



## **A WORLD POLITICAL FORUM INITIATIVE**

### **Water into the agenda of Copenhagen negotiations on climatic change**

A proposal for a global agreement for effective sustainability

- Today unsustainability is a result of both raising scarcity of natural resources - water included - and growing uneven access to goods and services that are essential and irreplaceable for life among human beings, social groups, communities and countries.
- It is also an issue of regional and global security, as scarcity of water resources increasingly leads to tensions and potentially to major conflicts between us. Today unsustainability is basically linked to unbearable, unjust, unreasonable ownership and use of resources, especially water.
- Together with air, sun and land, water is a basic essential element of life. No life without water. No water for life. The right for life means the right and de facto access to water.

Under these conditions,

#### **WE DEMAND THAT**

**1. The water problematic is included as such into the agenda of the negotiations of the Copenhagen Conference (COP 15).**

We consider that today greatest global negotiations of the future of and life on the planet Earth cannot be exclusively devoted to climate change and energy problems. To more than 3 billions people, the most critical problems are food, access to water and health. A new world treaty on climate, environment and development agenda must include water as a key item.

**2. The Copenhagen Conference agrees on the decision to open a multilateral UN based process for the period 2010-2012 for the definition and approval of a World Protocol on Water.**

The international community disposes of all needed political, economic, social, scientific and technical knowledge and expertise for adapting such a protocol, thanks in particular to the highly valuable work carried out by UN agencies during the last 30 years in terms of analysis, problems identification and selections, good experiences, initiatives, measurement techniques, assessment and scenarios building.

**3. The Copenhagen Conference recognize the need and urgency of a World Pact for Water, the outcome of which will be the World Protocol on Water. To this end the Conference should endorse the creation of an effective instrument for a world-based participative cooperation in the field of water such as “United Nations Water Authority” (UNWA).**

The UNWA would monitor the situation regarding the use and consumption of water and settle disputes among us with regard to these issues. The UNWA should be based on a real autonomy vis-à-vis the economic, financial and commercial private interest as well as the interests of the powerful countries.

Any subscription from citizens, organizations or institutions willing to support this initiative will be most welcome: please send it to [secretariat@theworldpoliticalforum.org](mailto:secretariat@theworldpoliticalforum.org).



## **WATER AND COPENHAGEN CONFERENCE ON CLIMATIC CHANGE**

# **MEMORANDUM FOR A WORLD WATER PROTOCOL**

## **PROPOSALS**

**From the international conference**

### **Peace with Water**

**held at the *European Parliament, Brussels on 12-13 February 2009***  
**as co-organised by IERPE and/or with the MEP's political contribution of the EP Political Groups**  
**and of the federal and regional authorities of Belgium**

Event co-chaired by the WPF President Mikhail Gorbachev

**October 2009**

# 1. The worldwide water crisis exists and it is serious.

1. The water crisis is a life crisis. Life is denied to hundreds millions of human beings because of lack of access to safe drinkable water or water shortages for sanitation and food production. Shortages of energy, in particular of clean energy sources, can be coped with substitution of today sources by renewable and sustainable energies. Water cannot be substituted.

The water crisis is exploding everywhere: China, the United States, and Mediterranean regions, Central Asia, Australia, Africa. The world is heading towards water “bankruptcy”.

2. The main reason for the lack of access to clean drinking water and proper sanitation for billions of people is not the lack of water in the regions in which they live, but poverty. Only poor people and poor countries are short of water.

Poverty determines *water* poverty. Addressing poverty is integral to addressing the right to water.

3. Climate change contributes only to worsen accessibility and usability of fresh water in the world. The negative effects of global temperature increase will mostly affect the poorest populations and the regions that currently suffer from water shortage. This is an unacceptable situation.

4. In view of the increasing shortages, conflicts between competitive uses and between communities, regions, States etc, have become more frequent and more serious. They are destined – in the absence of radical measures – to multiply and become more violent in the coming decades. Water wars can be prevented. Two basic principles must be redefined: the principle of utter national sovereignty, non-shared, of natural resources (including water) and the principle of national water security.

5. The water crisis is of a global scale. This crisis calls for a global political response.

6. The persistence and worsening of the water crisis point forcefully to the limits and structural inadequacies of the current responses. Their recipes often prove inefficient. Instead of offering solutions, they add to the problem. The financial crisis has contributed in highlighting the structural inadequacy of principles that had shaped the global economy over the last 30 years and on which the answers on water matters had also been shaped.

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**The climate and economic crises highlight the necessity and urgency for a qualitative political jump, a change in the paradigm regarding life, wealth, global commons, in particular water.**

## 2. A new Water Political Paradigm. We need a World Water Plan

7. A new water political paradigm means that the current economic-driven paradigm - "more harvesting and more money per water drop" - is to be replaced by "more life and living together per water drop".

Currently, the water policy is largely influenced by an economic paradigm focussed on the efficiency of water usage through the optimisation of the management of an economic good to achieve increasingly higher profitability. This paradigm, has not, so far, allowed the resolution of the water crisis neither concerning the fight against scarcity and the qualitative deterioration of water, nor regarding the promotion of sharing access to water and of its uses in a fair, cooperative and peaceful manner.

8. We suggest building the **new water political paradigm** and designing the **World Water Plan (or a World Pact for Water)** on the following few principles:

- Universal rights to life for each human being, thereby, the universal right to water and sanitation;
- Universal responsibility, individual and collective, of each human being, social group, and human community regarding life of all living species. Water must be preserved, protected and valued. It is inalienable;
- all goods (and related services) which are considered essential and irreplaceable elements to life and "living together" are common heritage of mankind;
- Choice of non violence and peace;
- Water Basins must be considered and treated as a common good of which populations, in collective interest and for future generations, have the responsibility and burden;
- Water is inseparable from food and health. Its relationship with energy is fundamental;
- Integration of policy functions, of management and public control of water resources into public hands;
- Centrality of social economy based on collective wealth and common patrimony. The costs related to the basic right to drinking water and to sanitation, must be covered by the public finance. A public tariff is introduced, beyond the level of the water rights, to steer fair and sustainable uses of water;
- Promote and strengthen participative and representative democracy starting from local communities through to global communities, and, in this context, give strong support for public/public partnerships;
- Priority towards cooperation and solidarity versus competitiveness;
- Shared sovereignty between communities and peoples and shared security founded on the responsibility towards future generations;

9. It will be impossible to "save the water" without a proper political institutional engineering at world level. Acting in favour of a world water plan implies the promotion of a new world political architecture (NEWPA) living up to conditions and expectations in the global 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **3. Our proposal: integrating water concerns and priority actions into the UNFCCC Agenda.**

We ask

**First, the inclusion of the water problematic as such into the agenda of the ongoing negotiations on climatic change** in the context of the convention on climatic change (“Post-Kyoto” Treaty). For now, the agenda’s focus is on the energy problematic (and on forests, as they are considered to play an important role in the fight for the reduction in CO<sup>2</sup> emissions). Obviously, energy is a central point for consideration and that, in all policies relating to the world and its future. It is just as obvious that solutions addressed to energy issues are insufficient to assure the restructuring of the global economy towards true sustainable development. The great complexities of human destiny and that of the planet demand multidimensional solutions.

The introduction of water in the agenda of post-Kyoto negotiations is necessary and urgent. Upholding its exclusion would signify that we would have to wait until at least 2018 before even thinking of discussing and defining a global policy on water within the international public agenda. The right to life for billions of people cannot so blatantly be ignored.

**Second, the Copenhagen Conference agrees on the decision to open a multilateral UN based process for the period 2010-2012 for the definition and approval of a World Protocol on Water.**

The international community disposes of all needed political, economic, social, scientific and technical knowledge and expertise for adapting such a protocol thanks in particular to the highly valuable work carried out by UN agencies during the last 30 years in terms of analysis, problems identification and selections, good experiences, initiatives, measurement techniques, assessment and scenarios building.

**Third, the Copenhagen Conference recognizes the need and urgency of a World Pact for Water (or a World Water Plan), the outcome of which will be the World Protocol on Water. To this end the Conference should endorse the creation of an effective instrument for a world-based participative cooperation in the field of water such as “United Nations Water Authority” (UNWA).**

The UNWA would monitor the situation regarding the use and consumption of water and settle disputes among us with regard to these issues. The UNWA should be based on a real autonomy vis-à-vis the economic, financial and commercial private interest as well as the interests of the powerful countries.

NB: A **complete version of the Memorandum** for a World Water Protocol can be downloaded from The World Political Forum’s website at <http://www.theworldpoliticalforum.net/peacewithwater>

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