

ACCESS TO WATER DECLARATION

COMMITMENTS TO ADAPT TO THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE TOWARD ENSURING ACCESS TO WATER FOR CURRENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS

On occasion of the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (COP21/CMP11), to be held in Paris from 30 November to 11 December 2015, We, representatives of Civil Society Organizations, Community Water Managers, Sub-National Governments, and National and International Donors from around the world hereby undertake to strengthen actions to adapt to climate change toward ensuring integrated water resources management, thus contributing to provide access to water for human consumption and food production, with citizen participation, in the territories where we work.

PART I – GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Considering that:

- In the year 2010, the United Nations General Assembly explicitly recognized the human right to water and sanitation, reaffirming that clean drinking water and sanitation are essential to the realization of all human rights;
- According to the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF, nearly 2.5 billion people—or half the population of the developing world—lack access to adequate sanitation facilities, and one billion people lack access to improved safe drinking water sources.
- Continuous emissions of greenhouse gases are changing the climate and increasing the risks to human and natural systems, heightening

vulnerability caused by lack of access to water for human consumption and food and energy production;

- The impacts of climate change on rainfall patterns, rising sea levels, the reduction of the cryosphere, and the intensification of droughts, floods, and other extreme climate events, together with deforestation, the contamination of watersheds and rivers, the over-harvesting of aquifers and other natural resources, compounded by poor management of water resources, all contribute to accelerate desertification and flooding events and trigger recurring water crises in densely populated urban and rural areas, increasing the number of people at risk of being left without regular access to safe water;
- The impacts of climate change are felt primarily by the poorest countries and populations, and among these populations the worst hit are women, elderly people, and children;
- Untreated sewage is a source of emissions, contributing to exacerbate the problems posed by climate change;
- Historically, international efforts to adapt to climate change and improve and expand water and sanitation coverage under the Millennium Development Goals have been limited, resulting in a gap between needs and financial and technological resources, and the capacities for adaptation (the adaptation gap);
- Community-based organizations that manage water resources are key actors in promoting climate change resilience and adaptation. There are more than 80,000 community-based organizations in Latin America alone, supplying water for over 70 million people, with thousands of social organizations also working to protect water sources and guarantee access;
- In many countries citizens are often not included in watershed committees and when they are their participation is limited. Moreover the political commitment of most Latin American governments is weak;

- Cooperation among different sectors and levels of governance contributes to enhance the efficiency of adaptation actions and to further the attainment of the goal of universal access to water.

PART 2 – COMMITMENTS

General Commitment:

Taking these considerations into account, **we hereby undertake to promote climate change resilience through improved water access for XXX people**, by xxx (year), contributing to the attainment of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals—in particular Goal 6, which seeks to ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all, and Goal 13, which calls for urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts—, and toward that end we will work to implement the following specific commitments:

Public Policies and Action Plans

1. Promote, from our countries and from our spheres of work, the development of Public Policies and Action Plans to reduce climate vulnerability and improve water resources management;

Economic and Financial Mechanisms

2. Mobilize and facilitate financial resources for community-based water management;
3. Promote and/or implement production models that have a minimum impact on the environment and are more resilient to climate change;

Developing ecosystem-based engineering and technological infrastructure

4. Promote, use, disseminate and/or develop technologies for water

management and climate change adaptation that are environmentally sustainable, socially acceptable, and technically feasible, prioritizing technologies developed by local communities;

5. Implement measures to reduce deforestation and recover and preserve riparian forests with community engagement;
6. Protect watersheds and recover water sources with integrated and sustainable management actions;

Energy Efficiency and Mitigation

7. Implement measures to reduce energy use and greenhouse gas emissions in water distribution;

Cooperation

8. Promote multi-sector alliances to measure, reduce, offset, and neutralize the water footprint in private, government, and social sectors;
9. Disseminate and share with other countries the experiences we develop;

Knowledge-Generation, Education and Awareness-Raising

10. Promote the strengthening of capacities in community-based water management organizations;
11. Promote training and capacity-building in water resources management for citizens in general, including children;
12. Promote campaigns to raise awareness on responsible water use in the understanding that water is a finite resource and on climate change and mitigation and adaptation measures;

We also undertake to measure the impact of our actions and report with transparency on the progress of our commitments as signatories of this Declaration.

PART 3 – REQUESTS

Our commitment is important, but it is not enough to respond to the challenges of climate change. The leadership of national governments and the establishment of a binding global agreement in Paris are key for achieving climate safety for our generation and for future generations. In this sense and by way of this letter we ask national governments to:

At the Global Level:

1. Guarantee a binding and ambitious global climate agreement in Paris, with a long-term vision and targets that are consistent with the shared but differentiated responsibilities of each country;
2. Promote mechanisms to effectively transfer climate change adaptation and mitigation technologies to the most vulnerable countries and regions;
3. Promote and implement financing mechanisms for community-based water management, reforestation, and the development of community technologies as resilience mechanisms, as well as for sanitation;
4. Establish September 14 as world community-based management day.

At the National Level:

5. Prioritize Water as a strategic agenda at the national, regional, and global levels;
6. Create and/or implement Public Policies, National Plans, and sub-national actions to reduce water vulnerability to climate change and guarantee integrated water resources management;
7. Promote mechanisms to engage citizens in the processes of construction of water, sanitation, and climate change related public policies;

8. Promote actions and protocols to prevent emergency situations;
9. Implement accountability and transparency measures for the mitigation and adaptation actions undertaken by states/provinces.
10. Forge alliances with social organizations, especially community-based organizations that provide water and sanitation services, to carry out mitigation and adaptation actions;
11. Coordinate water resources management policies and instruments with other policies in the energy, agriculture and cattle-raising, industrial, and transportation sectors:

Signatures: (See annex for form)