



Alliance for Democracy

Defending Water for Life

Statement on World Water Day, March 22, 2011

As the world reels from the earthquake/tsunami/nuclear catastrophe in Japan, a disaster which was never supposed to happen, we have an opportunity today on World Water Day to look into the future and pledge to take action to prevent another impending disaster. We must not allow corporations to gain control of water on which all life depends. Action must be taken at all levels, from local communities to the United Nations.

This means we must examine the confluence of privatization of municipal water/sewer systems and bottled water commodification which if left unchecked will overwhelm efforts to ensure the right to water in specific communities.

- While multinational corporations like Suez and Véolia focus on municipal water/sewer systems in the U.S. and multinational corporations like Nestlé, Pepsico and CocaCola focus on the bottled water industry, there is a confluence of their impacts that threatens the fundamental right to water.
- Corporate control of water/sewer systems puts these systems in private hands where profit, not service, is the fundamental corporate objective.
- The bottled water industry commodifies drinking water by selling water at a price determined by the marketplace. It also creates a private water distribution system for drinking water.
- These converge toward the corporate control of water even in a country like the U.S. with a proud history of public water systems. Federal support for public systems has already dramatically decreased. Public support for funding municipal systems erodes as corporate advertising instills the idea that drinking water comes from bottles, despite the fact that Pepsico and CocaCola bottle municipal water.
- Once this corporate control reaches a critical point, government will have little control over the price of water which will then be free to increase dramatically, creating a serious impediment to the right to water for the poor.

We commend the United Nations for passing the resolution on the human right to water and sanitation last July.

We commend Catarina de Albuquerque, the United Nations Independent Expert on Human Rights Obligations Related to Access to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation, on her commitment to seeing that this resolution is carried out in the real world.

Now we call on the United Nations to take the next step: pass a declaration to block the sale of public water and sewer services to private companies.

Say NO to the commodification of water
Say NO to corporate control of water
WATER FOR LIFE, NOT FOR PROFIT!