

THE PORTO ALEGRE WATER DECLARATION: In the spirit of Cochabamba (Bolivia), Narmada (India), Ghana and other fights

We are a diverse group of organisations drawn from various countries of Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and North America involved in different sectors of societies and citizens' participation. We met at Porto Alegre from 1st to 5th February within the framework of the World Social Forum 2002. We are united by the following common principles, beliefs and values

1. That the Earth's freshwater belongs to all living species and therefore must not be treated as a commodity to be bought, sold and traded for profit as an economic good. Local human communities have the primary responsibility to guarantee that water is treated as a common heritage.
2. That water is a fundamental human right and of all living species. It must be safeguarded by public authorities and institutions by national and international law. The human right to water in quantity and quality sufficient to life (40 to 50 litres per day per person for domestic use) is an individual and collective inalienable right which cannot be submitted to any constraint of social (sex, age, income), political, religious or financial nature. The cost to satisfy such a right for all must be financed by the collectivity.
3. Water is a natural resource that must be used in a sustainable manner for the common good of our societies and the natural environment. Today construction policy of large dams must be profoundly revised in accordance to the recommendations of the UN International Commission on Large Dams.
4. Water is essential to the security of our communities and societies. For this reason its ownership, control, delivery and management belong in the public domain.
5. The public sector is legally and constitutionally mandated and designed to represent the public interest. The private sector cannot be trusted with the public interest.
6. Citizens must be at the heart of the decision process in the shaping of public policies which fundamentally affect their lives such as the control of water, at "local", international and global levels.
7. Water management policies must ensure social equity such as gender equity, public health and environmental equity.
8. We do not consider, contrary to the World Bank, the World Water Council and the Global Water Partnership, that the "French model" of privatisation based on long term concession contracts is a good solution for an equitable, sustainable and democratic control and management of water in the public interest.

United by the above stated principles, beliefs and values we commit to forming and promoting "The World Coalition of Citizens Organisation fighting against Water Privatisation and Commodification".

We plan to invite other organisations to become founder members of the coalition and subsequently to proceed to the formal creation of the coalition next April or May.

The main aim of the coalition is to strengthen the co-operation among founding members by all appropriate means, in particular in the field of

- a) Information/communication and research
- b) Co-ordination of specific activities of each member organisation with the view to support them
- c) Joint actions

Regarding field a, the Council of Canadians has offered to open a page in their web site on the coalition until a coalition web site is created.

Regarding field b it has been decided to give a common "motto"/purpose to the local actions promoted by the member organisations on the occasion of the next World Water Day (22nd March 2002). The "motto" proposed is "Stop Privatisation of Water. Privatised water services must return in the public domain".

Regarding field c, the intention is to promote common actions

- at the Third Earth Summit in Johannesburg, 26 August - 2 September 2002
- at the Third World Water Forum in Kyoto, March 2003
- and vis-à-vis current policies promoted by the WTO, NAFTA, the European Union and ISO in favour of the liberalisation and deregulation of water services and the commodification of water.

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