

Contribution to the RoundTable 1: Water governance

My name is Dinesh Suna. For the past ten years, I have been the Coordinator of Ecumenical Water Network (EWN) - an initiative of the World Council of Churches (WCC). I am also co-chair of PaRD water workstream (Partnership of religion and sustainable development), a platform for multilateral actors, governments and Faith Based Organisations. I am also representing the "People's Water Forum", alternative to the corporate driven, World Water Forum.

WCC is a global fellowship of churches from 120 countries with a membership of around 600 million and is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland. We focus on advocacy for human right to water through our faith constituencies. Over 80% of world's population identify themselves with one faith or the other. without our voices this UN Water Conference may be hijacked by the corporate interests who see this as an opportunity to make huge profit from the life-giving resource : Water, very often at the cost of the water for life! The 'value' of water is often economical, when it comes to the water governance sector. The social, cultural, spiritual and ethical values are overlooked.

We at the Ecumenical Water Network strongly believe that "water is a 'gift' of God, a public good/resource and a human right. Water governance is at the core of the current water crisis. More often than not the rich and powerful decide how water is governed. Community participation on the other hand is overlooked. They decide who gets priority for water, how much and at what cost? More often, the prioritisation of water for life is overlooked over water for profit! **The human right to drinking water must be prioritised over other usage of water such as by industries, for development and also for irrigation etc.** Furthermore financial values of water overshadows cultural, spiritual and ethical value of water. Thus water privatisation is pushed as the solution to the water crisis. However, this adds to the problem. Water must remain in control of the public and private corporations may be encouraged to contribute to innovation, technology, etc. Becoming a **"blue community"** is the way forward which respects human right to water, promote public control of water and say no to bottled water, which is a menace for our planet and an impediment to the human right to water.

If we have to achieve sdg 6 and use water for sustainable development, then all voices must be heard, including that of the faith communities, who have tremendous potentials in terms of influencing behavioural changes but also financial abilities to contribute to the solutions, above all has a moral imperative for ethical and justice based solutions to the water crisis.

To know more about our work, please visit:

[Ecumenical Water Network | World Council of Churches \(oikoumene.org\)](https://www.oikoumene.org/en/about-us/ecumenical-water-network)

[WCC reaffirms water justice concern at UN talks on SDGs | World Council of Churches \(oikoumene.org\)](https://www.oikoumene.org/en/news/wcc-reaffirms-water-justice-concern-at-un-talks-on-sdgs)