

Declarations

STATEMENT OF THE DAKAR GLOBAL ALTERNATIVE FORUM:

WATER, A COMMON HERITAGE AND A UNIVERSAL RIGHT

We, representatives of peasant movements, women, young people, NGOs, workers and trade unions, faith and religious communities, and Indigenous Peoples from all continents, who work collectively to defend their right to water and sanitation, gathered in Dakar from March 21 to 26, 2022 for the Alternative World Water Forum (FAME). The FAME brought together hundreds of participants from all continents, around panels, conferences, workshops, exhibitions, site visits, screenings of documentary films, etc. It took place in a context of water stress on a planetary scale, the growing climate crisis, the Covid pandemic, and neoliberal economic globalization, harmful to communities around the world. The theme of FAME was “access to water and sanitation is a matter of public health and a barometer of democracy”.

The following realities have led to rich exchanges during the forum:

- Fresh water represents only 2.8% of water resources and is decreasing, only 1% is in liquid form and is used as follows: 70% by irrigated agriculture, in particular agribusiness which represents only 18% of cultivated land in the world to the detriment of peasant agriculture, 20% by industries, and 10% only for domestic needs.
- Water scarcity affects nearly 40% of the world's population; and groundwater, which makes up 99% of liquid freshwater on earth, and is largely invisible, is being rapidly depleted leading to widespread drought.
- Three out of 10 people do not have access to safely managed drinking water services.
- The burden of work resulting from a lack of access to water falls on the shoulders of women, girls, and children, who spend 200 million hours collecting this water, surely mortgaging their future.
- More than two billion people lack basic hygiene and sanitation facilities such as toilets and latrines.
- More than 700 children under the age of five die every day from diarrheal diseases due to the consumption of unsafe water or a lack of hygiene and sanitation.
- Floods represent 70% of the causes of death linked to natural hazards.
- Water justice organizers and other human rights defenders come under sustained attack by states and corporations and are increasingly victims of violence and repression.

Considering the severity of this situation, we proclaim:

- Water is the basis of life like land and air. They are our common heritage. Their vital natural cycles must be respected for the preservation of biodiversity and ecosystems through agroecology.

- For people to live in dignity and in good health, water must be managed at all levels, in a concerted, inclusive, equitable and participatory manner, respecting the rights of grassroots communities, Indigenous Peoples, ecological balances, local and traditional Indigenous knowledge and positive endogenous values and their freedom to assert these rights free from repression and violence.
- Water, as a vital resource, is neither a commodity to be traded on the stock exchange, nor a good to be privatized for the benefit of the rich and multinational companies. The privatization of water services and the financialization of this resource enrich the multinationals to the detriment of the people.
- All persons regardless of payment capacity and places of residence must have guaranteed access to water and sanitation.
- It is urgent to implement in an optimal way at all levels, the Sustainable Development Goal 6 which seeks to guarantee access for all to sources of drinking water and sanitation, but also ensure the sustainable management of water resources by 2030.
- The resolutions adopted in 2010 by the United Nations General Assembly and the Human Rights Council
- Recognize that access to water and sanitation is a right. It must be integrated into international law and into the constitutions of all countries, as is already done in Venezuela, Bolivia, Burkina Faso and Senegal, whose current constitution states: “natural resources belong to the people”.
- The provisions of Article 21 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas relating to the right of peasants to water must be disseminated and applied in all countries.
- Nation-states must ensure the full implementation without qualification of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The World Water Alternative Forum (FAME) calls for:

- A convergence of initiatives and actions to fight for the respect of the rights to water and sanitation, land, and the environment
- An international campaign to raise awareness, build the capacities of rural and urban communities and Indigenous Peoples and advocate for the effective integration of the right to water and sanitation in the constitutions and public policies of all countries.
- More regular meetings of the network to work towards these goals, to expand global resistance to the corporate water agenda and to realize water justice for all as we look towards Alternative World Water Forum 2024 in Bali, Indonesia. Although, beyond an Alternative Forum, we are the People’s World Water Forum.
- The creation within the United Nations system of an Independent High Authority for Water.
- The creation of a United Nations Indigenous Conference on Water.

Dakar, March 25, 2022

