

**Press Statement  
22 March 2023**

## **ZLHR STATEMENT ON WORLD WATER DAY**

ON World Water Day, **Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR)** implores government to take tangible action to accelerate progress on ensuring access to safe drinking water and sanitation to more people and communities.

Since 1993, 22 March has been commemorated as World Water Day and this day offers opportunities to raise awareness and inspire action to tackle the water and sanitation crisis.

On World Water Day, governments, policymakers and other stakeholders commit to and take action to tackle the global water crisis grappling with 2.2 billion people living without access to safe water.

The aptly chosen theme for World Water Day in 2023 of “Accelerating Change” is pertinent to solving the worsening water and sanitation crisis.

Access to safely managed water and sanitation coupled with healthy hygiene practices and resources empowers people and communities to enjoy improved health, build resilient economies and offer greater opportunities for prosperity.

The human right to safe water and sanitation is a gateway to the enjoyment of multiple other critical human rights and entitles everyone to sufficient, safe, clean, physically accessible and affordable water for personal and domestic use and consumption and ultimately sustains every person’s life.

While water and sanitation are basic needs critical for the survival of people, it is worrying that several people in the world estimated at 2.2 billion by the United Nations, lack access to safe and clean water and adequate sanitation.

This sad state of affairs puts in jeopardy the planned attainment of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6, which seeks to ensure the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all by 2030.

Hence, this makes it imperative for governments to eliminate the inequalities and barriers to access to this vital resource.



ZLHR is gravely concerned by reports issued by Ministry of Health and Child Care of an upsurge in cases of cholera outbreak in several parts of the country.

It is alarming that a medieval and preventable disease such as cholera continues to affect people in this day and age. It is unacceptable that any cases of outbreaks of cholera and other waterborne diseases continue to be recorded in the country.

The Constitution places an obligation on the state to guarantee the rights of persons to safe, clean and potable water as enshrined in section 73 and the right to healthcare provided in section 76 and hence government must uphold its obligations in the Governance Charter.

**To accelerate change and secure a water wise future, ZLHR implores both local and central government to;**

- Fulfil constitutional obligations to achieve the progressive realisation of the right to clean, safe and potable water, the right to health and the right to an environment that is not harmful to health;
- Stop the recurrence of the outbreak of preventable diseases such as cholera and devise preventative strategies for non-recurrence in the future including of other water-borne diseases like typhoid and diarrhoea;
- Double efforts in providing and ensuring access to water and sanitation and increase budget allocation on water, sanitation and hygiene.
- Invest in infrastructure and technologies that improve access to clean water;
- Reduce water waste and pollution and promote water conservation and efficiency;
- Address the impact of climate change and invest in climate-resilient water infrastructure;





**ENDS**

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