

## **Water, Energy, Food - The Nexus approach**

21 Maggio - EXPO – Cascina Triulza

### **Water is a human right**

**Without water there is no food, no energy, no life!**

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Water has been left on the margin of EXPO 2015, despite it is by now broadly admitted by the scientific community that in the next future we will face a water crisis producing no lesser critical effects than the current economic crisis. In 2015 ends the decade “Water for life”, and we are forced to realize that the objective of halving the population without access to water is far from being reached. Today, 748 million of people still have no access to safe drinkable water and 2,5 billion do not dispose of sanitation; in contrast, it is estimated that the demand of water will grow of 400% by 2050.

Thus, it becomes clear that current approach based on over-exploitation of natural resources and land/water grabbing is no longer sustainable, it will inevitably lead to growing inequalities, social conflicts and migration flows toward richer zones. We also need to take into serious consideration the consequences of this approach in terms of relation between the humans and the planet, and among citizens themselves, who belong to a unique family, humanity. Furthermore, we can no longer secure access to water on the basis of this exploitation approach.

All those critical points let crucial weaknesses emerge about the Food Security approach, the most represented here in EXPO 2015, that tends to be applied also for water. In this approach, a pattern of security is adopted, about food, water and energy, based on extensive production and biotechnologies, giving for granted the current level of natural resources grabbing. The security approach calls for citizens taking responsible behaviors against waste, but it is unable to stop destroying natural cycles, thus worsening life conditions of a large part of population, namely of the weakest part, by taking food and water away from farmers to the advantage of multinational companies, and replacing the natural cycle of water with a technological, market and profit-oriented cycle.

However, water proves to be resistant to such orientation towards market and profit. First of all, water is still a public good, most often managed by States or local communities, and not yet a “commodity” as it is the case for food. Secondly, water is deeply perceived as a right and for this reason urges citizens to mobilize in defense of their right, as it is proved by the petition that 621 CSOs from all over the world have sent last May to the UN General Secretary, asking for the right to water being integrated within the political declaration of post-2015 Agenda. Thirdly, the right to water and sanitation has been acknowledged by the UN General Assembly Resolution 64/292 (2010) as a specific human right, linked to life and dignified conditions for life.

And yet, five years later, practically no State has implemented the human right to water and sanitation through its national laws and the latter is still a “declaration”. It is true that the current conjuncture is unfavorable to human rights implementation. We assist to a twofold trend: on the one side, reducing decision power of supranational institutions, such as the UN, in order to replace it with bilateral agreements (TTIP, CETA, EPA), on the other side, reducing the power of States and national Parliaments, in order to replace democratic representation with models of governance and decision based on markets and stockholders. We need a new political approach aimed at protecting human rights and guaranteeing everybody access to common resources. A new global political and institutional framework is needed, founded on the adoption of binding tools of international law, able to define States obligations in the defense of human rights and of the rights of the planet, and namely the rights indispensable for life.

This demands new tools, implementing the UN Resolution of 2010, as first step of a process of constitutionalization of common goods and of a new approach in managing those goods and the natural resources offered by the planet. CICMA has launched an Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, as an International Treaty specifically devoted to the implementation of the human right to water. The Treaty defines the minimum quantity of water essential for life that must be treated as a right freed from market, connects the right to water to other rights such as food and health, defines the criteria for accessing to water and sanitation that States ought to guarantee to their citizens, establishes the possibility for citizens and local communities to denounce violations against the right. An International Campaign “**Waterhumanrighttreaty**” has been launched, that shall be supported by an International Committee expression of Networks, NGOs, Social Movements. For information about the content of the Protocol and the objectives of the Campaign, see [www.waterhumanrighttreaty.org](http://www.waterhumanrighttreaty.org).

Living prosperous and satisfying existence and promoting environmental sustainability are objectives of the post-2015 Agenda as well as of the Carta di Milano that should be the legacy of EXPO 2015. Yet, these objectives cannot be reached through a model of Security keeping unsustainable exploitation of natural resources. A twofold challenge faces the international community about water: to guarantee to future generations the universal right to water and to life; to avoid that water becomes a commodity, hence a business for markets, taking water control away from states and local communities. If the legacy to EXPO 2015 will be merely the Food Security model, to which next EXPO in Dubai will no doubt respond by proposing new technologies for nutrition. The Campaign for an International Protocol implementing the human right to water could offer a much stronger and more innovative political legacy.