

March 11, 2009

Mr. Ban Ki-Moon  
Secretary-General  
United Nations Headquarters  
S-3800  
New York, New York 10017  
USA

CC. Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann  
President  
United Nations General Assembly

Dear Secretary-General,

As the 5th World Water Forum approaches in Istanbul, Turkey, on March 16-22, 2009, we, the undersigned civil society organizations actively engaged in the struggle for water justice throughout the world, are deeply concerned about the contradictory messages coming from the United Nations on the issue of water rights.

On the one hand, as the UN Secretary-General, you have correctly issued repeated warnings about increasing water shortages around the world while the UN President, Miguel d'Escoto, has called for the recognition by member states of water as a fundamental human right. On the other hand, the UN has, in effect, taken measures to consolidate the rights of for-profit corporations to secure control over the world's freshwater sources and supplies by harboring the CEO Water Mandate under the UN Global Compact. As a result, there is the very real danger that water as a corporate right will trump water as a human right and an ecological trust.

On World Water Day last year, leaders of more than 125 environmental, public health, water justice, human rights and corporate accountability NGOs in 35 countries expressed to you their view that the CEO Water Mandate is primarily designed to facilitate greater control over water sources and services by for-profit transnational corporations. We share those concerns. Led by Coca-Cola, which has a highly questionable track record when it comes to water takings and water pollution, the companies which have signed on to the CEO Water Mandate all have a vested interest in gaining control over water in times of increasing scarcity. Suez is the world's largest privatizer of water services while Nestlé is

the world's leading bottled water company. Other co-signers include food giants like Unilever, clothing manufacturers like Levi-Strauss, and chemical companies like Dow Chemical, all of whom are greatly dependent on water sources and services for the production of their products.

Our concerns are reinforced by the heavy presence of these and other corporations involved in the global water industry at the World Water Forum [WWF] in Istanbul. It is well known that global water companies like Suez and international financial institutions like the World Bank have had a major role to play in organizing the WWF and determining its agenda since its inception. Every three years, the WWF program puts a priority on encouraging representatives of local governments from all over the world to invite private sector involvement in the running of their water services and accept greater corporate governance over their water sources and infrastructure.

What's more, the World Water Forum promotes voluntary corporate initiatives like the CEO Water Mandate, although there is no evidence that such approaches facilitate rather than undermine regulation and government action. Companies involved in the CEO Water Mandate will also meet in Istanbul at the WWF in March to advance their plan of action. While a few NGOs have been handpicked to attend and a transparency policy has been posted on the CEO Water Mandate website, such measures do not go far enough to hold corporate signers accountable to standards set by the public, or to ensure broad civil society participation or increase public access to relevant information about corporate use, abuse and control of water.

This conflict over water being recognized as a corporate versus a human right, could well come to a head at the WWF in Istanbul. It is our understanding that the President of the UN General Assembly, Miguel d'Escoto, will be present, and will continue championing the cause of water as a human right. However, the global water corporations who are driving the program of activities at the WWF will have the benefit of your support as the UN Secretary-General for the CEO Water Mandate. Indeed, there is the very real danger that your continuing endorsement of the CEO Water Mandate will tip the balance in favour of water as a corporate right.

We maintain that water is the essence of life on this planet. As such, it is both a human right and an ecological trust. Local communities must be recognized as the true guardians of their local watersheds. Democratically elected governments must be held responsible for ensuring community participation and control over water sources and services. The UN should be looking to local communities and representative governments, rather than for-profit corporations, to set the global policy agenda and lead the development of solutions to the world water crisis.

We, therefore, urge you, Mr. Secretary-General, to issue a statement prior to the World Water Forum in Istanbul that reaffirms water as a human right and an

ecological trust rather than a corporate right. We also call on you to withdraw your official support for the CEO Water Mandate at the UN and instead commit resources to developing an alternative program and strategy on the global water crisis that is both transparent and accountable. Indeed, civil society and community based groups engaged in water justice issues around the world today have a valuable contribution to make in developing an alternative water program and plan of action at the United Nations.

This letter has been initiated by the following organizations: African Water Network, Corporate Accountability International, Corporate Europe Observatory, Polaris Institute and Red Vida.

For follow-up, please contact Tony Clarke, Polaris Institute, [tclarke@polarisinstitute.org](mailto:tclarke@polarisinstitute.org) and Kathryn Mulvey, Corporate Accountability International, [kmulvey@stopcorporateabuse.org](mailto:kmulvey@stopcorporateabuse.org).

Co-signators:

Koos Van Schie	Africa - Europe Faith & Justice Network, Belgium
Anne Rutter	Africa-Europe Faith & Justice Network, Belgium
Mairéad Ní Chuirc, R.S.C.	Africa-Europe Faith & Justice Network, Ireland
Alhassan Adam	African Water Network, Ghana
Cor Van Den Brand, President	Afrika-Europa Netwerk Netherlands
Ruth Caplan	Alliance For Democracy, USA
Acacia Rose	Alpine Riverkeeper, Australia
Bobby Ramakan	Asha Parivar And National Alliance Of People's Movements (Napm), India
Enzo Vitalesta	Asociación Yaku, Italy
Andrew Preston, Director	Association For International Water Studies (Fivas), Norway
Dorothea Haerlin	Attac Germany
Matteo Guainazzi	Attac-Spain
Adam Wolfenden, Trade Justice Campaigner	Australian Fair Trade And Investment Network (Aftinet), Australia
Zakir Kibria	Banglapraxis, Bangladesh
Claus Kittsteiner	Berlin Water Table, Germany
Thomas Braunschweig	Berne Declaration, Switzerland
Krishan Bir Chaudhary, President	Bharatiya Krishak Samaj, New Delhi, India
Gauri Sreenivasan, Policy Coordinator	Canadian Council For International Co-Operation, Canada
Saul Arbess	Canadian Department Of Peace Initiative, Canada
Paul Moist, President	Canadian Union Of Public Employees, Canada
Luis Márquez Valdivia, Presidente	Centro Cultural Social Y Del Medio Ambiente Ceibo, Chile
David Barkin	Centro De Ecología Y Desarrollo, Mexico
Armando Flores, Director Cdc	Centro Para La Defensa Del Consumidor, El Salvador
Carlos J. Correa Bernier, Coordinator	Centro Romero, USA
Boniface Rapudo Hawi	Chemchemi Ya Ukweli, Kenya
Miriam Silva	Coalición De Organizaciones Mexicanas Por El Derecho Al Agua, Mexico

Günther Nährich	Comboni-Missionare, Germany
Samuel Ochieng	Consumer Information Network, Kenya
Gustavo Spedale	Coordinadora Córdoba En Defensa Del Agua Y La Vida (Ccodav), Argentina
Alessandra Cangemi	Coordinamento Nord Sud Del Mondo, Milano, Italia
Kathy Mulvey	Corporate Accountability International, USA
Olivier Hoedeman	Corporate Europe Observatory, The Netherlands
Jim Riesberry	Council Of Canadians, Brockville Chapter, Canada
Cory Morningstar	Council Of Canadians, London Chapter, Canada
Abdul Pirani, Chairperson	Council Of Canadians, Montreal Chapter, Canada
Fran Thoburn, President	Council Of Canadians, Victoria Chapter, Canada
Nancy Clegg, Chairperson	Council Of Canadians, Cowichan Valley Chapter, Canada
Muhammad Nauman	Creed Alliance, Pakistan
Victoria Sant	Daughters Of The Sacred Heart, Malta Antenna
Mathias Ladstaetter	Department Water Supply, Ver.Di, Germany
Roland Gross, President	Department Water Supply, Ver.Di, Germany
Koos Van Schie	Divine Word Missionaries, Belgium
Sister Carmel Downes	Dominican Convent, Ireland
Marian Tannam, Coordinator	Dominican Justice Office, Ireland
Martin Hunter	Dominican Order (Op), Italy
Jeanette Kiely,O.P.	Dominican Sisters, Wicklow, Ireland
Erika González	Ecologistas En Acción, Spain.
Tom Kucharz	Ecologistas En Acción, Spain.
Iqbal Shah, Program Director	Economic Justice And Development Organization, Pakistan
Tahir Hasnain, Executive Director	Economic Justice And Development Organization, Pakistan
Tauseef Habib, Research Associate	Economic Justice And Development Organization, Pakistan
Christopher J Clovis, Moderator	Environmental Council, Pope John Paul Ii Catholic Secondary School, Ontario, Canada
Philip Jakpor	Environmental Rights Action/Friends Of The Earth, Nigeria
Rene Crespo	Escuela Del Pueblo Primero De Mayo, Bolivia
María Teresa Florensa Asensio, Secretaria	Federación De Comités De Solidaridad Con Africa Negra, Spain
Luis Isarra Delgado, Secretario General Adjunto.	Federacion Nacional De Trabajadores Del Agua Potable Y Alcantarillado Del Peru -Fentap, Peru
Oscar Olivera	Federation Of Factory Workers From Cochabamba, Bolivia
Wenonah Hauter	Food & Water Watch, USA
Francesca Caprini	Forum Italiano Dei Movimenti Per L'acqua, Italy
Bartiria Lima Da Costa	Frente Nacional De Saneamento Ambiental, Brasil
Ricardo Ramírez Aguirre, Presidente	Frente Nacional Por La Salud De Los Pueblos Del Ecuador.
Boris Ríos Brito	Fundación Abril, Bolivia
David A Mcdonald	Global Development Studies, Queen's University, Canada
Julia Dettinger	Global Health Through Education, Training And Service (Ghets), USA
Sabine Hofmann	Globalisierungskritische Gruppe Welzheim, Germany
Maria Silvia Emanuelli	Habitat International Coalition-Latin America Regional Office (Hic-AI), Mexico
Gopal Siwakoti 'Chintan'	Himalayan & Peninsular Hydro-Ecological Network - Hyphen, Nepal
Zafar Lund	Hirrak Development Center, Pakistan
Lida Lhotska	Ibfan-Gifa, Switzerland
Dharmendra Kumar, Director	India Fdi Watch, India
June D Meek	International Brotherhood Of Teamsters, USA

Victor Menotti	International Forum On Globalization, USA
Adonia Mutero	International Socialist Organisation Of Zimbabwe
Cor Van Den Brand, Coordinator	Justice And Peace Group Of The Missionaries Of Africa, Netherlands
Carlos J. Correa Bernier, Minister For Environmental Justice	Justice And Witness Ministries, United Church Of Christ, USA
Linda Jaramillo, Executive Minister	Justice And Witness Ministries, United Church Of Christ, USA
Angela Hurley	Justice Peace Integrity Of Creation, Irish Missionary Union, Ireland
Sumesh Mangalassery	Kabani - The Other Direction, India
Ayodele Akele	Labour,Health And Human Rights Development Centre,Lhahrdev, Nigeria
José Antonio Gutiérrez D.	Latin American Solidarity Centre, Ireland
Ethna Grant	Little Sisters Of The Assumption, USA
Suren Moodliar, Coordinator	Massachusetts Global Action, USA
Terry Swier, President	Michigan Citizens For Water Conservation, USA
Zeki Ergas	Millennium Solidarity Geneva Group, Switzerland
Fr. Bernd Pehle	Missionaries Of Africa, Germany
G. Glotzbach	Missionary Sisters Of Our Lady Of Africa, Germany
Angela Wiley	Morgantown High School Green Initiative, USA
Nirmala Sitoula	National Concerned Society, Nepal
Rabin Subedi, Director	Nepal Policy Institute - Npi, Nepal
Cesar Cardenas	Observatorio Ciudadano De Servicios Publicos, Ecuador
Dominic Bellissimo	Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, Canada
Saeed	Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum [Pff], Pakistan
Hans Kratz,Chair	Parksville/Qualicum Kairos, Canada
R. Ajayan	Plachimada Solidarity Committee, India
Tony Clarke	Polaris Institute, Canada
Joy Kennedy, Program Coordinator	Poverty, Wealth And Ecological Justice, The United Church Of Canada
Leanne Rasmussen	Public Water Initiative(Pwi), University Of Toronto, Canada
Mabel De Faria Melo	Rebrip- Rede Brasileira Pela Integração Dos Povos, Brazil
Guillermo Amorebieta	Red De Sindicatos Del Sector Del Agua De Latinoamérica Afiliados A La Internacional De Servicios Públicos (Isp - Psi), Argentina
Renée Mouazan, Secrétaire Exécutive	Réseau Foi Et Justice Afrique-Europe, Antenne De France
Maria Mcmillan	Right To Water, Aotearoa, New Zealand
Jorge González Fazio	S.O.S.B.A. - Argentina
Art Cohen	Saniplan, USA
Sindhoo Bachao Tarla	Save Indus River Struggle, Pakistan
Bärbl Aichele Asc	Schwestern Anbeterinnen Des Blutes Christi, Switzerland
Christine Elwell	Sierra Club Of Canada
Larry Williams	Sierra Club, USA
Margarita Lopez	Sintracuavalle, Sindicato De Trabajadores De Acuavalle S.A Esp, Valle Del Cauca, Colombia
Anne Rutter	Sisters of St. Joseph of Annecy, Belgium
Jacques Berthelot	Solidarité, France
Louisa Barton-Duguay	Sos Eau Water Sankwan Inc, Canada
Jack Thornburgh	St. John's Eco-Cell, Canada
Norbert Mushoff	Steyler Missionare, Germany
Elaine Hughes, Spokesperson	Stop The Hogs Coalition, Canada
Gallege Punyawardana	Swarna Hansa Foundation, Sri Lanka

Jørgen Magdahl	The Association For International Water Studies (Fivas), Norway.
Álvaro J. De Regil, Executive Director	The Jus Semper Global Alliance, USA
Satoko Kishimoto	Transnational Institute, The Netherlands
Mayor And Council	Village Of Valemount, British Columbia, Canada
Issah Ali	Vision For Alternative Development (Vald), Ghana
John Hilary, Executive Director,	War On Want, Uk
Christiane Hansen	Wasser In Bürgerhand" Wib, Germany
Ratan Bhandari, Coordinator	Water & Energy Users' Federation (Wafed), Nepal
John Grogan	Water Across Time, Our Environmental Responsibility, Canada
Ava Danlog	Water For The People Network, Phillipines
Trude Malthe Thomassen	Water Movement , Norway
Penny Bright, Media Spokesperson	Water Pressure Group, New Zealand
Cally Rogers Witte, Executive Minister	Wider Church Ministries, United Church Of Christ, USA
Alice West, Chairperson	Women Elders In Action (We*Act), Canada
Nancy Munger, Co-President	Women's International League For Peace And Freedom, USA Section
Benedict Southworth, Director	World Development Movement, UK