

Country: Austria

Committee: United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP)

Agenda: Access to Clean Water Supplies in Underdeveloped Countries



Clean freshwater is imperative for drinking and sanitation, providing crops, animals, and industry, and to help sustain the ecosystem on which all life depends on. However, many countries around the world – mainly in Southern/Central Asia and North Africa – suffer to find it. Unsanitized water and water scarcity/stress has been a topic of debate since the 1800s. Unsanitized water mainly is found in underdeveloped countries labeled as LCD'S. They consist of 49 countries, with a population of more than 600 million. These countries have a GDP of less than 900\$. According to the UN-Water, more than 2.3 billion people live in water-stressed countries. Woefully, more than 297,000 children die annually due to lack of sanitized water. While the human population is on an exponential growth, the demand for water is increasing which puts countries with poor financial conditions and shortage in fresh water in trouble. Other factors like climate change, pollution, and infrastructure development have also had a huge negative impact on freshwater systems. Over the past 300 years, more than 85% of the wetlands have disappeared due to water drainage and land conversion. Poor sanitized water transmits many deadly diseases including Cholera, Diarrhea, Dysentery, Hepatitis, Typhoid, and Polion.

We as a delegation of Austria firmly believe that it's every human's right to have access to clean water. The Austrian Development Agency (ADA) supports developing countries by setting up sustainable water supply and sanitation facilities. According to the Austrian Development Agency, “ ADA supports water supply and sanitation projects and programs of selected global organizations and in the priority countries Albania, Moldova, Mozambique, Palestine and Uganda.” We're aware of the 'SDG 6' introduced by the UN, and it's on the top of our priorities. The European Union and the Austrian Development Agency have shown great cooperation with the Ugandan Government in order to improve water sanitation for the people of Uganda. Furthermore, they've been in direct communication with the Ministry of Water and Environment to make sure refugee settlements in Northern Uganda have access to sanitized water. Austria was and will always be altruistic and helpful towards everyone in need.

We believe that it's time to take firm action to end this issue. In order to achieve this, many actions should be taken. These actions include purifying the polluted water resources by setting treatment plans, establishing hygiene campaigns to raise awareness. Most importantly, countries should send financial aid to countries with poor conditions. Technical equipment should be used in order to reach the underground waters, then use needed filtration processes to make sure water scarcity is under-control. Membrane Filtration can be a solution in order to sanitize polluted water. According to Alfalaval, membrane filtration is “a physical separation method characterized by the ability to separate molecules of different sizes and characteristics.” Its affordable and inexpensive cost makes it a great solution compared to the other alternatives. In order to improve hygiene and sanitation we must wash hands with soaps, proper handling of food and water purification, countries should provide water purification machines/ systems to help citizens access clean water as this is a basic human right. Where adequate sanitation is available coupled with improved hygiene behaviors. Together, we can make a difference in access to clean water supplies in underdeveloped countries.

Resources:

1. UNEP STUDY GUIDE
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1dhKVmhQhWWHkRDtY0KilH3VuFpgexDw_
2. World Health Organization: Drinking-water
<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/drinking-water#:~:text=Contaminated%20water%20and%20poor%20sanitation,individuals%20to%20preventable%20health%20risks.>
3. Austrian Development Agency: Water Supply And Sanitation
<https://www.entwicklung.at/en/themes/water-energy-and-food-security/water-supply-and-sanitation>
4. Alfalaval: What is membrane filtration?
<https://www.alfalaval.com/products/separation/membranes/what-is-membrane-filtration/#:~:text=Membrane%20filtration%20process%20is%20a,sides%20of%20a%20special%20membrane.>