

## **UN ADOPTS RESOLUTION PROCLAIMING SAFE DRINKING WATER A BASIC HUMAN RIGHT**

*By Robert Bradbury, IFEH President Elect.*

In the July 28, 2010 session of the United Nations General Assembly, a resolution was adopted declaring access to safe drinking water and sanitation as fundamental human rights. Some 884 million people lack access to safe drinking water, more than 2.6 million have no basic sanitation and around 1.5 million children under age 5 die each year from water- and sanitation-linked diseases, sponsors of the resolution said.

Regrettably, the vote was not unanimous as many countries abstained, saying no such right yet existed in international law. The resolution garnered 122 votes in favour, none against and there were 41 abstentions. The abstainers were mainly developed countries, although European Union members Germany and Spain voted for the measure.

This vote underpins the excellent work done by the International Federation of Environmental Health, its members and individuals in identifying environmental public health issues and working towards long term viable solutions. As per the Stockholm Policy Statement, the IFEH will continue to give support in whatever way possible

The Federation will continue to work with international agencies to do all that they can to develop clean water and sanitation globally.

Bernard Forteath, President of the IFEH said today "the IFEH applauds those member states of the UN on finally recognising the fundamental right that is access to clean water, and I hope that all nations will soon come to the same realisation and work to ensure that the right is guaranteed and implemented"

The UN Resolution can be accessed through this link:

<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2010/ga10967.doc.htm>

The article from the UN News Centre can accessed through this link:

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=35456&Cr=SANITATION&Cr1=>

An article from Reuters can be accessed through this link:

<http://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFJOE66R0PB20100728>

The IFEH Policy Statement 6, Water and Sanitation, go to [www.ifeh.org](http://www.ifeh.org)