

Dear friends and colleagues,

I am happy to present my second newsletter of 2019. Several activities of significance to the mandate have taken place during previous months and more will be coming up soon.

In this newsletter I cover the following events:

1. **2<sup>nd</sup> Human Rights Youth Challenge round-up**
2. **World Water Day (22 March 2019): Leaving No One Behind**
3. **Latinos in Costa Rica**
4. **Official country visit to Lesotho**
5. **Follow-up country visits project**
6. **Menstrual Hygiene Day Campaign**
7. **Announcement of 2020 report**
8. **Launch of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Human Rights Youth Challenge**
9. **Communications**

## 1. 2<sup>nd</sup> Human Rights Youth Challenge

In January 2019, I launched the 2<sup>nd</sup> Youth Challenge on the human rights to water and sanitation in spheres of life beyond the household – the theme of my report to the 42<sup>nd</sup> of the Human Rights Council - the together with the Permanent Mission of Spain, the Permanent Mission of Germany, UN-Water, UNESCO-IHP, and OHCHR.

For this challenge, participants uploaded on social media original content in which they showed their passion about the human rights to water and sanitation and their understanding of these rights in spaces beyond the household. (See more information: [English](#) | [French](#) | [Spanish](#))

Over 80 submissions were received from around the world, in several different languages. I would like to thank each and every participation for showing inspiring dedication and creativity to demonstrate their passion for human rights. You can find a summary of submissions and special mentions on the [website](#).

On World Water Day 2019 (22 March 2019), I announced Juliana Muller as the winner of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Youth Challenge. See her submission providing a virtual reality experience of many who are left behind without water and sanitation: <http://bit.do/eMyrs>. I will invite Juliana to travel to Geneva and to speak at a side-event of the 42<sup>nd</sup> session of the Human Rights Council in September 2019. The winner of last year's winner, Asniya Mohammad, will also travel to Geneva and speak at the same event.



## 2. World Water Day: Leaving No One Behind

On 19 March, I participated in a panel discussion held during the commemoration of occasion of the World Water Day (22 March) under the theme “Leaving no one Behind”. The event was coordinated by OHCHR and UNHCR. You can find the [agenda](#) here.

The UN Water 2019 [World Water Development Report on Leaving no one behind](#) was also launched during the celebration of the World Water Day on Geneva.



## 3. Latinosan in Costa Rica

I attended to the Fifth Latin America Conference on Sanitation (Latinosan) that was held between 1 and 3 April in Costa Rica.

On 1 April I delivered the main speech on the “Human Right to Sanitation: Inequity and inclusiveness in sanitation services in Latin America and the Caribbean” in the Session on [“Policies and Programs for Progressive Reach towards Sustainable and Universal Access to Safe and Affordable Sanitation”](#)

On 2 April I presented on the “Progress and Perspectives on the Fulfilment of SDG 6” at the Keynote Conference on the [“Progress and Perspectives for the compliance of SDG6 and Launch of the Latin American and Caribbean Observatory on Water and Sanitation \(OLAS\)”](#).

## 4. Official Visit to Lesotho

I undertook an official visit to Lesotho at the invitation of the Government from 5 to 15 February 2019 to assess the country’s situation regarding the realization of the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation. I visited villages, towns, schools, health clinics, a church, and correctional services in the districts of Mafeteng, Maseru, Mohale’s Hoek, Mokhotlong, Thaba-Tseka, and Quthing, and I met government representatives at the central and district levels, international funders, and the civil society.

During my visit I observed considerable gaps in the access to safe drinking water and sanitation, affecting especially poor populations, as well as high inequalities. I also observed difficulties from the Government in addressing the human rights to water and sanitation as a national priority and in identifying the most pressing issues to realize the human rights to water and sanitation.

My full statement on the official visit to Lesotho, can be read in [English](#) or in [Sesotho](#) and the shorter press release can be read [here](#). I will present my mission report to Lesotho at the 42<sup>nd</sup> session of the Human Rights Council in September 2019.



## 5. Follow-up country visit project

After each official country visit, I present a report of the visit to the UN Human Rights Council which contains findings and various country-specific recommendations. In order to support a coordinated approach at the country level to facilitate the implementation of my recommendations, I have decided to conduct a follow-up analysis of the official country visits that I have undertaken. For more information on the project [see](#).

I sent a questionnaire to the Governments of [Botswana](#), [Tajikistan](#), [El Salvador](#), [Mexico](#) and [Portugal](#) and invited the civil society and other stakeholders to contribute to this follow-up analysis by submitting a written response to the specific questionnaire.

I will present the follow-up reports to the 42<sup>nd</sup> session of the HRC in September 2019 and each of the five reports will be issued as addendum report. In each report, I will provide my assessment on the status of the implementation of the recommendations following the criteria: “Good Progress”, “Progress on-going”, “Limited Progress”, “No Progress”, or “No assessment could be made”.

Following this, for 2020, I am planning to conduct the follow-up analysis of my official visits to India and Mongolia (that I undertook in November 2017 and April 2018, respectively) and also the two last country visits by my predecessor, namely, Kenya and Brazil.



## 6. Menstrual Hygiene Day Campaign

For the month of May, leading up to Menstrual Hygiene Day (28 May 2019), I published a series of tweets and a [webpage](#) outlining the crucial links between gender, menstrual health and the human rights to water and sanitation.

The aims were to combat shame, to highlight the many existing disparities in accessing water and sanitation in the context of menstruation, and the paramount importance of accessibility, availability, affordability, safety and appropriateness of water and sanitation in the safe and dignified management of menstrual health.



## 7. Announcement of 2020 report

As I have done for the past five years, I will submit my last set of thematic reports in 2020 which is the last year of my mandate. For 2020, I will dedicate the theme of “the impact of private sector participation in the water and sanitation sectors on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation” for one of my reports. More information on the expert consultations and calls for inputs for the private sector participation will be provided in the following months.

## 8. Launch of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Human Rights Challenge

I am happy to announce that I am organising a third challenge to raise awareness among the youth about the human rights to water and sanitation. While as the previous two challenges were open to youth ages from 15 to 24, the third challenge focuses on young professional ages from 24 to 32.

For this challenge, I invite eligible persons to write a 2000-word essay outlining a case study illustrating the impact of private sector participation in water and sanitation services on the human rights to water and sanitation. The author of the winning submission will be invited to join me and participate in an expert consultation that I will organize on the same issue. The challenge will be launched in few days.

## 9. Communications

The following communications that I sent, or was a part of, were made public in the past few months:

[Indonesia \(7 December 2018\)](#) - Concerning allegations of extrajudicial killings through either torture, intentional killing or excessive use of force of five indigenous Papuans by the police and the military in 2017 and 2018 which are alleged to be part of a broader pattern of extrajudicial killings of indigenous Papuans. The Government responded on [14 December 2018](#).

[Panama](#) and [Guatemala](#) (17 December 2018) - Concerning the criminalization of Mr. Bernardo Caal Xól, indigenous Q'eqchí leader of Santa María Cahabón in the department of Alta Verapaz, sentenced to seven years and four months in prison for illegal detention and aggravated robbery on 9 November 2018 by the 1st Judgment Court of Cobán, following a complaint filed by its subcontractor. Additional communications were sent to the private actors involved: [1](#) | [2](#) | [3](#). The Government of Panama responded on [8 March 2019](#).

[Indonesia \(6 February 2019\)](#) – Concerning the the alleged failure to protect against human rights abuses linked to coal mining operations in East Kalimantan Province, including violations of rights to life, to water and sanitation, to food, and to a clean and safe environment, as well as the alleged harassment and attacks against JATAM (Mining Advocacy Network), an environmental non-governmental organisation, for denouncing this situation.

[Philippines](#) and [Australia](#) (13 February 2019) - concerning the failure of the Government of the Philippines to protect the human rights of the indigenous peoples and local communities living near Dipidio, Nueva Vizcaya Province, and the overall environmental degradation in this region, which are resulting from the exploitation of a gold and copper mine by OceanaGold Corporation, an Australia-based mining company. A communication was also sent to [OceanaGold Corporation](#), who responded [1](#) | [2](#). The Government of the Philippines responded on [15 February 2019](#).

[Brazil \(24 February 2019\)](#) - Concerning the closure of the National Council of Food and Nutrition Security (CONSEA), which could have a severe negative impact on the realization of the rights to food and water in the country, and in particular for persons living in poverty and indigenous peoples. The Government responded on [27 February 2019](#).

Between 7 and 11 March 2019, I collaborated with other mandates to send letters to several states outlining our views in relation to the ongoing work of the UNCITRAL Working Group III on Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) Reform, which was scheduled to hold its 37th session in New York from 1 to 5 April 2019. These states were: [Australia \(response\)](#), [Armenia](#), [Zambia](#), [United Kingdom](#), [Uganda](#), [Turkey](#), [Thailand](#), [Sri Lanka](#), [Singapore](#), [Sierra Leone](#), [Russian Federation](#), [Republic of Korea](#), [Poland](#), [Philippines \(response\)](#), [Pakistan](#), [Nigeria](#), [Namibia](#), [Mauritius](#), [Malaysia](#), [Libya](#), [Liberia](#), [Lesotho](#), [Lebanon](#), [Kuwait](#), [Kenya](#), [Japan](#), [Israel](#), [Islamic Republic of Iran](#), [Indonesia](#), [India](#), [Hungary](#), [Greece](#), [Germany](#), [Denmark](#), [Czech Republic](#), [China](#), [Canada](#), [Bulgaria](#), [Brazil](#), [Belarus](#), [Austria](#), [Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela](#), [United States of America](#), [Switzerland](#), [Spain](#), [Romania](#), [Panama](#), [Mexico](#), [Mauritania](#), [Italy](#), [Honduras](#), [France](#), [El Salvador](#), [Ecuador](#), [Côte d'Ivoire](#), [Colombia](#), [Chile](#), [Cameroon](#), [Burundi](#), [Argentina](#)

[Zimbabwe \(1 April 2019\)](#) - Concerning the Government's response to the country's economic crisis.

[Japan](#) and [Ecuador](#) (3 April 2019) - Concerning the situation of workers and families living on farms in the abaca plantations of the Japanese company Furukawa Plantaciones C.A. in Ecuador. An additional communication was sent to the [company](#). The company responded on [31 May 2019](#), Japan responded on [13 June 2019](#) and Ecuador responded on [2 June 2019](#).

[Haiti \(16 April 2019\)](#) - Concerning the arbitrary executions of 71 individuals, the disappearance of 2 persons, the rape of 11 individuals as well as acts of vandalism and destruction of more than 150 houses, which occurred in the district of La Saline, in the municipality of Port-au-Prince.

[Colombia \(25 April 2019\)](#) – Concerning the situation of the community of Brisas del Cauca, in Cali, Colombia against the Jarillón Plan implemented by the City Hall.

**Kindest Regards,**

**Léo Heller**

**UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation**

Follow the mandate!   

The [website of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights](#) remains the number one place to discover the mandate's past and upcoming activities.

The mandate is also present on major social media platforms [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) (@SRWatSan), where it actively engages with the global community on issues related to the human rights to water and sanitation.