Dhesigen Naidoo is a leader, scientist and an activist for positive social change. As CEO, he leads the Water Research Commission (WRC), South Africa’s dedicated national Water and Sanitation Innovation, Research and Development Agency. He is also President of the global NGO Human Right 2 Water and a founding member of the Water Policy Group. He has previously served in senior positions in the South African national government and South African universities having begun his career as a medical scientist in a specialist children’s hospital. He is a Councillor of the South African National Advisory Council on Innovation (NACI) and a Fellow of the Mapangubwe Institute for Strategic Reflection (MISTRA). He counts his lovely wife and beautiful children as both his primary source of inspiration and vanguard of his humility.

South Africa is a leader in the area of human right to water and sanitation. Nelson Mandela and his water minister Kader Asmal introduced the notion of water as a basic human right in 1996. South Africa enshrined it in its constitution in 1997. Dhesigen was a young member of Asmal’s team at the time. Nelson Mandela challenged the world leaders in 2002 at the Earth Summit in Rio to make water and sanitation a human right. It took the international community another 8 years and the United Nations recognized water and sanitation as a human right in 2010.

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