



DPI/NGO Relations invites you to a
Briefing

***“Water for a Healthy World:
The Challenges of Producing
Clean Water”***

(In Observance of World Water Day – 22 March)

Thursday, 11 March 2010

10:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

Simon Wiesenthal Center

226 East 42nd Street

Background Information

Water, in particular clean water, is essential for life. No living being can survive on our planet without it. It is critical to ensuring a healthy environment and human health. However according to UN figures, four out of every ten people in the world do not have access to even a simple pit latrine; and nearly two in ten have no source of safe drinking water. The World Health Organization says that every day some 3,900 children die because of dirty water or poor hygiene. Water scarcity, poor water quality and inadequate sanitation negatively affect important aspects of life including food security, livelihood choices and educational opportunities for poor families. Worldwide water quality is declining, mainly due to human activity and in many countries, the amount of water required daily for drinking and sanitation is not provided in acceptable quality. For example, developing countries undergoing rapid urbanization suffer from lack of sewage treatment facilities, resulting in the contamination of drinking water and becoming a major cause of illness (with serious impacts on poverty and education) and death. Despite progress in the provision of sanitation since 1990, providing safe water and sanitation to large parts of the human population remains a challenge that is predicted to increase significantly in the coming years. According to the UN World Water Development Report, by 2050, at least one in four people is likely to live in a country affected by chronic or recurring shortages of freshwater.

Important international commitments have been made on water including the Millennium Development Goals [MDGs]. Governments at the Millennium Summit in 2000 agreed to reduce by half the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water by 2015 and put a stop to the unsustainable exploitation of water resources. At the World Summit in Johannesburg in 2002, this target was expanded to include basic sanitation and water as a critical factor for meeting all the MDGs. Since Johannesburg though much progress has been made to providing people with access to clean drinking water and sanitation, but major efforts are still needed to extend these essential services to the those still unserved, most of whom are poor. In December 2003 the UN General Assembly proclaimed the “Water for Life” Decade (2005-2015) with the aim of focusing greater attention on action-oriented activities and policies that would promote the sustainable management of water resources both in terms of quality and quantity and would also include measures to improve sanitation. International World Water Day (held annually on 22 March) is an important reminder to every one of these critical commitments, and the need for cooperation and investment of all stakeholders. This week’s Briefing is part of our effort to keep the issue of water in the public spotlight and encourage our NGO community to do their part in bringing the world’s attention to this critical matter.

All Briefings begin promptly at 10:15 a.m. and we ask that our audience is seated by 10:00 a.m. sharp.

Moderator: Maria-Luisa Chavez; Chief, NGO Relations, Department of Public Information (DPI)

Speakers to be announced

REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED FOR THIS EVENT (see details in bold below)

The venue for the weekly Briefings will be provided as soon as the information is available. United Nations-produced videos relevant to the theme of the Briefing are sometimes screened during the session. For Briefing information please call the DPI/NGO Resource Centre at +1-212-963-7232 / 7233 / 7234 or e-mail dpingo.briefings@un.org. To receive the Briefing information electronically, please email dpingo.briefings@un.org. You may also visit the DPI/NGO Relations Cluster website at www.un.org/dpi/ngosection, where archived web casts and audio (both, when available) of the Briefing may also be accessed

Due to space constraints, all attendees, including those with yearly badges, must register for this event by calling 212-963-7232/7233/7234 no later than noon, Wednesday, 10 March 2010. Guest passes will NOT be issued for this event.

Note: ATTENDEES WILL BE ACCOMMODATED ON A FIRST-COME, FIRST SERVED BASIS