

**Explanation of Vote by John F. Sammis, U.S. Minister Counselor to the Economic and Social Council, on Resolution A/64/L.63/Rev.1, the Human Right to Water, July 28, 2010**

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Mr. President,

The United States is deeply committed to finding solutions to our world's water challenges. We support the goal of universal access to safe drinking water. Water and sanitation issues will be an important focus at this September's Millennium Development Goal Summit. The United States is committed to working with our development partners to build on the progress they have already made in these areas as part of their national development strategies.

Water is essential for all life on earth. Accordingly, safe and accessible water supplies further the realization of certain human rights, and there are human rights obligations related to access to safe drinking water and sanitation.

The United States supports the work of the UN Human Rights Council's Independent Expert on the issue of human rights obligations related to access to safe drinking water and sanitation. In fact, we co-sponsored the resolution on Human Rights and Access to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation last September at the Human Rights Council in Geneva. We look forward to receiving the next report of the Independent Expert. We also look forward to a more inclusive, considered, and deliberative approach to these vital issues in Geneva than we have unfortunately experienced on this resolution in New York.

And I would just add to my prepared remarks that these concerns are not alleviated by the fact that just this morning, we have seen an amendment made to what the lead sponsor viewed as the core operative paragraph of the resolution from the floor. This again is an imposition on all of us. We haven't had sufficient time to really consider the implications of this, and I think that it would have been far better, under the circumstances, not to bring this resolution forward for action today.

The United States had hoped to negotiate and ultimately join consensus on this text, on a text, that would uphold and support the international process underway at the Human Rights Council.

Instead, we have here a resolution that falls far short of enjoying the unanimous support of member States and may even undermine the work underway in Geneva. This resolution describes a right to water and sanitation in a way that is not reflective of existing international law; as there is no “right to water and sanitation” in an international legal sense as described by this resolution.

The United States regrets that this resolution diverts us from the serious international efforts underway to promote greater coordination and cooperation on water and sanitation issues. This resolution attempts to take a short-cut around the serious work of formulating, articulating and upholding universal rights. It was not drafted in a transparent, inclusive manner, and the legal implications of a declared right to water have not yet been carefully and fully considered in this body or in Geneva.

For these reasons, the United States has called for a vote and will abstain on this resolution.

Thank you, Mr. President.