Public Law and Human Rights Forum
香港城市大學
City University of Hong Kong

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CPLR, Webinar Series on Asian Perspectives on Human Rights

Water as a Human Right: Critical Asian Perspectives on its Present and Future Dimensions

THURSDAY, 9 JUNE 2022 (ONLINE 12:00-13:30 HKT)

Access to water is a fundamental human right: it is essential for the full enjoyment of all other rights and life itself. However, limited water resources worldwide, together with climate change, have engendered many disastrous water conflicts, affecting people's access to clean drinking water. Various international conventions and declarations have recognised water as a human right. However, water as a human right is formally recognized in its entirety and completeness in a 2010 UN General Assembly resolution (A/RES/64/292), followed by a bit more expansive HRC resolution (A/HRC/RES/15/9). The *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 25 September 2015, recognises the 'water goal' under Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG6). Even UNESCO water programmes have supported SDGs. However, 2.2 billion people lack access to safe drinking water globally, and many succumb due to poor sanitation and dirty water. Despite recognition of water as a human right, there has been mysteriously a lack of undisputable discussion on water quality. It has been missing from the global negotiations in any meaningful manner even though SDG6 facilitates the implementation of the international human right to water at the local level.

The CPLR is organising this 90-minute thematic webinar on '***Water as a Human Right***', a part of the CityU Series: Asian Perspectives on Human Rights. This event aims to provide a critical discussion on questions such as:

1. How to achieve reasonable and equitable access to safe drinking water for everyone, irrespective of the state's economic and social conditions?
2. To what extent is SDG6 realized? How does SDG6 facilitate the implementation of the international human right to water at the domestic level?
3. What does it mean to have the sustainable human right to water in light of the Sustainable Development Goals on the 20th anniversary of the human right to water?
4. Why is access to safe drinking water much worse in Asia? What positive role can China play as an upper riparian?
5. Has the investment tribunal recognized the existence of a human right to water? If so, how have investment tribunals demonstrated their willingness to impose human rights obligations on a State?
6. How can the amicus curiae mechanism in the investment arbitration promote the realization of the human right to water?
7. How does the dam building on the upper reaches affect water quality? Can it be avoidable?
8. Has access to safe drinking water been achieved or manipulated?
9. We always hear that transboundary water cooperation requires the adoption of an interdisciplinary approach and the involvement of all stakeholders. What does it mean at the practical level?
10. Many states have not signed the transboundary water agreements and remain tangled in the water conflicts. How do these water wars affect the people's right to safe drinking water?
11. To what extent sustainable water governance/policy is essential for safeguarding the right to safe drinking water for everyone along with states' development goals?

MODERATOR: ***LONE, Fozia Nazir***, Associate Professor & Associate Director Public Law and Human Rights Forum (CPLR), School of Law, City University of Hong Kong.

PANELLISTS:

- ***ZAFAR Adeel***, Executive Director, Pacific Water Research Centre & Professor of Professional Practice, School of Sustainable Energy Engineering, Simon Fraser University, Canada
- ***KHAN Shahbaz***, Director of UNESCO Beijing, UNESCO Representative to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Japan, Mongolia, People's Republic of China, and the Republic of Korea
- ***SPIJKERS Otto***, Professor at Wuhan University's China Institute of Boundary and Ocean Studies (CIBOS) & Professor at Wuhan University's Research Institute of Environmental Law (RIEL)
- ***CHEN Huiping***, Professor of International Law, School of Law, Xiamen University and Director of International Economic Law Institute.
- ***THEIN, Khin NiNi*** Founder and Chairperson of the Water Mothers Organization and Initiator of the Myanmar Water Think Tank & Secretary of the Advisory Group of Water, Research and Training Centre (WRTC)

Please register at https://cityu.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJUuf-CqrzkoE9f0sILfrThSTTfESVGF8PAu

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email, and Zoom link for joining the event.