



**Responsibility of Corporations:**

As responsible citizens, corporations have a duty to ensure safe and equitable access to water is not denied to others by their actions. This includes due diligence in researching new and existing sites to ensure they are not operating in water scarce areas, as to not exacerbate the water problems of the community.

Companies have been encouraged to sign the **CEO Water Mandate**, a public-private initiative created by the UN to assist companies establish sustainable water management practices.

**Challenges to Companies:**

- Water Conservation
- Sustainable development
- Responsible citing of operations, avoiding known water scare areas
- Wastewater quality
- Wastewater treatment
- Responsibly managing water used in the product

ICCR members have been working with companies to ensure the Human Right to water.

Some companies are taking proactive measures in reducing their consumption of this essential product however; more attention needs to be given to the Human Right to Water, to ensure that safe and equitable access to water is not superseded by the desire for increased profits.

Tri-State Coalition for Responsible Investment

**Water Rights**

“We never know the worth of water till the well is dry” ~Thomas Fuller, *Gnomologia*, 1732

Water is essential for the survival of living beings. No person or animal can prosper without it. Today, one in three people is affected by water scarcity, according to the World Health Organization. Elements contributing to water scarcity include increases in pollution, population, and adverse affects of climate change.

However, these issues have more than just singular connections. Water shortages are inevitably linked to food shortages. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, has reported that currently 1.02 billion people are undernourished. In 2009, 1/6<sup>th</sup> the world’s population will face hunger, the worst record in history. As the population continues to grow, more food is needed, putting more stress on the flawed food supply. As more food is needed, more water is needed for agricultural purposes, and

as the population grows, more water is needed for drinking purposes as well.

**New Class of Refugees**

Climate change is forcing a new clientele of refugees to seek shelter. A recent study entitled “In Search of Shelter”, authored by many NGOs and the UN, stated that “the impacts of climate change are already causing migration and displacement,” and by 2050 “the prospects for the scope and scale could vastly exceed anything that has occurred before.” As populations grow and relocate, densely populated areas will become more rapidly water stressed. For current water strained areas, and predictions see <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/7821082.stm>

**Water as a Human Right**

As water shortages continue, it is essential to

recognize water as a human right, to ensure safe and equitable access to this essential life ingredient.

In July of 2008, Pope Benedict XVI called for the declaration of to the right to water. He said “the use of water, which is regarded as a universal and inalienable right, is related to the growing and urgent needs of people who live in destitution, taking into account the fact that limited access to potable water has repercussions on the wellbeing of an enormous number of people and is often the cause of illnesses, sufferings, conflicts, poverty and even death.”

All persons have a role to play in this rapidly growing depletion of our natural resource. As legal persons, or corporations, use water to produce goods and services, they also hold a critical role in managing water sources.

**What you can do:**

Encourage companies to sign the CEO Water Mandate

Measure your water foot print, and learn to decrease it at [www.waterfootprint.org](http://www.waterfootprint.org)

Learn how to reduce your [water usage](#)

Use the EPA’s [Water Sense](#) website, before you purchase a new product or service

