicators	
Stakeholder Engagement and the HRBA for Public-Private Partnerships	
3. CAPACITY BUILDING	5
Masterclass on Institutional Responsibility	
Citizen Science and Local Water Forums	
Digitalization and Data Management	
4. ADVOCACY	6
UN Water Conference	
Policies for inclusive Decision-Making in Climate Adaptive World	
Parliamentarians and Water for Peace	
World Water and World Toilet Days	
Our Events	
5. LAST REMARKS	8
Emerging Trends	

Introduction from the President



After completing more than three years of operation, HR2W is proud to announce that we are expanding our research base in the human rights to water and sanitation (HRWS), embracing also the human right to clean, healthy and sustainable environment (HRHE). This more holistic approach to the entire water cycle enables us to consider the risks to water supplies impacted by climate change, extreme climate events, pollution, and over-extraction. We continue to build expertise on stakeholder engagement based on the human rights-based approach (HRBA). The HRBA emphasises community engagement in programmes that can further the human right to water through citizen science, monitoring of human rights indicators, and encouraging the development of water infrastructure that puts vulnerable people first in our communities, and that values the social, cultural, and environmental benefits to society.

Our main regional programme this year has focussed on the Lempa River Basin of the Trifinio Region. Encompassing Guatemala, Honduras and El-Salvador, the research completed to date by HR2W has concluded a baseline analysis of the current legal and regulatory environment, and the situation analysis. The programme will eventually develop human rights-based indicators for monitoring the access to water, sanitation and a healthy environment, as a support to the Trifinio Plan and Commission. HR2W has been visible at key global events this year, advocating the Human Rights to Water and Sanitation. When not on the global stage, it is running knowledge sharing activities through masterclasses, webinars, and train-the-trainer workshops.

Our strategy is threefold, bringing deep research, innovative methodologies, and advocacy to the global stage. We use this research and innovation to provide the knowledge and competence for supporting programmes at local, national and regional levels.

Dhesigen Naidoo, South Africa

Comments from the Chair of the Expert Committee



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.

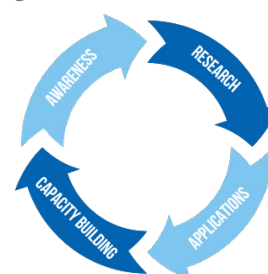
Professor Martha Davis, Northeastern University

2024-2026 Strategy

Vision	A world where all people have access to safe and sustainable water and sanitation.
Mission	To collect, use and share expert knowledge on how the human rights to water and sanitation (HRWS) should be integrated into law, policy and practice to realise safe, sustainable, and safely managed access to water and sanitation for all, prioritising the most vulnerable and marginalised.
Who are we	A Non-Profit Swiss-based association building on expertise established over 10-years.
What makes us different	Our methodologies provide references of good practices, adaptable for all people and leaving no one behind (LNOB).
Why do we work	In today's 2030 Agenda, the human rights to water and sanitation (HRWS) are essential for the achievement of several many Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
Who we work with	We support governments, civil society, water and sanitation service providers, academics, UN-Water partners, and utilities to accelerate the realisation of SDGs related to water, especially for the people that continue to be left behind.
What we do	Human Right 2 Water brings leading-edge legal research, guiding duty-bearers to improve sustainable water governance and water cooperation. Therefore, 'It contributes to human rights access to water and sanitation for marginalised communities through law reform.

The strategy for the next three years includes a revision to the categories of programmes based on our experience since 2020. The programme work falls clearly between our four activities of research, applications, capacity building and awareness (as represented in the figure on the right).

The vision and mission remain unchanged, and we have concentrated on developing areas where there are gaps in knowledge. For instance, the work on the constitutional review, and the link with the healthy environment.



Main Objectives	Our Programmes	Products	Partners and Stakeholders
1. Research <i>Analysing law and policy to support the human rights to water and sanitation.</i>	1. Constitutional and judicial review of HRWS in 40+ countries 2. Link between the HRWS and the right to a healthy environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Country Legal Mappings of HRWS, Publications and Policy Briefs 	National Governments, Expert Committee, White and Case, Amazon Legal Department
2. Applications <i>Developing human rights-based tools, programmes and activities to support the integration of the human rights to water and sanitation.</i>	1. River Basin programme in Trifinio, C.America to develop Human Right Indicators. 2. Human Rights Indicators in other countries 3. Checklist tools for private and public water and sanitation service providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sub-national legal analysis, situation analysis, LNOB Tool, HR Indicators, tools for PPPs and water service providers 	Local governments and river basin authorities, Water utilities including PPPs, Inter-American Development Bank, The Organisation of American States, Swiss Development Cooperation
3. Capacity-Building <i>Facilitating knowledge-sharing activities to improve awareness of the HRWS, and build confidence in using our tools.</i>	1. Tailored capacity building related to research and publications 2. Citizen Science workshops to support local water forums to monitor water quality (SDG 6.3.2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Masterclasses, webinars, and in-person facilitated workshops 	Water utilities, private sector, youth networks, members of HR2W, HRWS networks, e.g. Swiss community of practice, AGUASAN, WWQA, Water Research Commission, WfWP, IWRA
4. Awareness <i>Promoting the human rights to water and sanitation to achieve all water related SDGs, making sure that all vulnerable groups are included.</i>	Communications to raise visibility of our research products, events and web-based programmes, creating an online presence for HR2W, to increase awareness of the need to recognise the HRWS.	Social media campaigns to create awareness about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research products and programmes HRWS through World Water Day, World Toilet Day, Human Rights Day, and our own events 	General public, and wider membership and partners. UN-Water Partnership, members, participants in Human Rights Council and Parliamentary events, Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)

1. RESEARCH

Legal Research

All of our programmes are founded on legal and policy research into the human rights to water and sanitation, and more recently, also including the right to clean, safe and sustainable environment.

We are fortunate to attract a wide range of in-kind legal research from White and Case, Amazon's legal department, and many of our members. The Expert Committee, chaired by Prof. Martha Davis, from Northeastern University, and Vice-Chair, Dr Pedi Obani from the University of Bradford, provides a sounding board for new ideas and exploration, and a set of experts from whom to seek advice for the Board. Recent programmes include a listing of all countries that include the HRWS in their constitution; a judicial review of cases that recognise the human rights to water and sanitation under other human rights; and an on-going list of country legal mapping studies, that now include the Framework Principles of the Healthy Environment.

Human right to clean, healthy and sustainable 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 page](#), and also under the Publications and Policy Brief pages. Research conducted by our members is also shared on the [Our Partners Research](#) page, and we encourage you to share your publications on this page.

2. APPLICATIONS

Human Rights Indicators

HR2W has worked on methodologies for developing human rights indicators in five countries so far, with the last three in Central America, in the Trifinio Region. This methodology, based on the OHCHR paper from 2012, is summarised on our [policy brief](#) page. In very brief, human rights indicators are based on needs rather than charity, and monitor the efforts that are being made to enact policies for supporting the HRWS. The outcomes are very much dependent on the needs of vulnerable groups. Monitoring these indicators provides a way for local authorities to identify priorities, and brings local ownership over challenges.

Trifinio Regional Programme to develop human rights indicators

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 the rights.

Stakeholder Engagement and the HRBA for Public-Private Partnerships

HR2W works with UNECE and the PPPs for SDGs programme to improve stakeholder engagement by integrating the HRBA into their evaluation tools. This year, we have been involved in the annual PPP Forum, the 7th Working Session of the UNECE Working Party on PPPs, and heading the Water Chapter of the World Association of PPPs (WAPPP). Our goal here is to use meaningful public participation to increase the value of PPPs through wider social, cultural, environmental and economic benefits. The Water Chapter in WAPPP, is a think tank for solutions to attract more investment into water infrastructure.

We complemented this programme by supporting the WAPPP Event at the UNCTAD World Investment Forum this October in Abu Dhabi. We provided the only platform for investment in water infrastructure, highlighting a few of the new technologies from the Region. The main learning was that innovation in water is related to the nexus between water-energy-ecosystems, and that it could be a route to creating more value for water investments.



3. CAPACITY BUILDING

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.](#)

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). HR2W has collaborated with the World Water Quality Alliance (WWQA) to support citizen science projects to set up local water forums to test water quality in local rivers and water sources.

As part of the stakeholder engagement work stream for WWQA, HR2W developed and facilitated a [workshop](#), in partnership with the Women for Water Partnership, alongside the WWQA Conference in Nairobi this September. This ‘train-the-trainer’ course is aimed at supporting the establishment of Local Water Forums to set up water quality monitoring using citizen science. The workshop focused on supporting participants to use local stakeholder engagement to attract technical, funding and community support. The workshop highlighted the importance of inclusive, participatory approaches in ensuring access to clean and safe drinking water and advancing the broader goals of water quality and the human right to water.





Digitalization and Data Management

Each year, AGUASAN supports the Swiss Community of Practice through technical workshops and an e-learning journey. HR2W has been involved in the process as part of the steering committee, and through the facilitation of two online webinars and a one-week in-person workshop in Martigny. The programme has allowed HR2W to share its network of experts and knowledge on the subjects of citizen science for water quality monitoring, and also in digital water governance.

Participants in the workshop joined from at least 10 different countries, and exchanged knowledge and best practices on the general topic of digitalisation and data management in the water sector. The AGUASAN Workshop is a long-standing Swiss institution that charts progress towards actionable strategies and partnerships by fostering collaboration and understanding.

4. AWARENESS

UN 2023 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

Policies for inclusive Decision-Making in Climate Adaptive World

We launched this publication at Stockholm World Water Week together with partners IDB, WRC, Veolia and Nestle. The publication was based on a study completed in 16 countries whereby we have integrated the water relevant principles of the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment into our signature Country Legal Mapping methodology. Our events highlighted the urgency of being inclusive for decisions about climate adaptation policies, emphasizing the holistic view required for sustainable water resource management, and the impact on vulnerable communities. For a brief review of the methodology, you may review our Policy Brief comparing the framework principles of the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, with the principles of the human rights to water and sanitation.

Parliamentarians and Water for Peace

The Inter-Parliamentary Union has a programme for encouraging peace through the discussion of scientific matters related to water. Our CEO, Amanda Loeffen, was invited to speak at their workshop in Vietnam this September, on the twin topics of human rights indicators and citizen science, both of which have featured strongly in our programmatic work this year. We recommended that parliamentarians have a simple checklist approach to assessing the status of the human rights to water and sanitation in their countries, as an aid for advocacy and policy improvement.

World Water and World Toilet Days

We celebrate World Water Day in March and World Toilet Day in November each year to bring attention to the need for safer access to sanitation. As partners and members of the communications task force of UN-Water, we join the annual campaigns, and we also run complementary activities, such as the social media interview with one of our Board Members from the Toilet Board Coalition.

2023 Events

Here are a selection of the main events in 2023 where HR2W organised, facilitated, or presented advocacy events linked to the HRWS and human rights-based stakeholder engagement.

Date	Event
18 th -24 th March	UN-Water Conference, New York
28 th -30 th April	UNECE PPP Forum, Athens
14 th June	HR2W Annual General Meeting
19 th June	Citizen Science Webinar with AGUASAN
20 th -24 th August	World Water Week, Stockholm
11 th -13 th September	Inter Parliamentary Workshop, Vietnam
18 th -21 st September	WWQA Workshop for Local Water Forums, Nairobi
9 th -15 th October	AGUASAN Meeting and Workshop, Martigny
18 th -20 th October	World Investment Forum, Abu Dhabi, WAPPP
29 th -30 th November	UNECE PPP Working Party on PPPs

More information on our events is available on [our website Events page](#).



LAST REMARKS

Emerging Trends

Given our emphasis on research and development in the HRWS, it would not be complete to record our year's work without discussing the new areas that are emerging. While much of this work is still in the brainstorming stage with new partners and stakeholders, we would like to highlight a few areas where we are working:

- a. Inclusive decision-making for humans and nature – Regional studies of how the inclusive decision-making research for the HRWS and HRHE can work in practice, bringing attention to case studies in three regions where the principles of the HRBA are demonstrated in both legislation and in practice. We have plans to publish this information for Asia, Africa and Latin American regions. The messages are related to the importance of meaningful public participation at community levels, and how this can translate into more sustainable projects.
- b. Parliamentary support – A human rights checklist for parliamentarians to see how they can support the strengthening of human rights to water and sanitation.
- c. Human rights indicators and monitoring to support SDG 6 – Human rights indicators in other countries, where there is already a recognition of the HRWS, and where there is a need to develop strategies at local level to monitor how these rights are being implemented.
- d. HRWS Roadmap – supporting UN-Water and OHCHR in the development of tangible products for the HRWS roadmap for UN Agencies.
- e. Public-Private Partnerships – In partnership with WAPPP, we are investigating how to attract additional infrastructure financing into the water sector while maintaining government accountability, and capturing wider environmental, societal and cultural benefits.

In a last word from the secretariat, we cannot let the year go by without a special thanks to the numerous people that have contributed to such a successful year. It is not only the special people in our team (thank you Noémie, Isa, Imanol, Geraldine and Mario), but also the army of pro bono legal researchers that have enabled the huge volume of work that supports our programmes. I would like to thank our volunteer researchers (Clara, Jennifer and Gouri), the supportive Board (Dhesigen (President), Callum (Secretary), Alex, Anand, Andres, Dominique, Mamohloding, Mariet, Mercedes, Olcay, Rashid), our enthusiastic Expert Committee (Martha (Chair), Pedi (Vice-Chair), Amael, Carla, Daniel, Dom, Inga, Mudford, Philippe), and the country legal research teams from White and Case and Amazon. A special thanks also to our main funders and partners: the Organisation of American States, the Latin American Bank, the Swiss Water Partnership, Women for Water Partnership Water Research Commission, International Water Research Association, AGUASAN, Veolia, Nestle and to our many members. We would achieve only a fraction of our impact without you all. My heartfelt thanks.

Amanda Loeffen, CEO

