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Private involvements in the water net is necessary since the government of México City can't absorb the costs on its own, says Humberto Morgan, PRD local deputy.

PRD to privatize water

Deputy says it's necessary to solve the problem of supply and distribution

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RUMBO de México

To solve the growing problem of water supply and distribution in Mexico City and its surrounding area, one deputy claims that private involvement is necessary, since the government can't absorb the costs on its own.

Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) Deputy Humberto Morgan of the Federal District said during a press conference on Sunday that intervention may be inevitable, despite opposition from the new President of the D.F.'s Human Rights Committee, Emilio Álvarez Icaza.

Morgan said that while private investment would alleviate the city's problems, the government shouldn't let water service become privatized.

"If it's true that the government has the obligation to guarantee access to water as a human right, it's also true that it can find the necessary means

to achieve it, as long as it doesn't give up its guidance and doesn't privatize it," Morgan said.

By granting concessions to private companies for distribution, the water grid will receive better maintenance. This is nearly impossible with the government's lack of technology, resources and economic conditions, Morgan said.

"The real cost per cubic meter of water is 13 pesos and users only pay between two and 11 pesos," he said. "This makes sufficient bill collection impossible to invest in infrastructure, modern distribution systems, filtering plants and above all, maintenance to the Cutzamala (reservoir) System."

In addition to private involvement, there needs to be a change in culture to preserve water, Morgan said.

Last week, Mexico City PRD and Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) deputies proposed measures such as mandatory rainwater col-

lection, and called on public institutions, universities, research centers and the general population to pitch new ideas and projects to resolve the crisis. Lawmakers in other parts have also called on holding municipalities more accountable for their water infrastructure.

Mexico City Mayor Marcelo Ebrard said in late August that continued water shortages predicted for 2010 could bring not only social disruption, but also health risks.

Ebrard qualified the water situation as "very grave" and has the possibility of eroding public health.

The mayor called for healthcare workers to educate their communities on how to confront the water shortages without risking their health.

Much of the country has had an uncharacteristically dry rainy season. The city began cutting water earlier this year amid falling supplies in its reservoirs.

