

# **FAMA final declaration reaffirms: "water is not a commodity, water belongs to the people"**

This Thursday (22), World Water day, the Alternative World Water Forum (FAMA), which gathered around 7,000 people for five days in Brasília (DF), was held as a counterpoint to the corporations's forum - the World Water Forum.



Photo: Matheus Alves

Understanding the FAMA as something larger than an event, the organizations that converged in building the fight for water release this final statement. The fundamental commitment is to keep fighting, to root the construction processes carried out so far and to keep the mobilization alive.

The document reaffirms the fight against any privatization and establishment of private water ownership. The FAMA defends water as a common good, that is, it must be controlled by the people to serve the people, reinforcing the gathering's slogan: "Water is a right, not a commodity".



Photo: Guilherme Weimann

This document is signed by 36 organizations. Other entities in Brazil and in the world that want to subscribe the document must send a request until April 12 to the Operational Secretariat of the FAMA, to the e-mails: [operativafama@gmail.com](mailto:operativafama@gmail.com) / [metodologiafama2018@gmail.com](mailto:metodologiafama2018@gmail.com).

See the full declaration below:

## **FINAL DECLARATION OF THE ALTERNATIVE WORLD WATER FORUM**

### **About us**

We, builders of the Alternative World Water Forum (FAMA), gathered from March 17 to 22 of 2018, in Brasília, declare to the entire society what we collected after many debates, exchanges, cultural sessions and testimonies over several months of preparation and in these last days gathered here. We are more than 7 thousand workers in the city and countryside, of the waters and forests, representatives of indigenous peoples and traditional communities, articulated in 450 national and international organizations from all continents. We are popular movements, religious traditions and spiritualities, non-governmental organizations, universities, researchers, environmentalists, organized in groups, collectives, networks, fronts, committees, forums, institutes, unions, and councils.

In the greatness of the peoples, we exchange experiences of knowledge, resistance and struggle. And we are aware that our production is to guarantee life and its diversity. We are here creating unity and popular strength to reflect and fight together for water and for life in its various dimensions. What makes us common with nature is to ensure life. Our fight is the guarantee of life. This is what sets us apart from the projects and capital relations expressed in the Corporations's Forum - the World Water Forum.

We are also here to denounce the 8<sup>th</sup> edition of the World Water Forum (FMA), the Corporations's Forum, an event organized by the so-called World Water Council, as a space for the capture and stealing of our waters. The Forum and the Council are linked to the large transnational corporations and seek to serve exclusively their interests to the detriment of the people and nature.

### **Our findings about the historical moment**

The capitalist mode of production historically concentrates and centralizes wealth and power by expanding its forms of accumulation, intensifying its labour exploitation mechanisms, and deepening its dominion over nature, leading to the destruction of ways of life. We live in a period of crisis of capitalism and its political model represented by neoliberal ideology, which seeks to intensify the transformation of common goods into merchandise, through processes of privatization, pricing and financialisation.

The persistence of this model has deepened the inequalities and the destruction of nature through the plans of rescuing capital in moments of deepening of the crisis. In this scenario, the actions of the capital are guided by the maintenance of its interest rates, profit and income at any cost.

This model imposes on Latin America and the Caribbean the role of producers of primary commodities and suppliers of raw materials, economic activities intensive in natural assets and workforce. It subordinates the economies of these countries to a dependent role in the world economy, being priority targets of this strategy of expansion and exploitation at any cost.

Brazil, which hosts this edition of FAMA, is exemplary in this sense. The recently applied coup exposes the coordinated action of corporations with sectors of parliament, the media and the judiciary to break the democratic order and subject the national government to an agenda that meets the corporation's interests quickly. One of the toughest budget measures in the world has been implemented in our country, where the public budget has been frozen for 20 years, guaranteeing the drainage of public resources into the financial system and laying the foundations for a wave of privatisations, including therein the infrastructure of storage, distribution and sanitation of water.

### **What are the corporation's strategies for water?**

We identified that the goal of the corporations is to exercise private control over water through privatization, commodification and securitisation, making it the source of accumulation on a global scale, generating profits for transnational corporations and the financial system. To this end, various strategies are in course, they range from use of direct violence to forms of corporate capture of governments, parliaments, judiciaries, regulatory agencies and other legal institutional structures to act in the interests of capital. There is also an ideological offensive articulated with the media, education and propaganda that seek to create hegemony in society against common goods and in favour of its transformation into merchandise.

The result desired by corporations is the invasion, appropriation and political and economic control of territories, springs, rivers and reservoirs to serve the interests of agribusiness, hydrobusiness, extractive industry, mining, real estate speculation and hydroelectric power generation. The beverage market and other sectors want to control the aquifers. The corporations also want control of the entire water supply and sanitation industry to impose their market model and generate profits for the financial system, transforming the right historically won by the people into a commodity. They also want to appropriate all the water sources of Brazil, Latin America and other continents to generate value and transfer wealth from our territories to the financial system, enabling the world water market

We denounce transnational corporations Nestlé, Coca-Cola, Ambev, Suez, Veolia, Brookfield (BRK Ambiental), Dow AgroSciences, Monsanto, Bayer, Yara, multilateral financial institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, and market environmental NGOs, such as The Nature Conservancy and Conservation International, among others, that express the character of the "Corporations's Forum". We denounce the crime committed by Samarco, Vale and BHP Billiton which contaminated the Rio Doce with its toxic mud, murdering an entire water basin, killing countless people, and to this day their crime goes unpunished. We denounce the recent crime committed by the Norwegian Hydro Alunorte which dumped thousands of tons of mining waste through clandestine channels in the heart of the Amazon and the murder of community leader Sergio Almeida Nascimento who denounced their crimes. These are examples what has been happening not only in Brazil, but all around the world.

The people have been the victims of the advance of the corporations' projects. Women, indigenous peoples, traditional peoples and communities, black populations, migrants and refugees, family farmers and peasants, and urban outskirts communities have suffered directly the attacks of capital and the social, environmental and cultural consequences of its action.

In the territories and places where there were or are plans of privatization, inequalities, racism, sexual violence and work overload for women, criminalization, murders, threats and persecution of leaders, mass layoffs, in increased precariousness of work, withdrawal and violation of rights, wage reduction, increase in exploitation, brutal restriction of access to water and public services, reduction in the quality of services provided to the population, lack of social control, abusive increases in tariffs, corruption, deforestation, contamination and poisoning of water, destruction of springs and rivers and violent attacks on peoples and their territories, especially populations that resist the rules imposed by capital.

The dynamics of capitalist accumulation intertwines with the hetero-patriarchal, racist and colonial system, controlling the work of women and intentionally hiding their role in the spheres of reproduction and production. In this moment of conservative offensive, there is a deepening of the sexual division of labour and racism, causing an increase in poverty and in the precariousness of women's lives.

Violence against women is a tool of control over our bodies, our work and our autonomy. This violence intensifies with the increase of capital, reflected in the increase in the murder of women, prostitution and sexual violence. All this makes it impossible for women to live with dignity and pleasure.

For the various religions and spiritualities, all these injustices regarding the waters and their territories characterize a desacralization of the water received as a vital gift, and hamper relations with the Transcendent as greatest horizon of our existences.

We emphasize that for Indigenous and Native Peoples and Traditional Communities there is an interdependent relationship with the waters, and everything that affects them, and that all the criminal attacks they suffer, directly impact the existence of these peoples in their bodies and minds. These peoples affirm themselves as water, for there is a profound unity between them and the rivers, lakes, ponds, springs, aquifers, wells, wetlands, water tables, streams, estuaries, seas and oceans as a single entity. We declare that the waters are sacred beings. All waters are one water in permanent movement and transformation. Water is a living entity and deserves to be respected.

Finally, we note that the surrender of our wealth and common goods leads to the destruction of the sovereignty and self-determination of peoples, as well as the loss of their territories and ways of life.

**But we say: we resist and we shall win!**

Our resistance and fight is legitimate. We are the guardians of the waters and defenders of life. We are a people that resists and our struggle will overcome all the structures that dominate,

oppress and exploit our peoples, bodies and territories. We are like water, merry, transparent and moving. We are peoples of the water and water of the peoples.

Within these days of collective sharing, we have identified an extraordinary diversity of social practices, with enormous wealth of cultures, knowledge and forms of resistance and fight for life. No one will surrender. The people of the waters, of the forests and of the country resist and will not surrender to the capital. That is also the way the fight of the peoples, the workers, and of all the working men and women of the cities, who have shown ever greater strength has been. We are convinced that only the joint struggle of the peoples can defeat all the unjust structures of this society.

We have identified that resistance and struggle have taken place in all places and territories of Brazil and of the world, and we are convinced that our strength must move forward and join itself with the major national and international struggles. The struggle of peoples in defense of waters is global.

Water is life, it is health, it is food, it is territory, it is human right, it is a sacred common good.

### **What we suggest**

We reaffirm that the various struggles in defense of waters say loud and clear that water is not and can not be merchandise. It is not a resource to be appropriated, exploited and destroyed for good business yield. Water is a common good and must be preserved and managed by the peoples for life needs, guaranteeing its reproduction and perpetuation. That is why our project for the waters has in democracy a fundamental pillar. It is only through truly democratic processes which overcome the manipulation of the media and money that people can build popular power, social control and care over waters, affirming their knowledge, traditions and cultures in opposition to the authoritarian, selfish and destructive project of capital.

We are radically against the various present and future strategies of private appropriation of water and we defend the public, communal and popular character of urban water management and sanitation systems. That is why we welcome and encourage the processes of re-nationalising water and sewage companies and other forms of management. We will continue denouncing the attempts of privatization and opening of Capital, as occurs in Brazil, where 18 states expressed interest in privatizing their companies.

We advocate for decent work, based on democratic, protected, and free from all forms of precariousness work relations. It is also essential to guarantee democratic and sustainable access to water along with the implementation of land reform and defense of the territories, with guarantee of food production on agro-ecological bases, respecting traditional practices and seeking to meet food sovereignty of urban, field, forest, and water workers.

We are committed to the overcoming of patriarchy and of the sexual division of labour, in favour of acknowledgement that domestic work and care are at the basis of sustainability of life. The fight against racism also unites us in the struggle for the recognition, titling and demarcation of the

territories of the original and traditional peoples and communities and in the reparation to the black and indigenous people who live marginalized in the outskirts of the urban centers.

Our project is guided by justice and solidarity, not by profit. In it no one will be thirsty or hungry and everyone will have access to quality, regular and sufficient water as well as to public sanitation services.

### **Our action plan and struggles**

The depth of our collective debates and elaborations, the success of our mobilization, the diversity of our people, and the breadth of the challenges that need to be addressed impel us to continue facing the capitalist, patriarchal, racist and colonial system, having as reference the construction of the alliance and unity among all the diversity present at FAMA 2018.

We will work, through our forms of struggle and organization, to increase the strength of the peoples in the fight against appropriation and destruction of the waters. The intensification and qualification of grassroots work with the people, the action and political education to build a critical understanding of reality will be our instruments. The people must take charge of the struggle. We bet on the protagonism and the heroic creation of the people.

Let us practice our international support and solidarity with all the processes of peoples' struggles in defence of water denounce the architecture of impunity, which, through free trade and investment regimes, grants privileges to transnational corporations and facilitate their corporate crimes.

We will multiply the experiences shared at the People's Court of Women to promote popular justice, making visible the denunciations of crimes against our sovereignty, bodies, common goods and the lives of rural, forest, water and city women.

Water is a gift that humanity received for free, it is a right of all creatures and a common good. That is why we commit to unite mysticism and politics, faith and prophecy in their religious practices, fighting against the projects of privatization, mercantilization, and contamination of the waters that hurt the water's sacred dimension.

The Alternative World Water Forum (FAMA) supports, is solidary with and encourages all processes of articulation and struggles of the peoples in Brazil and in the world, such as the construction of the "People's Congress", the "Acampamento Terra Livre", the "International Assembly of the Movements and Organizations of the Peoples", of the "Continental Journey for Democracy and Against Neoliberalism"; of the international campaign to dismantle corporate power and by the "binding treaty" as a tool to demand justice, truth, and reparation for transnational crimes.

We call on all peoples to fight together to defend water. Water is not a commodity. Water is of the people and by the people must be controlled.

It is time of hope and struggle. Only the struggle will make us win. We will triumph!

**This declaration is signed by:**

Articulação dos Povos Indígenas do Brasil

Brazilian Semiarid Articulation

Abrasco - Brazilian Association of Collective Health

National Association of Municipal sanitation Services

Caritas Brazil

Central of Popular Movements

National Council of Extractive Populations

National Confederation of Urbanitários

National Confederation of associations of Inhabitants

National coordination of articulation of Rural black communities Quilombolas

National Council of Christian churches of Brazil

National Confederation of agricultural workers

Pastoral Land Commission

Trade Union Confederation of Workers of the Americas

Central Única dos Trabalhadores

Federation of Organs for Social and Educational Assistance

Brazilian Forum of NGOs and social movements for the environment and development

National Federation of Staff Associations of Caixa Econômica Federal

Interstate trade unions Federation of engineers

National front by the environmental sanitation

National Federation of Urbanitários

Federation Only oil tankers

Forum on Climate Change and Social Justice

Brazilian Institute of Environmental Protection

International Public Services

March by the women of the world

Movement of People Affected by Dams - MAB

Movement of small farmers

Movement of Fishermen and Fishermen of Brazil

MST

HOMELESS WORKERS MOVEMENT

NGO Proscience

Women and media network

Interfranciscano service of Justice, peace and ecology

The international society for environmental epidemiology

Validity