



## **DECLARATION OF THE PARTICIPANTS AT THE ALTERNATIVE WORLD WATER FORUM IN MARSEILLE, 14 – 17 march 2012.**

As members of the global water justice movement gathered together in Marseille in March 2012 at FAME (Alternative World Water Forum), we have a shared vision of water: water is **a commons, not a commodity**.

Thanks to the water justice movement, the United Nations has recognized the **right to water and sanitation as a “human right that is essential to the full enjoyment of life”** (resolution 64/292). There have been significant subsequent victories such as: the adoption of this right in constitutional amendments in many South American and African countries; the success of the Italian referendum against the privatization of water management; the remunicipalization of water in Paris, Buenos Aires, Atlanta and in many other cities around the world; and for the first time, there have been legal proceedings involving the application of the human right to water.

We oppose the dominant **economic and financial model** that is in favour of **privatizing and commoditizing water and sanitation services**. Capitalist, extractive development has created dramatic and profound economic, social, and environmental crises. This approach, which considers water to be a commodity like any other, is unjust and ineffective in providing access to water and sanitation to all, and goes against the will and interests of the people.

In response to the growing privatization of water, we uphold **water as the basic element of life** on the planet and as a **fundamental and inalienable human right**; we insist that solidarity between present and future generations be guaranteed; we **reject all forms of water privatization** and declare that **the management and control of water must be public, cooperative, participatory, equitable, and not for profit**.

We demand that governments guarantee **access to clean and safe water for all**, in quantities that can sustain life. We call upon all governments to officially recognize the **right to water and sanitation for all people** in their national laws, in accordance with the UN resolution 64/292. We call upon governments to **challenge the authority and legitimacy of the World Water Forum** as a place for developing international water policy. The financial failings of the dominant economic thinking and the collapse of neoliberal, capitalist structures that lead to this situation make this clear: the World Water Forum and World Water Council have no legitimacy.

We call upon the UN General Assembly to organize a **Democratic Global Summit on Water** in October 2014 that will commit member states to implementing the human right to water and sanitation, in a manner accountable to the global community. The growing water crisis requires a legitimate, accountable, transparent, and democratic water summit. This summit must enable meaningful and open discussions with impacted communities, workers, indigenous peoples and civil society, and must result in binding commitments, not ministerial statements. To participate

at the same level as today's economic and political forces, civil society must obtain enough material and financial resources.

It is urgent and crucial to bring about “**real democracy**”: impacted populations should take part in the important decisions regarding water use, distribution and conservation, and for example, in water management or in the implementation of a large project. Citizens and associations must play an active role in water management. Governments must make efforts to accomplish this, by using political and financial resources to train citizens to be part of this exercise, and to develop educational activities about water.

The human right to water requires **adequate public financing**. The pattern of economic austerity in industrialized countries and structural adjustment in developing countries that has led governments to slash spending for vital water and sanitation services and allowed private corporations greater access to these sectors must end.

We call on States to **finance public water and sanitation systems** through **progressive taxation, domestic and international financial transaction taxes, and to use funds for water instead of military purposes**. We demand that governments guarantee no one will be excluded from access to water: in terms of household water bills, this should be done using a **progressive system** (based on income).

Quality public service in drinking water and sanitation, especially in big cities, is impossible to ensure without infrastructure and manpower. We **support workers' rights** as expressed in the International Labour Organization conventions. Working conditions must be worthy, and workers must have the necessary tools to do their jobs and contribute to workplace democracy.

We reject the notion of “public-private partnerships”, and we are in favour of **public and citizen-run water management**. We wish to promote, create, and strengthen “**public-public**” and “**public-citizen/public-community**” **partnerships**. We call for public investment in these partnerships and the transfer of public sector knowledge to people and communities who need training in this area.

We recognize the value of **community water management**, implemented when public services are impossible or when the collective demand goes beyond mere service. In community management, water is provided in its multiplicity of functions, including those that are usually ignored: the **spiritual, aesthetic, symbolic and cultural dimensions**. This approach also gives communities an opportunity to reformulate their needs and mobilize forces in complementary projects related to agriculture, education, and community organization. We believe that the harmonious use of water leads to harmony within the community and that the quality of water management will reflect in the quality of society.

We defend the **rights of indigenous peoples**. We recognize the importance of their perception of the world, **their practices, their traditional knowledge** and customs, which are needed in order to build alternatives to the dominant value system based on pure economics.

We reaffirm the **rights of women** as central to the global water struggle. Having a vital role in providing and managing water supplies, women demand that **knowledge be shared**, particularly

technical knowledge, to aid in the practical aspects of accessing water. They stand for participating in decision-making as equals, in water management, sanitation, hygiene, and all aspects of the process including scientific and technological aspects.

We support **small-scale, family-run agriculture** and demand **food sovereignty** that allows people to feed themselves, and access to water and land. We want **agro-ecological production**, which is adapted to climate change, respectful towards the environment, less water-intensive, and less polluting, to become a priority in industrialized and developing countries. We want agro-ecological farmers to be guaranteed their right to use water for agriculture to feed the cities and villages with quality food, by giving them adequate financing, and investing in smart rainwater collection techniques and water usage techniques, that are adapted to local capacities and **take traditional practices into account**.

We are against the industrial exploitation and extraction of natural commons in all its forms, especially **mining and hydrocarbons** including gas and shale oil, which keep pushing back the borderlines of “sacrifice zones” in order to supply raw material and energy, endangering access to water and its availability and quality for more and more people worldwide.

We not only denounce extractivist **multinationals**, but also **international financial institutions, international treaties**, and **governments** that support and apply this “development” model. The collusion of powers of these different players aims to inhibit the people’s expression and prevent alternative political propositions, on both local and global levels.

We call for a **change in our consumer habits**, in order to end over-consumption and the dogma about infinite growth, which pushes for an exponential acceleration of extracting natural resources.

We call upon the UN General Assembly to consider thinking about constructing a **new model for cooperation between governments** in order to exit an economic system based on frantic competition. This global economic war causes a spiral of overproduction and overconsumption that encourages continued, unlimited preying upon the biosphere, going far beyond satisfying basic needs. This leads to growing unrest in developed and developing countries.

We call for an **energy transition** based on reducing overall consumption, energy efficiency and giving priority to renewable energy over energy sources that are finite. The **production and delivery of energy** must be reoriented to satisfy the needs of the people and stop being managed by transnational interests and industrial over-consumption. **Local, alternative and sustainable solutions** must be prioritized, decentralizing production. This transition requires an immediate ban on drilling for oil and shale gas, oil sands, operating offshore oil-rigs, and in general, any hydrocarbon extraction that uses techniques that are dangerous for the environment and health.

We oppose with determination **processes of commoditizing all aspects of life – nature, water, work** - that trans-nationals and international finance try to capture with their plan for a “green economy”, supported by governments at the international conference Rio+20. We demand that governments reject the **false solutions of this “green economy” - dams, nuclear energy, agrofuels, mono-agriculture and industrial forestry, commercial exploitation of bottled**

**water** – which far from resolving environmental and financial crises actually threaten the availability and quality of water.

We support economic systems that aim to guarantee well-being and a healthy environment for communities and not the pursuit of maximum individual wealth and over-inflated profits for business and finance.

We call upon governments to follow the guidelines from the world commission on dams and refrain from approving the directives from the Protocol on evaluating the durability of hydro-energy. We also ask that international organizations impose a moratorium on financing major dams.

We denounce the **criminalization of social and environmental** movements that fight for the right to water and against extractivism, and we demand that their protection be guaranteed. In particular we feel outrage at the murder on March 15, 2012, during FAME, of Bernardo Vásquez Sánchez, who opposed the mining project of the Canadian company Fortuna Silver Mines in Oaxaca, Mexico.

We reserve the right to show **civil disobedience** to confront the destruction of the environment, methods of subsistence, of quality of life and health.

We propose that an independent international legal system be set up in order to guarantee the right to water and sanitation: this right must be enforced throughout the world and crimes against this right must be stopped.

We call for the **creation of an international penal court for environmental crimes**.

We call for the **preservation of the integrity of the water cycle** in the framework of the recognition of the rights of ecosystems and species to exist, thrive, and reproduce. We call for the creation and recognition of the **rights of nature** in order to guarantee that the biosphere and its inhabitants get the protection needed for balance and sustainability.

We commit to **continue building networks** and new social alliances, broadening and deepening our connections with social movements fighting for food sovereignty, climate justice, democracy, and social and environmental justice. We will continue to coordinate activities around the world. We commit to **involve both local authorities and parliamentarians** who are determined to defend water as a common good and to reaffirm the right to freshwater for all human beings and nature. We are **encouraging all public water utilities and communities of water users to collaborate**, establishing national associations and regional networks.

We call upon all movements, networks, organizations who are part of the movement for water justice to make a commitment to mobilizing citizens for **Rio+20**, to make the Peoples' Summit (June 15 to 23, 2012) and the day of global action (June 20, 2012) a grand, popular success. This will play a role in stopping the commodification and financialization of our lives and to impose our alternatives, which respond to today's ecological, social, economic, and democratic crises.

We salute the **determination and cohesion of our movement**, the victories of today and tomorrow, and we are happy to pursue these joint efforts that go beyond countries and continents! FAME has met its objectives in its contribution to bringing the World Water Forum closer to an end. The path has been cleared to enforce the right to water and sanitation, a fundamental human right, and to make sure that water becomes once again a commons belonging to humanity and the biosphere.

Marseille, March 17, 2012.