

# **THE COALITION OF MEXICAN ORGANIZATIONS FOR THE RIGHT TO WATER (COALICIÓN DE ORGANIZACIONES MEXICANAS POR EL DERECHO AL AGUA-COMDA) IS FORMED TO DEFEND THE RIGHT TO WATER IN MEXICO**

## **PRESS RELEASE**

**T**he below signing organizations have decided to work on a shared basis in the context imposed by the IV World Water Forum to be held on March 2006, an event that articulates the interests of huge multinational enterprises and multilateral banks.

On such occasion, we want to put on the water policy debate a social, cultural and spiritual perspective, in order to take into account the human right to water and its democratic, sustainable and fair management as a vital element, a view that inspires the following statement:

### **Troubled by the unsustainable management of water**

The immoderate logging and climate change have modified the hydrologic cycle and negatively affected water reserves. Contamination of water due to fertilizers, insecticides and detergents, and those of heavy metals and organic and toxic substances as well, is alarming. The way of extracting and distributing water, and the logic of satisfying demand through mega projects like dam building have proven to have disastrous social and environmental consequences.

### **Troubled by the inequitable supplying and access to the vital element**

While the cities' drinking water supply level is of 94 percent, and almost 90 percent for sewage, rural populations still suffer appalling conditions. While some enjoy an adequate water service, others, mainly low income and indigenous people, have to fetch water from distant sources, pay water trucks or suffer the consequences of receiving unsafe water. In these cases, women and children suffer this situation the most.

Furthermore, water access among the agro producers is also inequitable. Despite that 80 percent of Mexico's water is used for this activity, only the 30 percent of the country's territory concentrated in the northeastern and central regions benefits from it. Besides, water use in agriculture is highly inefficient.

### **Troubled by the privatisation trend**

We believe that water is a public resource. This means it is not merchandise as multilateral banks and private business intend to maintain. Thus, the object of its management is not profiting but to suit criteria in order to give an efficient and equitable access to drinking water.

In our country, the privatization levels of water and sewage services are worrying. There are examples that constitute an attempt against citizens, such as those of Aguascalientes and Saltillo, where "Suez" and "Agua de Barcelona" enterprises arbitrarily raise their water tariffs. Besides, a growing number of cities are experiencing water and sewage services privatisation processes whose evaluation hasn't been done yet. Evidently, such processes benefit transnational business and joint ventures.

### **Troubled by the lack of democratic ways of participation**

Due to the National Water Law reforms, the decision-making process is done through the so called *Organismos de Cuenca* (Basin Organisms). Both the users and civil and social organizations are allowed only to take part in the Basin Councils whose power is very limited. However, the most affected by these organisms' decisions are the basin communities.

It's necessary to remark that the judiciary frame does not take into account the peasants and indigenous communities' view on the water management. This is a view that considers water as something essential for life, and thus as an irreplaceable, priceless divine element.

**Thus, we declare that:**

**Respecting, protecting and guaranteeing the right to water is a Mexican State obligation**, contracted by ratifying the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). According to General Comment number 15, issued on 2003 by the United Nations Economic, Social Cultural Rights Committee, the human right to water is the right for every person to have enough, clean, accessible water; a sustainable human right to be enjoyed by both, present and future generations. Besides, the right to water is essential for the fulfilment of other human rights.

**The access, distribution and decision-making on water must be equitable for both, the peoples and regions.**

**It is urgent to issue a new water policy in order to guarantee the human right to water** and a its sustainable use, by means of the promotion of democratic and public management, new technologies and a new culture of water.

**And we demand:**

- ✓ Justice and equity for everybody's access and distribution of quality water and sanitation services, guaranteeing sustainable management.
- ✓ Strict attachment of the Mexican State to commitments acquired within the signing of the PIDESC, especially that of respecting, protecting and guaranteeing the water human right.
- ✓ To constitutionally guarantee the human right to water, so to strengthen our country's permanent exercise of such right.
- ✓ To stop and revert the water services privatisation processes, by means of reforming law and policies that promote it, and thus creating brand new legislations and policies to favour plural engagement on the water management decisions making.

ALIANZA MEXICANA POR LA AUTODETERMINACIÓN DE LOS PUEBLOS (AMAP)  
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