



## CITIZENS COMMITMENT TO THE RIGHT TO WATER

It is urgent that the Millenium Development Goals on potable water and the Johannes burg agreements on sanitation be clarified and strengthened with tools and processes for measuring and monitoring their implementation and evolution.

It is urgent to find a sustainable and equitable solution of the problem of debt of developing countries in order to achieve the objectives established by the citizens commitment on the right to water

It is urgent to establish rules guaranteeing that water, as an economic resource and not an economic good, is a collective heritage

It is urgent to assure a right to equitable access to water and sanitation services by taking preventive measures against waste, breakdowns and pollution

It is urgent to organize the effective participation of citizens and local communities to assure the equitable and sustainable management of water resources

We commend the acknowledgement of the right to access to water as a fundamental and inalienable human right recently recognized by the UN Committee on Human, Cultural and Social Rights on 28/11/2002 in Geneva

Consequently it is urgent that the right to water be guaranteed by international law and that states commit themselves to its implementation.

**The World Assembly of Water Wisdom, meeting for the first time in Kyoto, affirms that:**

- **Access to water and sanitation must be a global and inalienable right. States are responsible for its implementation**

**Citizens and local communities have a right to decide.** All users – men, women and youth – must participate at all levels of organization, management and decision-making concerning water policy. This participation must take effect at the level of drinking water and sanitation services, managed within a framework of local communities and authorities in order to ensure respect for local traditional and ancestral practices. Participation of citizen-users must begin at project conception, must continue through implementation, and must be reaffirmed in management of the services. When local circumstances require, communities and organized citizens groups must be able to take responsibility for water supply and sanitation services. Equally, this participation must take place at the level of hydrographic units.



- At the regional level a reference group will be set up and given the means to offer expertise integrating local knowledge with a view to establishing strategies and priorities to resolve problems linked to water management.
- **Citizens and community members have a right to education and information.** Governance principles require informed citizens. Accounts rendered by those with political responsibility and operators of water and sanitation services should be totally transparent. This is an indispensable requirement in the fight against corruption and all forms of abuse of power.
- **Citizens and community members have a right to access to financing.** Proposed financial mechanisms must be flexible, effective and capable of being put into effect rapidly by communities. Numerous community initiatives exist which propose alternative mechanisms of financing and management. Financial mechanisms do not only deal with funding accessibility. The manner in which resources are allocated in line with what priorities and the strategy for their utilization is also crucial. Citizens should be associated with each of these decisions.  
Tariffs for water services must be adapted to peoples' economic capacities. The right to water is guaranteed for people that lack those means. Equally they must stimulate responsible use of water. Local, national and international financial solidarity should be able to reinforce existing traditional social mechanisms built on local solidarity. A fund, decentralized to a level as close as possible to citizens, should allow reinforcement of their visibility
- **Citizens and members of local communities have a right to recourse.**

### **To this end, the World Assembly of Water Wisdom requests:**

- **The signature of a global water convention**
- **The establishment of a network of international monitoring involving international institutions, governments, regional and local administrations, as well as civil society.**
- **The Assembly proposes the creation of “water mediators” (water ombudspersons) in each country.**

The mandate of this monitoring tool is to evaluate the respect for commitments made, based on principles of equity, solidarity and citizen control. It must have an impartial and unconditional role of control and warning. It oversees safeguards for the population, particularly the poorest people, proposing alternative and participatory solutions, adapted to the sociocultural context and to local capacity. These solutions must also be environmentally sound. It also watches out to ensure that actions are taken with attention to sustainable human development, and a guarantee of rights endorsed by the World Assembly of Water Wisdom. This monitoring will be carried out at the international, regional, national and local level through members of the Assembly.



**The World Assembly of Water Wisdom has decided to publish a report on a regular basis.** It will keep concerned people informed and will denounce everywhere necessary any failures to implement rules defined in the current engagement entered into in Kyoto.

**This report aims to:**

- Establish a status report based on facts and comments of the local milieu in each country highlighting inequalities wherever they may exist;
- Make a critical analysis relating to water management taking into account its four dimensions - social, cultural, environmental and economic - as well as the participation of citizens in decision-making;
- Analyze the legal and institutional situation of the right to water
- Assess the financial effort necessary for the achievement of these objectives.