



09 March 2009

Oral Statement on Agenda Item 3:  
The Right to Water

**“The clear choice:  
Disarm to Hydrate!”**

Distinguished Delegates,

On behalf of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, Solar Cookers International and le Mouvement Contre le Racisme et pour l’amitié entre les Peuples, I would like to address the Council concerning the Right to Water.

Water is the essence of life. Those who have it do not think about the struggle for it: A struggle leading to death, disease and despair. WILPF firmly believes that all human beings have the equal right to safe water and that this Right to Water should be specifically spelled out in the universal framework of Human Rights, now more than ever.

Due to climate change, pollution, underdevelopment and wasteful use the majority of the world population is living with a lack of sufficient, safe, physically accessible and affordable water for personal and domestic use<sup>1</sup>. This is an affront to human dignity. WILPF is aware that the Right to Water has been recognized in a number of international declarations, resolutions and plans of action<sup>2</sup>, but sees this as insufficient. You, the governments present here, have a duty to respect, protect and fulfill the Right to Water as part of Human Rights Law and thus fight this affront to human dignity.

Ensuring the Right to Water is just a matter of priorities. Governments worldwide spend \$1339 Billion US Dollars yearly on their military<sup>3</sup>, but are unable to provide a bare minimum of 20 litres of safe water per day to 1.1 Billion world citizens, which is 20% of the world population<sup>4</sup>. It only costs \$ 2 US Dollars per person per year to be sure that sufficient wells, boreholes and pumps are installed and maintained worldwide<sup>5</sup>, while governments spend \$202 US Dollars per person yearly on their military.

Major health improvements would occur immediately if Governments took heed of simple water pasteurization techniques, such as heating in a 3 Euro simple solar cooker and made them generally accessible to the public.

The choice is there and to WILPF, MRAP and SCI it is clear: Governments disarm to hydrate, now, not later!

Thank you very much Mr. President.

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<sup>1</sup>WHO (February 2003), “the Right to Water”, retrieved on 05 March 2009: [http://www.who.int/water\\_sanitation\\_health/rtwrev.pdf](http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/rtwrev.pdf).

<sup>2</sup>OHCHR (May 2007). “Consultation on Human Rights and Access to Water and Sanitation”. Retrieved on 05 March 2009: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/water/docs/consultationReportmay07.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup>SIPRI (2008). “Stockholm International Peace Research Institute Yearbook 2008”. Retrieved on 05 March 2009: <http://yearbook2008.sipri.org/05>.

<sup>4</sup>FAO (2007). “Coping with Water Scarcity: Every Drop Counts”. Retrieved on 05 March 2009: <http://www.fao.org/nr/water/docs/wwd07brochure.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup>Clasen, T.F. (2008). “Developing a National Action Plan for Household Water Treatment and Safe Storage”. Retrieved on 05 March 2009: [http://www.wpro.who.int/NR/rdonlyres/5B854371-5A5A-4077-8423-0942E3B521A9/0/DevelopingaNationalPlanforHWTS\\_Final\\_.pdf](http://www.wpro.who.int/NR/rdonlyres/5B854371-5A5A-4077-8423-0942E3B521A9/0/DevelopingaNationalPlanforHWTS_Final_.pdf).