



**Joint visit of the UN Independent Expert on human rights and extreme poverty
and the UN Independent Expert on water and sanitation to Bangladesh
3 - 10 December 2009**

Information Note

1 - Background

Independent Experts of the UN Human Rights Council undertake country visits; respond to information received concerning the human rights situation of people within the scope of their respective mandates; engage in dialogue with Governments, international organizations, civil society and other relevant actors; and submit annual reports to the Human Rights Council and the UN General Assembly on the activities of their mandate.

The mandate of **UN Independent Expert on the question of human rights and extreme poverty** was established by the Human Rights Council to evaluate the relationship between the promotion and protection of human rights and the elimination of extreme poverty. Through its resolution 8/11, the Human Rights Council requests the Expert to examine and report back to member States on initiatives taken to promote and protect the rights of those living in extreme poverty. The Expert is also asked to pay particular attention to the situation of women, children, persons with disabilities and the impact of discrimination. She is also invited to contribute to the assessment of the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, in particular Goal 1, to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, as well as other relevant UN initiatives relating to extreme poverty.

The mandate of **UN Independent Expert on the issue of human rights obligations related to access to safe drinking water and sanitation** was established by Human Rights Council resolution 7/22. The Expert is called upon to identify, promote and exchange views on best practices related to access to safe drinking water and sanitation; to clarify the content of human rights obligations in relation to access to safe drinking water and sanitation; and to make recommendations that could help the realization of the Millennium Development Goals. This particularly applies to Goal 7 and the stated target of halving the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation. She is also requested to integrate a gender perspective throughout her work.

2 - Objective of the visit to Bangladesh

The Independent Experts are visiting Bangladesh with the intention of collecting firsthand information from stakeholders on the relationship between access to safe drinking water, sanitation and extreme poverty. This information will be drafted into reports to be presented to the UN Human Rights Council in 2010.

The reports will present an overview of the human rights situation within the scope of each Expert's mandate. Moreover, in the reports the Experts will analyse some key policies and challenges, and provide recommendations intended to strengthen the protection and promotion of human rights in the country.

3 - Scope of the visit

The Experts will aim to collect information about good practices, as well as challenges faced in the country. They will particularly examine the extent to which living in extreme poverty has a negative effect on access to clean drinking water and sanitation, taking into account the policies and programs in the country that address these and related issues. Good practices that will be studied will include; community led total sanitation campaigns and cash transfer programs, amongst others. Special attention will be given to the most marginalized groups and those living in particularly disadvantaged situations.

4 - Visit preparation

The Experts will be in Bangladesh from 3 to 10 December, 2009. The Experts' agendas will consist of alternate meetings with Government institutions, international organizations, civil society organizations and people living in communities with specific water and sanitation issues, as well as those affected by extreme poverty.

The Experts intend to travel to some places outside of the capital city to get a more comprehensive picture of the situation in the country as it relates to water and sanitation, and extreme poverty.

5 – About the Experts

Ms. Magdalena Sepúlveda has been the Independent Expert on the question of human rights and extreme poverty since May 2008. Ms. Sepúlveda is a Chilean lawyer and is currently working as Research Director at the International Council on Human Rights Policy in Geneva. She holds a Ph.D in International Human Rights Law from Utrecht University in the Netherlands and an LL.M in human rights law from the University of Essex in the United Kingdom. Ms. Sepúlveda has worked as a researcher at the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights, as a staff attorney at the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, and as the Co-Director of the Department of International Law and Human Rights of the United Nations affiliated University for Peace in San Jose, Costa Rica.

Ms. Catarina de Albuquerque has been the Independent Expert on the issue of human rights obligations related to access to safe drinking water and sanitation since November 2008. Ms. De Albuquerque is a Portuguese lawyer and is currently working as senior legal adviser at the Office for Documentation and Comparative Law in the area of human rights. She holds a DES in international relations with a specialization in international law from the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva. She has represented her country in the area of human rights at the UN, Council of Europe

and European Union, having participated in the drafting of the two optional protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Between 2004 and 2008 she was the Chairperson-Rapporteur of the Working Group on an Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

6- Further information

For further information on this visit please contact the staff assisting the Independent Experts in Geneva:

Extreme poverty

Mr. Marcelo Daher (mdaher@ohchr.org) or

Ms. Elaine Ryan (eryan@ohchr.org)

Tel. (+41-22) 917 9431 or 917 9697

Fax (+41-22) 917 9006

Special Procedures Division

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Mailing Address: UNOG - OHCHR CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland

For previous reports and activities of the Expert please check the website:

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/poverty/expert/index.htm>

Water and sanitation

Ms. Lucinda O'Hanlon (lohanlon@ohchr.org)

Tel. (+41-22) 917 9679

Fax (+41-22) 917 9006

Special Procedures Division

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Mailing Address: UNOG - OHCHR CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland

For previous reports and activities of the Expert please check the website:

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/water/iexpert/index.htm>