

October 31, 2011

Dear G77 member state,

With the overwhelming support of countries from the global South, the United Nations General Assembly passed an historic resolution in July 2010 recognizing water and sanitation as a human right.

As countries prepare their submissions to the Rio +20 zero draft document, we urge you to remember your obligations regarding the human right to water and sanitation.

The global water crisis has become a powerful symbol of inequality in our world. Still today, more children are killed by drinking dirty water than by war, malaria, HIV/AIDS and traffic accidents combined. Among the 1.4 billion without access to safe drinking and the more than 2 billion without access to sanitation, a vast majority are from the developing world. A newborn baby in the global North consumes between 40 and 70 times more water than a baby in the global South.

October 31 marks the day that the world's population reaches seven billion. Unless there is a firm commitment to human rights and environmental justice, these inequalities will only deepen. By 2030, if things continue, demand will exceed supply by 40 percent.

As economic and environmental crises collide, the Rio+20 Earth Summit provides an opportunity for countries to recalibrate, change the disastrous course that has led us thus far and set priorities that will benefit people and nature. Market fundamentalism has demonstrated its inherent weaknesses across a number of sectors, and we must not let it encroach any further, especially not in water. It is therefore crucial that Rio +20 not serve as a platform to pave the way for greater corporate control of scarce water resources. Rio+20 must enable the international community, led by the United Nations Members States, to commit to clear mechanisms to implement the human right to water and sanitation.

The human right to water and sanitation must be at the forefront in Rio to ensure policies of equitable access to limited supplies and responsible use to safeguard water for future generations.

We urge you to take leadership on this vital issue and support the human right to water and sanitation in the Rio +20 text.

Sincerely,

The African Water Network - ANW
Alpine Riverkeepers (Australia)
Amigos de la Tierra, Buenos Aires (Argentina)
The Blue Planet Project – (International)
Bread of Life Development Foundation (Nigeria)

The Canadian Union of Public Employees (Canada)
CeVI - Centre for International Volunteering (Italy)
CICMA - Italian Committee for a World Water Contract (Italy)
Coalición de Organizaciones Mexicanas por el Derecho al Agua (COMDA) (Mexico)
Corproación Ecológica (Colombia)
The Council of Canadians (Canada)
Corporate Accountability International (USA)
Cultural Penca de Sábila (Colombia)
Comité en defensa del agua y la vida de Antioquia (Colombia)
Doga Dernegi (Turkey)
Earth Law Centre (USA)
EcoMujer e.V. (Germany)
Food and Water Watch (International)
Food and Water Europe (Europe)
Foundation for Grassroots Initiatives in Africa (GrassRootsAfrica) (Ghana)
Foreningen for Internasjonale Vannstudier (International)
Global Exchange (USA)
Global Water Institute (International)
GRÜNE LIGA (Germany)
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (USA)
Institut Européen de Recherche sur la Politique de l'Eau (IERPE) (Belgium)
Jeunes Volontaires pour l'Environnement (Togo)
The Kenya Debt Relief Network (KENDREN) (Kenya)
KRuHA (Indonesia)
Kulturen in Bewegung VIDC (Austria)
Monitoring Sustainability of Globalisation (MSN) (Malaysia)
Other Worlds (USA)
The Polaris Institute (Canada)
Public Service International (International)
The Swarna Hansa Foundation (Sri Lanka)
The Transnational Institute (International)
West Africa Water and Sanitation Journalists Network (West Africa)
World Future Council (International)