

Listen. Reflect. Act. For Environmental Justice

I'm taking 60 [seconds, minutes, days] to listen, reflect, and act in honor of the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This important statement has been the foundation of countless successful human-rights struggles over the last six decades. But the work is not done! We must all take action in our daily lives to protect and promote human rights.

Through UUSC, an international human-rights organization, I'm listening to the voices of people who are working to defend their rights. **For example, the human right to water entitles everyone to sufficient, safe, acceptable, physically accessible, and affordable water for personal and domestic use.** But many people are losing their access to clean, affordable water in the United States and in other countries, and too often, the victims are low-income families, women, and racial and ethnic minorities.

Serafina and the Fight for Water Rights in South Africa

South Africa is one of the few countries in the world to protect the right to water in its constitution. But when Johannesburg Water began installing prepaid water meters in low-income, black neighborhoods, Serafina decided to fight back. A 71-year-old "makoko," or granny, Serafina had endured her whole life under the laws of apartheid and refused to endure the further indignity of suffering with little to no water.

Serafina lives on a government pension and does not have enough money to pay for water services. At first, she refused to accept the company's prepaid meter, instead walking to her neighbors' houses and bringing back buckets of water to take care of her basic needs.

When this got to be too much for her, Serafina joined the Coalition Against Water Privatisation (CAWP), UUSC's program partner in South Africa. CAWP educates community members about their rights and has built a social

movement in Soweto to ensure access to water. In April 2008, CAWP won a major victory against the prepaid meter system in the South African courts, solidifying the human right to water in that country. **We won because the courts listened to Serafina and CAWP and respected their rights.**

Please join me, UUSC, Serafina, and CAWP in working to ensure that everyone has access to sufficient, safe, acceptable, physically accessible, and affordable water.

To take action, ask your senators and representatives to support appropriations for the Senator Paul Simon Water for the Poor Act. We need them to insist that funding from the United States supports water access for low-income communities. For more information, a model letter, and talking points, see www.uusc.org/environmentaljustice.

Listen. Reflect. Act.
Pass it on.



Dignity and justice for all of us