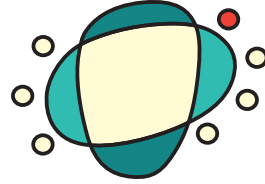




Services



REALISING THE HUMAN RIGHTS TO WATER AND SANITATION:
A HANDBOOK BY THE UN SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR
CATARINA DE ALBUQUERQUE

Planning processes, service providers, service levels and settlements





Realising the human rights to water and sanitation:
A Handbook by the UN Special Rapporteur
Catarina de Albuquerque

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Entidade Reguladora dos Serviços de Águas e Resíduos
The Water and Waste Services Regulation Authority



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01.

Planning

The incorporation of human rights standards and principles into national and local planning processes is crucial to ensure the human rights to water and sanitation. This is ambitious but realistic, and provides States with tools to improve services and eliminate inequalities in access.

The strategy of starting by improving services in well-to-do areas, thereby increasing the amount of money that can be used later to deliver services to disadvantaged individuals or groups, has been shown again and again to be insufficient to eliminate inequalities in access to services. States should direct their efforts to creating the institutions and structures necessary for enabling environment that ensures everyone can exercise their rights, while prioritising direct assistance for the individuals and groups who face the greatest barriers to access to water and sanitation services.

Financial transfers from the State to service providers should be properly targeted, so as to benefit only the poor and disadvantaged individuals and groups, as opposed to the utility's customers in general.

Planning takes place at the national, as well as at regional and local levels, depending on the extent of decentralisation and how State functions are organised. A wide range of actors may be involved, from finance ministries and relevant line ministries to local authorities, service providers, national human rights institutions and regulatory bodies, civil society organisations, and the users of water and sanitation services themselves.

The planning process in cities and at the national level may be more complex than for a small town or village, but it will generally follow the same steps:

- assessment and analysis
- setting of targets and developing plans of action
- allocating roles and responsibilities to different actors
- implementation
- monitoring and evaluation ensuring accountability

Planning must be open and transparent, with opportunities for people to participate actively in decisions made relating to their access to water and sanitation.

States must devise strategies and set targets to address discrimination and eliminate inequalities in access to water and sanitation. This will require the development of tailored interventions for specific circumstances and careful monitoring of progress for disadvantaged individuals and groups. Without this focus, improvements in water and sanitation services tend primarily – or exclusively – to reach people who are better off, reinforcing existing inequalities.

PLANNING MUST BE OPEN AND TRANSPARENT

1.1. Assessment and analysis

The first step of a comprehensive planning process is an assessment of the status quo. This should include examining the extent to which the human rights to water and sanitation have already been realised, as well as analysing existing institutional and policy frameworks. This process includes reviewing:

- laws, regulations and policies ([see Frameworks](#));
- financing and budgeting strategies ([see Financing](#));
- strategies and plans for water and sanitation;
- institutions and how they interact;
- data on access to water and sanitation, with a focus on disadvantaged areas and individuals ([see Monitoring](#));
- accountability processes ([see Justice](#));
- barriers to access.

Where any of the above do not meet human rights standards and principles they must be adapted or revised.

Data about access to water and sanitation may already be available, for example, from national statistic offices, Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) or Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS), or directly from service providers. These data generally provide a broad national outline and can assist in overall planning and the allocation of national budgets. For planning at the local level, however, feasibility studies and local data showing the existing access to water and sanitation in detail are essential. Any baseline study must pay particular attention to assessing the levels of access of disadvantaged individuals and groups, such as people living in rural areas or in informal settlements in urban areas. Studies should identify existing gaps, exclusions, barriers and constraints, in order to design adequate responses that address the root causes for lack of access. (see [Monitoring](#))



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