



Rome Declaration of 10 December 2003 Making the right to water a reality

1. There are still today 1,4 billion people without access to safe drinkable water and 2,4 billion without access to adequate sanitation services. The consequences are devastating : 30.000 persons are dying everyday from diseases due to the absence of safe water and adequate sanitation. Remember, the United Nations proclaimed in 1980 “The Decade for Drinkable Water and Sanitation” (1981-1991) with the aim to provide access to water for all by the year 2000!
2. Since the International Water Conference in Dublin in 1992, the (institutional) International Community refrains from recognising access to water as a human right, i.e. a right that is universal, indivisible and inalienable. Today World leaders prefer to treat access to water as a vital need and consider water as a resource, a raw material, an economic good. Accordingly they give the preference to market oriented policies, to the privatisation of management of water services and to water commodification.

In November 2002, the United Nations Committee for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights declared that adequate water provision for personal and domestic use represents a fundamental human right of every person. In its “General Comment” number 15 on the implementation of the 1966 International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Committee stated that “the human right to water is essential to conduct his own existence with dignity. It constitutes a precondition to the realisation of the other human rights”. The “General Comment” has no binding power on the 146 States that have ratified the International Convention. This is why the same States have, once more, stated in the Final Ministerial Declaration, on March 2003 at the 3rd World Water Forum in Kyoto, that access to water is a vital need (not a right); that water has to be treated primarily as an economic good, not only as a social good; and that water must be given an economic value, determined by market price mechanisms according to the full cost recovery principle (profit included). Fortunately, at the same Forum, various participating organisations supported different position. In particular, Catholic Church presented a document in which it is said that access to water should be considered a human right. Additionally its authors provide some criticism on today trend towards water privatisation. The international public service, trade-union defended similar opinion.

3. The right to water is mentioned in a few international acts and decisions. The Convention on Children Rights, for instance, makes an explicit reference to water. Equally, the first United Nations Conference on water in 1977 at Mar del Plata declared that every person has the right to access to drinkable water to satisfy her fundamental needs. Reality, however, has moved in a different direction. The political, economic and techno-

scientific leaders of the rich and powerful countries of the world - and very often, the leading groups from the less “developed” countries as well – have implemented in the last 20 years, institutional, financial, agricultural, industrial and commercial policies that have had major destructive effects, of greater impact than the few declarations of principles in favour of the human right to water.

4. Prospects are not more encouraging than the present state of affairs. The commodification of water seems destined to expand more widely. In the last ten years, analyses and “forecasts” made by UN, FAO, UNESCO, WHO, UNDP and the World Bank have “anticipated”
 - a further deepening of the “water crisis” throughout the world. It is foreseen that in 2032 – 40 years since the first Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro – 60% of the World population will “live” in regions characterised by water scarcity.
 - major water shortages for agriculture in China, India and United States. In these countries water tables have dangerously gone down, because of excessive overpumping by agriculture and industry (energy production included) in the course of the last 50 years;
 - the proliferation and hardening of water conflicts within and across countries. Water is more and more defined as “the blue gold” in analogy with oil “the black gold” and, therefore, people are more and more told and convinced that the XXIst century will be the century of “water wars”

These are unacceptable possible futures

5. United Nations have declared 2003 as “the International Water Year”. Almost at its end, **we came together from the various regions of the world, as citizens, on behalf only of our citizenship**, with the intention to avoid that this year ends with very meagre concrete political results, as it was the case for the G8 meeting last June at Evian. G8 leaders promised that they would take strong commitments particularly in the water area. Some leaders expected a triple increase of International Public Aid to the water sector (up to 30 billions \$ yearly). Deception was great : G8 ended with no serious commitment for water.
6. **In front of such situation we want to react and invite all citizens to join us in acting for principles, goals and initiatives described herein below.**

We declare that

- the formal recognition of the Right to Water is a major step towards the implementation of the right to life for all;
- the effective implementation of the Right to Water for all is a necessary condition in the fight against poverty and its eradication;
- the Right to Water for all (and not only for the half of those people who have not access to water) by 2015, is a realistic economic target. In 1977, UN (namely the UNDP) showed that access to water for all within a period of 15 years was economically feasible. It still is absolutely clear that the **main obstacle to its implementation is not the absence or the inadequacy of financial resources, nor of competencies of technology rather, what is lacking is a political will and all related economic and social policy choices.**

Therefore we consider that

- The exclusion of water, 55 years ago, from being explicitly mentioned as a human right in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, has hampered citizens' ability to put effective

pressure on governments to affirm it. To the contrary, it has contributed, in an international context increasingly influenced by neo-liberal market economy, to the success of those approaches and management choices at national level that consider water an economic good. Hence the growing process of water privatisation and commodification.

- It is urgent and necessary to recognise water and the ecosystems as a common public good and to manage to exclude them out from the category of “market goods and services”, not only with regard its domestic uses. Being also an essential and unsubstituable element for other economic activities (agricultural, energetic, industrial) of fundamental importance for the right to life and living together, water must be considered as a public good under these circumstances as well.
- Water and water services cannot be the subject of trade talks or of World Trade Organisation negotiations, but have to become the object of world rules and institutions that support and promote a use of water as a common good and a human right.

To this end, **we re-state our adhesion** to the following principles :

- Water is a common public good belonging to humankind and all living species
- The access to water is a human and social right, individual and collective right
- Financing the costs for guaranteeing access to water for all by the quantity and quality required for life is the responsibility for the public authorities.

Therefore we propose that, out of many known and realistic actions and solutions, this **Special Day of Rome gives the priority to six goals**, for implementation on the next 5 to 10 years, i.e.

First goal : give the Right to Water a constitutional status

- by including this right into the Universal Declaration
- by introducing it into the Constitution of all States. It is time that European citizens push for the introduction of this Right into the new Constitution of the European Union
- by incorporating it into the statutes of local authorities (Communes, Provinces, Regions...)

Second goal : transform water into a peace instrument

By promoting a campaign for the approval of a text by local collectivities (communes, provinces, regions) and States in which they declare to repudiate the use of water for political and military ends and as an instrument for oppression, exclusion and blackmailing.

Third goal : freedom for the “water children”

To guarantee by 2010 full time school attendance to 18 millions children (mostly young girls) who are denied the right to education because they are obliged to spend their day to “bring water” to the family and the village by covering a distance of several kilometres

Fourth goal : stop devastating overpumping and overconsumption

To reduce by 2010 at world level by 40% excessive overpumping and water losses in agriculture, industry and in the distribution networks. Additionally, to reduce domestic water wastes represented by the use of drinkable water (about 90%) for non-drinkable ends. The resulting financial massive savings should be allocated to funding initiatives geared at expanding access to water in all developing countries, with the promotion of local populations' participation. With this

respect an important role should be played by a return of the management of mineral water into public ends.

Fifth goal : invent a new generation of cooperative finance for water

To set up a world co-operative financial system, geared at enhancing the development of a water world public service, and to finance water investments at “local”, national and international level, with the aim of ensuring access to drinkable water for all, particularly in arid and semi arid regions and in poor areas of the multi-millions cities, promoting at the same time public partnership.

Sixth goal : local democracy for water

To promote, at all levels (villages, communes, cities, provinces, regions and transnational basins), the creation of Citizens' Councils to which an effective power in decision making is attributed, in support to and as a reinforcement of existing or similar types of representative and referendum democracy, this according to the different contexts and cultures. It belongs to people to decide on water matters.

A I sottoscrittori presenti a Roma

1. Mario SOARES (Portogallo)
Presidente del Comitato internazionale per il Contratto Mondiale dell'Acqua
2. Walter VELTRONI (Italia)
(Sindaco Città di Roma)
3. Enrico GASBARRA (Italia) Presidente Provincia di Roma
4. Riccardo PETRELLA (Italia)
Segretario Comitato internazionale Contratto Mondiale dell'acqua e Presidente Comitato italiano.
5. Danielle MITTERRAND (Francia)
Presidente della Fondazione France Liberté e Presidente onoraria dell'Associazione francese per il Contratto Mondiale dell'Acqua.
6. Alex ZANOTELLI (Italia)
Missionario Comboniano
7. Silvano Saverio DA COSTA (Brasile)
Presidente Associazione nazionale Servizi Municipalizzati delle città (ASSEMAE) che raggruppa 1800 città del Brasile e rappresentante della Rete internazionale “VIDA” impegnata sul Diritto all'acqua
8. Elio DI RUPO (Belgio)
Sindaco di Mons (Belgio) - Presidente del Partito Socialista Belga
9. Pietro FOLENA (Italia)
Parlamentare italiano. Portavoce Associazione italiana dei parlamentari e degli eletti locali per il Contratto Mondiale dell'Acqua
10. Tran HOAI (Vietnam)
Rappresentante Comitato dei cittadini - Città di Hue
11. Asma CHAABI (Marocco)
Sindaco di Essaouira - (Rabat)
12. Jacques PERREUX (Francia)
Vicepresidente del Consiglio Generale del Val de Marne
13. Munther HADDADIN (Giordania)
Ex Ministro Acqua e Irrigazione - Consigliere del Principe - di Giordania El Hassan

14. Marc BUREAU (Quebec)
Consigliere Municipale Città di Gatineau. Presidente Commissione Ambiente Quebec. NB. La città di Gatineau ha approvato una risoluzione sul diritto all'acqua in previsione della Giornata del 10 dicembre
15. Roberto CONTI (Italia)
Vicepresidente ANCC Coop (Campagna Acqua per la pace)
15. Pedro ARROJO (Spagna)
Fondatore e presidente dell' Associazione "Per una nuova cultura dell'acqua" .
16. Alberto VELASCO (Svizzera)
Parlamentare Città di Ginevra e Presidente ATTAC Ginevra
17. Bernard J. WOHLWEND (Svizzera)
Presidente della International Water Law Association
19. Selim BESLAGIC (Bosnia)
Parlamentare, Già sindaco di Tuzla
20. Ahmed SEBAI (Marocco)
Parlamentare Nazionale
21. Mirelle VOLPATO (Francia)
Consigliere Regione Aquitaine – VicePresidente Associaz. eletti comunisti e repubblicani di Francia
22. Maj FIIL FLYNN (USA)
"Public Citizen" Water for All Campaign
23. Jorge NASCIMENTO (Brasile)
Forum Internacional das Aguas
24. Jean Luc TOULY (Francia)
Presidente ACME Francia
25. Claire PIERSON (Belgio)
Responsabile Oxfam Belgio per le Campagne ed azioni sull' Acqua
26. Massimo ROSSI (Italia)
Presidente Consiglio Comunale Grottamare
27. Rosario LEMBO (Italia)
Presidente del CIPSI - Segretario Comitato Italiano Acqua (ACME Italia)
28. Emilio MOLINARI (Italia)
Vice Presidente Comitato Italiano Acqua (ACME Italia)
29. Patrizia SENTINELLI (Italia)
Consigliera Comunale di Roma

B Adesioni al documento pervenute il 10 dicembre nel corso dei lavori

da persone invitate e/o che avevano annunciato la loro presenza ma impedito, all'ultimo momento, di partecipare

▪ *Società Civile*

Vandana SHIVA (India)
Direttrice Foundation for Scientific Research
Jean ZIEGLER (Svizzera)
Rapporteur spécial de la Commission des droits de l'homme des Nations Unies
Rudolf AMENGA-ETEGO (Ghana)
Coordinatore del movimento nazionale contro la privatizzazione dell'acqua
Walter BONAN (**Italia**)
Presidente Parco Nazionale Dolomiti Bellunesi
Federico MAJOR (Spagna)
Presidente della Fondazione per la Cultura della Pace
Eduardo GALEANO (Uruguay)
Scrittore

Carla MONTERMAYOR (Filippine)
Coordinatrice dell' Asian Committee for Water Vigilance Network
Roberto FUMAGALLI (Italia)
Circolo ambiente di Merone
Francesco FERRANTE (Italia)
Direttore Generale Legambiente
Stefano LENZI (Italia)
Responsabile Ufficio Istituzioni WWF Italia)

▪ *Parlamentari*

Francis WURTZ (Francia)
Parlamentare europeo - Presidente del Gruppo GUE /NGL
Paul LANNOYE (Belgio)
Parlamentare europeo . Gruppo dei Verdi/ALE . Autore del rapporto del PE su "Acqua e politica per lo sviluppo"
Fidèle HIEN (Burkina Faso)
Parlamentare Assemblea nazionale
Francesco MARTONE (Italia)
Senatore Associazione dei parlamentari e degli eletti per il Contratto Mondiale dell'Acqua
Aloisio MERCADANTE (Brasile)
Seantore, Capo Gruppo del PT
Ernst Ulrich von WEIZSÄCKER (Germania)
Parlamentare, Presidente della Commissione per l'Ambiente

▪ *Enti locali*

Gassan SBAKAA (Palestina)
Sindaco di Bablus. Presidente dell'Associazione dei Comuni Palestinesi
Sergio GOLINELLI (Italia)
Assessore Ambiente Provincia di Ferrara
Paolo CACCIARI (Italia)
Assessore Ambiente Comune di Venezia
Antonio MUSCONI (Italia)
Assessore Comune di VALMADRERA
Pamela PANTANO (Italia)
Assessore Politiche Infanzia Comune di Roma
Leonardo MASELLA (Italia)
Capo Gruppo consiliare PRC – Bologna
Rodolfo SCHIAVO (Italia)
Cittadinanza Attiva

C. Parlamentari Europei che hanno aderito all'iniziativa

Enrique BARON CRESPO (E)	Presidente del Gruppo PSE
Michel SCARBONCHI (I)	Segretario Nazionale del MRC
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Harem DESIR (F)	Gruppo PSE

Danielle DARRAS	Gruppo PSE
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Antonio DI PIETRO (I)	Gruppo ELDR
Alain SAVARY (F)	Gruppo PSE
Massimo CARRARO (I)	Gruppo PSE
Fausto BERTINOTTI (I)	Gruppo GUE/NGL
Luigi VINCI (I)	Gruppo GUE/NGL
Luisa MORGANTINI (I)	Gruppo GUE/NGL
Giuseppe DI LELLO FINUOLI (I)	Gruppo GUE/NGL
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