

Declaration of the Peoples World Water Movement

New Delhi, India January 2004.

We stand in clear opposition to the oligarchy of the World Water Council and commit to democratic control; peoples based control of the world's water resources.

We commit to working on the ground with women and men in communities, recognizing the special impacts of the world's water crisis on women.

Water is Life: Indigenous perspectives

Water is sacred. We acknowledge that water connects and regulates planet earth as the sacred mat of life, which is the ocean, and we acknowledge water also nourishes the land and all living organisms including human beings. Water is the physical form of spirit.

Like mother earth, women have special responsibility for water.

Water circulates through the sky and outer space we pledge to respect water and its holistic value to life. Education is needed to learn about the sacredness of water and peace. Communities must declare all water sources as sacred sites.

Water policy and legislation needs to protect water as a source of life by the recognition, respect and implementation of traditional indigenous and natural law. Water policies are needed to protect water for future generations and for all plants and animals.

Indigenous peoples must participate in and provide guidance in the development of such a world water vision.

We commit to work for the recognition of this sacredness of water for life in its totality.

Water is a Human Right

We reaffirm water as a Human Right as stated in the general comment #15 to the International Covenant of Ecological, Social and Cultural Rights of the United Nations.

We commit ourselves to inform the public and together promote the formal recognition and effective implementation of this Human Right on a local, national and international level.

We call for an international convention on fresh water under the auspices of the United Nations and we support the principles of the Rome declaration as a tool to achieve it.

Water privatization

We insist that water services must be provided by the public not the private sector.

Once water services are privatized, the essence of life itself is determined by the market, which distributes based on the ability to pay. Those who can pay increasing water rates get access to the water they need, "those who don't have the means are cut off".

We therefore reject the corporate takeover of water services, which has proven to be a failure in urban centres ranging from Buenos Aires, Manila, and Johannesburg to Atlanta.

For these reasons we commit ourselves to a plan of action on the following fronts;

Water Corporations

Building on successful and ongoing and wide spread campaigns we commit ourselves to promoting people based sustainable alternatives and launch a global offensive against Suez and Coca Cola, which are two prime exploiters of water global water resources.

World Bank

Concerned about the negative impact of World Bank water programmes and policies, we will coordinate global and local resistance to market based solutions such as a privatization, and pressure the Bank to support public water utilities, respecting the human right to water through proven mechanisms of transparency, accountability and participation.

Public Financing

We intend to launch a campaign promoting water as a public good to be publicly financed. We support the public financing of water services through the cancellation of debt, the reallocation of a percentage military expenditures and a redistributive taxation system. We reject the present financial system epitomized by the Camdessus Report and the plundering of public money by transnational corporations.

We further declare our commitment to stand in solidarity with the Delhi Water workers and their struggle against Suez and the privatization of water services here in India; and we support the protection of the Ganges River and the spiritual heritage of the peoples of India, threatened by the Tehri Dam project. We commit ourselves to raise this issue at home with our governments, parliaments and constituencies in each of our countries.

Ground Water Mining

We are opposed to all corporate ground water thefts including those that are enabled by trade agreements, which favour corporate water takings from communities. We stand in solidarity and advocate on behalf of the Plachimada/Varanisi, India- and Potisi, Chile campaigns against corporate water takings that have devastated local ecological, indigenous communities and economies. We encourage more research and investigation of corporate abuse in ground water mining and create networks to disseminate these stories between affected communities.

Water diversion and dams

People's movements and various studies including the World Commission on Dams have determined that destructive dams and diversions (also called linkages) have devastating and irreversible effects on ecosystems and people.

Privatization of water is the motor for resurrecting and expanding an outmoded, obsolete, non - sustainable and anti-democratic technology of water use and management. Examples include:

- India's river linking project
- The Brahmaputra known as the Psangpo in Tibet diversion to Mainland China
- The Grand Canal scheme of diverting Canadian rivers to the Great Lakes and further south to the USA.
- The diversion of the Abra River in Spain, for the tourist industry.
- The various diversion projects in Africa, such as those on the Congo River.

As a movement will continue to evaluate and assess the impacts of destructive schemes and projects.

We will organize and resist by organizing water parliaments, public hearings and consultations to ensure the integrity of water, rivers, lakes, oceans and cultures and our fundamental rights to water are not violated.

We will practice and promote sustainable alternatives in water and energy use, such as micro hydro, solar and wind power, water conservation, and harvesting and ecological methods of recycling and wastewater treatment.

Ecological, and community based management

We recognize the dominant models of development, agriculture and water management are unsustainable and are propelling us toward global water crisis. We recognize the responsibility over water resources belong at the local level and that communities have the need, the ability and the right to implement practices of sustainable management.

We want this global movement to empower communities around the world to employ locally appropriate methods of water management, and we strive to rebuild a culture of stewardship, the only truly sustainable solution to the impending crisis.

We will begin to build a communication network that will ultimately reach the community level around the world and will serve for the exchange of information to enable implementation of decentralized, low cost and ecologically sound practices of water stewardship.

January 14, 2004 New Delhi, India
