



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

Twenty-first session

Agenda Item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,  
political, economic, social and cultural rights,  
including the right to development**

### **Joint written statement\* submitted by the Sovereign Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem (OSMTH), the AL HAKIM Foundation, non-governmental organizations in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[24 August 2012]

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\* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language received from the submitting non-governmental organizations.

## **Clean water access, food cooking, deforestation and Human Rights**

We fully endorse and support the United Nations Millennium Goals, and especially Millennium Goal N°1 on eradication of hunger and extreme poverty, Millennium goal 3 on promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women, and Millennium goal 7 on environmental sustainability, and appreciate the constructive work by Member States and the efforts in the various intergovernmental negotiations relating to the urgent problems posed by environmental issues, with notably the 2010 COP10 on the Convention on Biodiversity in Nagoya, Japan, the 2010 International Year on Biodiversity, preparatory meetings being convened for the forthcoming UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in Durban, South-Africa, and the 2011 International Year of Forests. We refer to Resolution 7/14 on the right to food of the Human Rights Council on March 27, 2008.

We refer also to Kofi Annan, (*Ex*) Secretary General of the United Nations, stating that, “access to safe water is a fundamental human need and therefore a basic human right”.

We also fully acknowledge that the present lack of availability of safe clean water and of energy in many areas of this world are major challenges to human rights and especially to the right to food, the right to clean water, the right to health and to the empowerment of women through its consequences.

### **Making the need to access to safe clean water at an affordable price for all a reality and a world emergency**

We urge member states to support and to make a reality the access to safe clean water at an affordable price for the populations concerned in every parts of the world.

The concept of providing access at an affordable price to safe clean water encompasses the costs of providing the water, yet also is a fair measure as more wealthy populations would pay a little more than those less wealthy.

We recognize with hope the recent discovery of huge reserves of water underneath the African continent.

Water issues are and will become more and more crucial and strategic in the future. If they are not solved, we will see many uprisings and conflicts devastating already fragile economies and threatening.

We recommend to the Human Rights Council Member States that they recognize that “the need to access to safe clean water at an affordable price for all is a world emergency”.

### **Cooking one’s food without the requirement to harvest wood**

As deforestation is a major threat for our planet, and the collection of wood to cook food has been recognized as one causes, especially in desert threatened areas, We urge and to fully support and develop the concept of the “solar cookers” as an energy friendly way to cook one’s food.

Therefore, we strongly encourage the usage of Solar cookers for cooking food as a reusable and very inexpensive solution (-less than one euro/dollar per household) to deforestation especially in desert threatened regions, as well as a very energy friendly solution to liberating women (-and children) from having to walk miles and miles to harvest wood to cook their food.

We urge to consider the Human Rights Council to consider closely this concept, and support its development and implementation wherever possible through the United Nations related agencies.

**Enhancing Human Rights to education and health**

As women (and children) are often in those areas most targeted by these two measures, the ones who spend hours and hours a day to collect wood and water, both these measures would allow these women to free some time for personal use, for their own education as well as that of their children: We deeply think that it is not compatible with Human Rights that some people have to spend multiple hours a day just to collect basic supplies to support their life.

Health issues are closely related to access to clean water. As states have less and less resources, they should look closely at measures that will give them sustainable returns: providing access to clean water at an affordable price and preventing deforestation will lower the cost of disease prevention and treatment, will enhance local food productivity, not only by the new availability of water, but also by the supplement of time freed to cultivate land and grow food not just to sustain one's family.

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