

STATEMENT

Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation:
Pedro Arrojo-Agudo.

PGA meeting – UN Water Conference 2023
New York, 25 October 2022

Excellencies, thank you for allowing me to address a few words to you. The UN is convening for the first time in almost 50 years a global reflection on the Global Water Crisis, to accelerate the pace and achieve SDG6. The question is whether we will be able to put people first and the human rights at the center of the agenda, or whether we will continue to talk about profit and business opportunities.

As proposed by the organizers, it is time to work on strategies that move us forward, changing **the game**, but mainly for the 2 billion impoverished people without guaranteed access to safe drinking water. Excellencies, in my role as Special Rapporteur, appointed by the UN Human Rights Council, allow me to send a triple message to change the game: First, the human rights to water and sanitation of these billions of impoverished people represent a democratic challenge, not a business opportunity; second, being a democratic challenge, any strategy for change requires social participation; and third, we will not make serious progress in guaranteeing drinking water to these people if we do not improve the state of the aquatic ecosystems from which they draw their daily water supply.

Excellencies, the Human Rights Call to Action and the UN-Water Roadmap for the integration of the human rights to water and sanitation express the main "game changers" to be promoted. The Water Conference will succeed if we succeed in making it a great meeting place between the UN and water defenders, women organizations, impoverished right holders, human rights defenders, indigenous peoples, defenders of rivers, lakes and wetlands, inter-faith platforms, local governments and rural community authorities.

Finally, I would like to remind you that on November 3 and 4, the Human Rights Council, will hold in Geneva the Social Forum on Water, to contribute to the success of the New York Conference, from a social approach based on human rights.