

WATER PRIVATEERS JOIN THE RIGHTS BANDWAGON

You would think that corporations would be lining up to oppose a campaign to secure the right to water. But as governments around the world refused to enshrine water as a human right, corporations had a revelation. By embracing the right to water, they sought to undercut anti-privatization activists.

They are now are pressuring governments to adopt privatization to deal with the global water crisis. They argue that if corporations are restricted from privatizing water, people will be denied access to water. This dangerous and disturbing development distorts the meaning of the right to water.

It's been over two years since General Comment 15 of the United Nations Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights declared that water is a human right. Governments and water privateers continue to categorically reject GC 15, because it restricts the role of corporations in delivering and managing water, and makes governments accountable for providing water services.

Our challenge as concerned citizens and water activists is to secure an international treaty ensuring the right to water in a manner that protects water as a public trust and as a part of the global commons. Governments must be held accountable to ensure that this right is guaranteed through proper monitoring and enforcement. This can only be done under public control and management.

If we are successful, we will protect water from profit-makers for future generations. Communities and citizens will show that everything is *not* for sale, and that we believe

in values beyond those contained in a balance sheet. Governments will be held responsible for providing water to their citizens; international trade agreements will no longer be able to enshrine water privatization; the World Bank will no longer be able to force water privatization in the Global South; and corporations will be held to account for their violations.

That is why the Blue Planet Project is committed to this campaign and has taken a lead in the global struggle for water justice and the right to water. We have formed a working group with international partners and are consulting with communities involved in water struggles around the world. We are drafting an international treaty on the right to water, with the goal of serving people and nature, not corporate greed. We seek to establish an enforceable legal instrument that could be used in conjunction with national laws to secure this fundamental right.

The right to clean, safe, affordable, publicly managed water must include the conditions of community control, democratic management principles, and protection of water sources and the ecosystem. Water is a global public trust and part of the commons. We don't request that this vision be recognized – we demand that it be enforced. We do this for the sake of the billions struggling for the dignity and quality of life that comes from access to safe water. We do this for the plants and animals that cannot speak or purchase water as a commodity. The cost of losing this struggle is incalculable. We must win.

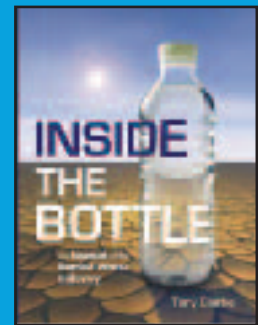
For more information on the fight for the right to water, check out www.blueplanetproject.net.

BOTTLED WATER: FACT OR FOOL'S GOLD?

Canadians are consuming more bottled water than coffee, tea, apple juice or even milk. But are they being duped by misleading promises that bottled water is healthier, purer and fresher than tap water?

The Polaris Institute's new book, *Inside the Bottle: An Exposé of the Bottled Water Industry*, sheds light on the deceptive practices of four big companies that dominate the bottled water industry: Nestlé, PepsiCo, Coca-Cola and Danone.

Inside the Bottle provides examples of how citizens can target the "big four" bottled water companies, control private water-takings, and promote public water management in their communities.



For more information, check out www.polarisinstitute.org.

Anil Naidoo is the Project Organizer, Blue Planet Project, for The Council of Canadians.