

9TH AND 10TH MARCH 2012 • MARSEILLE

PEOPLE, PLANET & WATER



**Civil society
declaration**



WWW.FRANCE-LIBERTES.FR

Organisé par



Dans le cadre du



En partenariat avec





**2 JOURNÉES POUR DÉBATTRE
ET CONSTRUIRE ENSEMBLE**



Final civil society declaration

Water is not a commodity; it is a common good that belongs to Humanity and all life

All people, irrespective of where they live, are made of water, and depend on water to remain alive. In order to guarantee life, human dignity, the evolution of our civilisations and to maintain the precarious balance of ecosystems for generations to come, we wish to take collective responsibility for this unique, fragile, limited natural element that is the first symbol of life on earth.

Gathered together in Marseilles on the 9th and 10th of March 2012, in the framework of the Alternative World Water Forum, in the Citizen's Days for "People, Planet and Water", we shared our knowledge and experience, our concerns and our hopes, our proposals and our struggles to ensure that water, a vital non-commercial common good becomes a priority consideration for all.

All people have the right to water

Although the right to clean drinking water and sanitation for all was recognised as a human right by the United Nations General Assembly on 28th July 2010, this right is neither promoted nor implemented. In order to achieve universal implementation and the requisite harmonisation of national and international regulations, water can not remain the sole concern of political, technical and financial authorities: all men and women, irrespective of their level of responsibility, should be entitled to participate in decision-making, and contribute to the protection and fair access of all to water, as a common good of all life.

Since time immemorial people have developed traditions that enable access to clean drinking water for all; these varied practices have led to a wealth of diverse life-styles. Sadly, the current global crisis has resulted in increased pressure on eco-systems, due to an unsustainable development model that pollutes and that has broken the natural water cycles, and due to increased inequalities, forced urbanisation and extreme poverty.

Actors of the current development model, including the International Financial Institutions and transnational corporations over-exploit, over-consume and pollute water. This includes economic, industrial or agricultural productivist practice, mega hydroelectric projects, exploration and exploitation of all sorts of minerals and fossil resources, and land-grabbing.

At a time when we are commemorating the sad anniversary of the disaster of Fukushima, the nuclear industry has proven to be a major risk of radioactive pollution of water, particularly to marine eco-systems. It is still impossible to evaluate the long-term consequences of this.

Unfortunately the International Institutions and certain States are attempting to impose uniform solutions that benefit a unique, imposed development model. There are insufficient political determination and commitment to promote requisite public investments that could change the way in which the cards are distributed and achieve, or even exceed, the objectives that have been set in the past, as we approach the People's Summit RIO+20.



**2 JOURNÉES POUR DÉBATTRE
ET CONSTRUIRE ENSEMBLE**



There is a major global deficit in participatory, transparent and democratic water management. This deficit is exasperated by the lack of control and regulation of water use; which is the result of a lack of means or political will. All too many actors of public services that are supposed to be accessible to all hand over their prerogatives and essential responsibilities to the market. There is financial speculation on the common good, leading to unreasonable profiteering and sometimes even as far as corruption. This profit maximising, that is imposed by the capitalist model of the global free-market, is an obstacle to effective universal access to water for all, particularly for the poorest and in the most geographically isolated regions.

We need to invent new societal models that both protect water as a common good and respect the balance of nature. Such models should promote sustainable innovative solutions that draw on inherited traditional knowledge as well as modern techniques. The protection and regeneration of water and nature for future generations requires us to take the long-term general interest of humanity into account.

PRINCIPLES

We declare that:

- > Water is not a commodity. Many peoples recognise it as sacred. It is a common good of all life!**
- > All people have a right to clean water and sanitation as a fundamental human right. All States shall be held responsible for the transparent implementation of this right in their territory, and in conjunction with cross-border territories.**
- > Information and the effective participation of people and citizens in binding public consultations on water and sanitation should be compulsory and effective. They should be protected from financial and economic interests.**
- > All people are entitled to have access to accessible, sustainable, just technologies that respect traditional, cultural knowledge grounded in good practice and protection of water.**
- > Given their predominant role in providing and managing water supplies, women should be involved in all local, national and international decision-making on water resources.**
- > The required balance between human activities, ecosystems and nature, with respect for water, should be guaranteed by good management practice.**
- > There is a need to build fair and just energy transitions and social, economic and political transformation. We need to change our way of life and of living with nature.**



**2 JOURNÉES POUR DÉBATTRE
ET CONSTRUIRE ENSEMBLE**



PROPOSALS

1. We commit to developing ways of monitoring and supervision by citizens, capacity-building and protection of committed civil society actors aimed at defending and promoting the right to water and sanitation in order to guarantee the effective implementation of the United Nations resolution on access to water and sanitation for all.
2. We call for the introduction of independent, international legal mechanisms that guarantee the right to water and sanitation and that have the power to judge crimes committed against water rights.
3. We demand the right to water and sanitation for all be universally enforceable in all courts of law or other relevant legal bodies.
4. We demand the creation of a permanent framework to establish a global water policy. The World Water Council is not a legitimate body to do this. This framework should forbid any commodification and financialisation of water.
5. We demand that States develop and implement action plans and mobilise sufficient public financial resources required to implement the right to water and sanitation, including through international solidarity.
6. We call for the cost of lifeline water services to be covered by society in the framework of public, democratic management. Should price differentiation be introduced, it should be progressive in order to take the diversity of use into consideration, avoid social exclusion in terms of access to water and avoid wastefulness.
7. We call for the implementation of appropriate preventive technologies, supported where possible by traditional knowledge and customs, that are context-appropriate, affordable and founded on natural treatment procedures, rather than expensive curative technical solutions.
8. All water-related technology should be publicly and freely accessible in terms of intellectual property rights.
9. We call upon all States to evaluate the last 20 years of international water management policy at the RIO+20 conference, in order to evaluate the long-term impacts of their economic management. The need for integrated democratic management should be emphasised.
10. We call upon all people to support the proposals for the recognition of the rights of nature.
11. We demand the introduction of integrated water management that aims to minimise the impact of human activity on ecosystems, whilst guaranteeing effective access to water for all.



**2 JOURNÉES POUR DÉBATTRE
ET CONSTRUIRE ENSEMBLE**



- 12. We call for transparency and citizens' supervision concerning information on the use of water in extractive and mining industries, in order to avoid the disastrous consequences of these practices on water, the environment, health and public safety. We demand that those actors responsible for having created damage be criminally penalised and demand the introduction of a reparations fund.**
- 13. We call for an immediate end to and banning of exploitation of shale gas and oil. This activity leads to the programmed destruction of our ecosystems and is in no way coherent with the defence of human rights to water or our responsibilities to future generations.**
- 14. We demand that international organisations declare a moratorium on the funding of large dams until such time as they truly follow the recommendations (in both concrete and binding ways) of the World Commission on Dams.**
- 15. We call for the encouragement of the promotion and introduction of local, sustainable energy solutions.**
- 16. We encourage all formal and informal water education initiatives, at all levels of society.**
- 17. We call for priority to be given to small-scale family and peasant farming, and new models of agro-ecological production, supported by intelligent water-use techniques, that are adapted to local capacities, to the protection of water resources and that take climate change into consideration.**

These concrete, participatory solutions exist. They can enable us to move beyond a development model whose destructive potential has been proven. Change is first and foremost a question of political will and of peoples' commitment. This is why we wish to share the proposals made in the course of the "People, Planet and Water" meeting, and move towards the effective, implementation of the right to water and sanitation, in the spirit of democracy, sustainability and respect for ecosystems.