

**OPEN LETTER FROM CONCERNED CITIZENS AROUND THE WORLD
IN SUPPORT OF THE GHANAIAN NATIONAL COALITION
AGAINST THE PRIVATISATION OF WATER**

September 21, 2004

Dear Mr. James Wolfensohn, President of the World Bank

Dear Mr. Henri Proglio, CEO of Veolia Environnement

Dear Mr. Mestrallet, CEO of Suez

Dear Mr. Larry Magor, CEO of Biwater,

Dear Mr. J.F. Talbot, CEO of SAUR

We, the undersigned, are writing as individuals and members of organizations, many of whom know firsthand the tragic impacts of corporate failures in the water sector from Bolivia to the Philippines and from Argentina to South Africa. Given this history of failed water privatization projects, many perpetrated by the very same corporations that are now seeking contracts in Ghana, we ask that you listen to the concerns of the Ghana National Coalition Against the Privatisation (CAP) of Water. The Ghana National CAP of Water, made up of women's organizations, student and youth groups, tenants, residents and community associations, religious groups, trade unions, environmental groups, and human rights groups has united around the goal of ensuring access to water for all Ghanaians by 2008. The National CAP of Water has concluded that the achievement of this goal is being undercut by World Bank programs that promote (1) a market price for water, and (2) private sector contracts to foreign multinational corporations for the management of the Ghanaian water system. We ask that these programs cease and the Ghanaian people be given a chance to develop alternative proposals.

The National CAP of Water calls for:

- A thorough examination of public sector options. Reform and restructuring of the public sector water utility is a viable option, requiring investments in capacity-building, infrastructure, greater local management autonomy and local community accountability.
- Full participation of all sectors of civil society in decision-making about reforms in the water sector.
- Full public disclosure of all documents, bids, proposals and negotiations involving private sector contracting to foreign multinational corporations for the management of the Ghana water system.

The undersigned organizations and individuals are particularly concerned about the proposed private sector water contract in Ghana because many of us have experienced serious problems with private sector water delivery in our own countries. A few examples are highlighted below.

BOLIVIA: In 1999, the Bolivian government granted a 40-year contract for the water services of Cochabamba to a subsidiary of the corporate giant, Bechtel. The terms of the contract were so draconian that citizens, unable to survive under the burden of the new water prices, began to organize to drive the company out. Water rates increased immediately – by 100 to 200 percent in some cases. Small farmers and the unemployed were especially hard hit. In a country where the minimum wage is less than \$100 per month, many families were struggling to pay water bills of \$20 or more. In April 2000 after months of civil disobedience and angry protest in the streets, the president of Bolivia was forced to terminate the water privatization contract. Bechtel, in retaliation, sued the government of Bolivia for \$25 million. Bechtel claimed it had lost investment and “potential profits” as the company was expected to earn an annual income of \$58 million.

PHILIPPINES: In 1997, the Filipino government granted a 25-year contract to Maynilad Water (co-owned by Suez and the Lopez family) to provide water services to part of Manila. Civil society groups criticized the undemocratic and non-transparent nature of the privatization process, rate hikes (which include an adjustment tied to exchange rate fluctuations), unmet promises of rehabilitation and expansion of water services (especially to the urban poor) and weak regulatory and oversight practices. In a Christmas 2001 press release the Asian Labor Network said, “In effect Maynilad Water...has deprived the Filipino family of three full meals or three kilos of rice. The ordinary vendor will now have to surrender one full day of income to pay for the cost of water.” Due to bad management and the Asian financial crisis, Suez now seeks to rid itself of the debt by pulling out of Maynilad Water. And, Maynilad Water is negotiating with the Filipino government, attempting to pass its debt to the public sector in a debt-equity swap. As is too often the case, the people of the Philippines will pay the burden of this debt.

ARGENTINA: In 1993, the Argentine government granted a 30-year contract to Aguas Argentinas (majority owner Suez) to provide water and sewerage services to the city of Buenos Aires. During the first eight years the company earned a 19% profit rate on its average net worth, but after 2002 the peso crisis left the company in debt. The contractual clause that permitted Aguas Argentinas to link water prices to the U.S. dollar, and ensure hefty profits, was overruled by an emergency decree of the government. Linking consumer water prices to the peso exchange rate had meant on-going price increases which were borne disproportionately by the urban poor. Non-payment for water and sanitation services were as high as 30%, service cut-offs were common, and women and children bore the brunt of the health and safety consequences. Aguas Argentinas reneged on its contractual obligation to build a sewerage treatment plant and over 95% of the city’s sewerage flows directly into the Rio del Plata.

SOUTH AFRICA: In 1999, the British water multinational Biwater developed a joint venture with a South African group and was awarded a 30-year contract to provide water in Nelspruit, South Africa. The company has nearly tripled the consumer price of water and been quick to cut-off service for those who cannot afford to pay. The price hikes and persistent complaints that the company fails to provide service to poor areas, have caused some consumers to boycott paying their bills. Contractual commitments to expand access are being hampered,

according to Biwater officials, by the lack of revenue and lack of access to credit. Conflict and social tension continue as citizens insist that access to clean and affordable water is a human right.

These are just a few of the water privatization failures suffered by people around the world. We call on you to listen to the concerns of the Ghana National CAP of Water. There is significant opposition to transnational corporate involvement in the water sector. There must be an end to the external pressure, including that of the World Bank, that promotes private sector contracting to foreign multinational corporations of vital natural resources such as water.

Sincerely,

SIGNERS FROM ARGENTINA

Adolfo Perez Esquivel, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, 1980

Agrupacion Mate Amargo de Entre Rios

Alianza de Iglesias Presbiterianas y Reformadas de America Latina

Asamblea Barria Nunez

Asamblea de Pequenos y Medianos Empresarios (APYME)

Asamblea de Vecinos Autoconvocados por el no a la Mina

Asamblea de Wilde

Asamblea Permanente por los Derechos Humanos

Asamblea Permanente por los Derechos Humanos de Rosario

Asamblea Popular de Almagro

Asamblea Provincial por el Derecho al Agua

Asamblea Vecinal S. Ortiz y Cordoba, Capital Federal

Asesor Gobierno de la Ciudad Autonoma de Buenos Aires

Asociacion Civil Canoa

Asociacion de Profesionales del Hospital O. Alende

Asociacion del Personal de la Universidad Nacional de la Patagonia

Asociacion Guadalupe / Equipo Nacional de Pastoral Aborigen

Asociacion Mutual Sentimiento

Asociacion por la Educacion Latinoamericana para el Cambio (AELAC)

ATTAC-Argentina

ATTAC Rosario

Autoconvocados No al ALCA de Ituzaingo

Autoconvocatoria contra el ALCA, la Deuda Externa y la Militarizacion de Corrientes

Autoconvocatoria-noalalca

Cabildo Abierto Latinoamericano

Margarita Jarque, Camara de Diputados

Patricia Sanchez de Bustamante, Camara de Diputados

Daniel Dagorret, Camara de Diputados

Marcela Sago, Camara de Diputados

Patricia Dalto, Camara de Diputados

Flavio Turne, Camara de Diputados

Jorge Dossi, Camara de Diputados
Campana la Deuda o la Vida
Catolicas por el Derecho a Decid ir
Central de los Trabajadores Argentinos, CTA
Centro de Estudio en Politica Internacional
Centro de Estudios y Promocion Agrarios
Centro Interdisciplinario de Estudios Territoriales
CEUR / CONICET
Club de Oyentes de Liliana Lopez Foresi
Colegio de Graduados en Cooperativismo y Mutualismo
Confederacion de Entidades de Fomento y Juntas Vecinalistas de Pica de Beunos Aires
Confederacion de Trabajadores de la Educacion de la Republica de Argentina (CTERA)
Consejo de Iglesias Evangelicas Metodistas de America Latin y Caribe
Consejo Latinoamericano de Iglesias
Cristianos de Base
Dialogo 2000
Economistas de Izquierda
Equipo de Pastoral Indigena - Ciudad de Reconquista - Santa Fe
Foro Argentino de la Deuda Externa / Delegacion Parana / Enre Rios
Foro de Ecologia Politica
Foro de Participacion Ciudadana
Foro por la Tierra y la Alimentacion
Foro Social Corrientes
Frente de Desocupados Eva Peron
Frente Para El Cambio
Fundacion de Investigaciones Sociales y Politicas
Fundacion Servicio Paz y Justicia
FUNDAPAZ
Futuros
Goethe-Institut
HNAS. De San Antonio de Padua
Iglesia Evangelica del Rio de la Plata
Iglesias Reformadas en Argentina
Institucion para la Comunidad y el Habitat Resistencia
Integrante de la Asamblea de Castro Barros y Rivadavia
Intergalactika - Laboratorio de la Resistencia Global
Jubileo Sur/Americas
La Comunidad para el desarrollo humano
Madres de Plaza de Mayo, Linea Fundadora
Movimiento de Ocupantes e Inquilinos
Movimiento Ecumenico de los Derechos Humanos
Movimiento Patriotico 20 de Diciembre (MP20) - Regional Neuquen
Movimiento Patriotico 20 de Diciembre (MP20) - Regional Rio Negro
Movimiento por la Paz, la Soberania y la Solidaridad entre lose Pueblos y Co-presidente,
Consejo Mundial de la Paz

Movimiento Teresa Rodriguez
Mujeres en resistencia - DDHH con perspectiva de genero - Fac. Filosofia y Letras
Multosectorial Vecinos de San Cristobal
Red Nacional Encuentro de Entidades No Gubernamentales para el Desarrollo
Servicio Habitacional y de Accion Social (SEHAS)
Sindicato de Obras Sanitarias de la provincia de Buenos Aires
Suenos Compartidos SEGUI (Entre Rios)
Sumarse
Taller Ecologista
Teatro Comunitario Patricios Unido de Pie
Union de Trabajadores de la Educacion
Union de Usuarios y Consumidores
Morita Carrasco, Universidad de Buenos Aires
Norma Giarracca, Universidad de Buenos Aires
Alejandro Raiter, Universidad de Buenos Aires
Universidad de Buenos Aires - Associacao de Docentes da UFRGS (ADUFRGS)
Universidad de Buenos Aires - Instituto de Ciencias Antropologicas
Universidad de Buenos Aires - Red de intelectuales artistas y academicos por los derechos
fundamentales (RIAA)
Universidad Nacional de Quilmes - Centro de Derechos Humanos
Damian Verzenassi, Universidad Nacional de Rosario
Claudia Briones, University of Buenos Aires

SIGNERS FROM BOLIVIA

Asociación de Agua Villa Sebastain pagador, A.P.A.A.S.
Asociación de Agua Potable Unidad Exaltación, A.S.A.P.U.E.X.
Asociación de Agua A.S.L.A.P.V.
Asociación Valle Hermoso de Agua Potable y Alcantarillado, A.V.H.A.P.A.
Agua Cruz
Agua Para Barrio Bolivar Encanada
Asamblea Permanente de Derechos Humanos la Paz
Asociación de Agua Potable Valle Hermoso Norte
Asociación de Agua Potable Villa San Miguel
Asociación de Agua Potable y Alcantarillado Mula Mayu
Asociación de Agua Potable y Alcantarillado San Andres
Asociación de Sistemas de Agua del Sur
Asociación Nacional de Regantes Y Comites de Agua Comunitarios
Cooperativa de Saneamiento y Agua Potable San Miguel, C.O.P.S.A.P.
Central Obrera Departamental de Cochabamba
Centro de Documentación e Información Bolivia
Cepromi - Bolivia
Cine Club "Luis Espinal" de Pastoral Universitaria
Comite de Agua 1 de Mayo
Comite de Agua 21 de Diciembre
Comite de Agua 24 de Junio Molle Molle

Comite de Agua 24 de Junio San Isidro
Comite de Agua Alto Bella Vista
Comite de Agua Alto San Isidro
Comite de Agua Alto San Miguel Sud
Comite de Agua Alto Universitario
Comite de Agua Barrio Magisterio Plan 40
Comite de Agua Campo Ferial
Comite de Agua Cobal
Comite de Agua Codever
Comite de Agua Domingo Sabio
Comite de Agua El Molino
Comite de Agua El Salvador
Comite de Agua Eucaliptos Norte
Comite de Agua Eucaliptos Sud
Comite de Agua Ferroviario Fatima
Comite de Agua Illimani
Comite de Agua Lomas Del Sud
Comite de Agua Magisterio
Comite de Agua Mario Tejada
Comite de Agua Mejillones
Comite de Agua Potable Rumicerco
Comite de Agua Pucara T'ajra
Comite de Agua San Antonio
Comite de Agua San Jose de la Banda Plan B
Comite de Agua San Jose de la Banda Plan C
Comite de Agua San Jose Tamborada
Comite de Agua Villa Aguada
Comite de Agua Villa Bolivar Tamborada
Comite de Agua Villa Serrano
Comite de Agua Villa Venezuela
Comite Impulsor del Municipio de San Pedro Santa Cruz de la Sierra
Comite Nacional de Defensa del Patrimonio Nacional
Comite Villa San Miguel / Valle Hermoso Norte
Confederacion General de Trabajadores Fabriles de Bolivia
Coordinadora de Juntas Vecinales de Barrios Perifericors Oruro
Coordinadora del Gas de El Alto
Coordinadora Nacional del Gas
Coordinadores del Comite de Lucha Contra el Alca
Directorio de Colectivo Rebeldia
Federacion de Mujeres de El Alto
Federacion de Trabajadores Fabriles de Cochabamba
Escritores de Santa Cruz de la Sierra
Escuela del Pueblo Primero de Mayo
Federacion Universitaria Local de la Universidad Publica de El Alto
Grito de los Excluidas de America Latina

Grupo de Apoyo a Movimientos Sociales GAMS
Grupo Juvenil Huayna Tipaj Sucre
Junta Vecinal 12 de Octubre San Isidro
Junta Vecinal 21 de Septiembre
Junta Vecinal Nueva Jerusalem
Junta Vecinal Villa Brasilia
Junta Vecinal Villa San Nicolas
Movimiento Sin Tierra Bolivia
Movimiento Sin Tierra Potosi
Organizacion Territorial de Base Alto Valle Hermoso
Organizacion Territorial de Base Central Itocta
Organizacion Territorial de Base la Rinconada
Organizacion Territorial de Base Ticti Sud
Organizacion Territorial de Base Villa Luz
Proyecto de Desarrollo de Agua, P.D.A.
Proyecto de Agua Nuevo Amanecer
Red Boliviana Uniendo Manos por la Vida
Red Intercultural TINKU BOLIVIA
Residentes Chaquenos Cochabamba
Luis Sanchez-Gomez, Director, SEMAPA
Sindicato de Trabajadoras del Hogar

SIGNERS FROM EUROPE

ACME - France
Jean-Claude Lefort, Assemblée Nationale
Association for International Water and Forest Studies (FIVAS), Norway
Attac France
Basildon District Council, UK
Biens Publics a l'échelle Mondiale
Both ENDS, Netherlands
Bretton Woods Project, UK
Campaign per la Riforma Della Banca Mondiale
Comboni Missionaries, Germany
Corporate Europe Observatory
Department of Land and Water Resources Engineering, Sweden
Friends of the Earth - France
Hackney Black Peoples Association, UK
Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa, Netherlands
Public Services International
Third Order of the Society of St Francis
Pedro Arrojo Agudo, Universidad de Zaragoza, España
Unser Wasser Hamburg (Citizens Initiative Against Privatisation of the Hamburg Water Works)

SIGNERS FROM THE PHILIPPINES

Alliance of Government Workers in the Water Sector (Philippines)
Integrated Rural Development Foundation of the Philippines (IRDF)
Southeast Asia Regional Initiatives for Community Empowerment (SEARICE)

SIGNERS FROM SOUTH AFRICA

Anti-Privatisation Forum, The
Coalition Against Water Privatisation
Environmental Monitoring Group
groundWork
Joining Hands Against Hunger
Jubilee South Africa
Rural Support Services
Patrick Bond, University of Witwatersrand - Graduate School of Public and Development
Management
South African Municipal Workers Union, SAMWU
Southern Africa Centre for Economic Justice

SIGNERS FROM OTHER COUNTRIES, INTERNATIONAL

50 Years is Enough: U.S. Network for Global Economic Justice
Accion Ecologica, Ecuador
Accion por la Biodiversidad
ACME - Suisse
Africa Faith & Justice Network, USA
Aid Transparency, Senegal
Asociacion Q'anil, Guatemala
Association quebecoise pour un contrat mondial de l'eau, Canada
ATTAC, Brazil
Beth Am, the People's Temple, USA
Blue Planet Project, Canada
Cabildo Abierto Latinoamericano
CAMEXPA, Panama
Camino Alternativo, Panama
Caritas Pastoral Social, Diocesis de Quiche, Guatemala
Censat Agua Viva / Friends of the Earth, Colombia
Center for International Studies, Nicaragua
Centro de Educacao Popular do Instituto Sedes Sapientiae, Brazil
Centro de Vecinos de Retiro
Centro Operacional de Vivienda y Poblamiento, Mexico
Centro Regional Ecumenico de Asesoría y Servicio
Coalicion Rural, Mexico
Colectivo de Organizaciones Populares, Dominican Republic
Comision de Asambleas Barriales por la Recuperacion de las Privatizadas
Comite de Defensa del Patrimonio Nacional (CODEPANAL)
Comite de Solidaridad de la Cut Valle del Cauca, Colombia
Comite Nacional pro Defensa de Fauna y Flora, Chile

Comite Pro-Nune z Haitiana, Puerto Rico
COMPA Suramerica, Venezuela
Concerned Citizens Coalition of Stockton, USA
Consejo de Unidad Popular (CUP), Dominican Republic
Convergencia de Movimientos de los Pueblos de Las Americas – COMPA, Dominican Republic
Coordinadora Nacional de la Comision Nacional de Mujeres Trabajadoras de Venezuela
Corriente Magisterial Juan Pablo Duarte, Dominican Republic
Council of Canadians, The
Creed Alliance, Pakistan
Cumberland Countians for Peace & Justice, USA
Dakine Corporation, USA
Defensoria de los Derechos del Nino, Venezuela
Development VISIONS, Pakistan
Developpement et Pais (Development and Peace), Canada
Earth Action Network, USA
Earth Resource Group, USA
Edizioni Gattacicova, Venezuela and Italy
Ecologist Asia, India
Ecumenical Program on Central America and the Caribbean (EPICA), USA
ERA Consumer Malaysia
Federacion Nacional de Trabajadores de Agua Potable (FENTAP), Peru
Federation of Independent Trade Unions and NGOs (FITUN), Trinidad and Tobago
Forum for African Alternatives, Senegal
Free Montserrant United Movement
Friends of the Earth - Australia
Friends of the Earth - Canada
Friends of the Earth - Japan
Goldman Environmental Prize, USA
Grupo Red de Economia Solidaria del Peru
Henry George Concerned Citizens, USA
Iglesia Evangelica Valdense, USA
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, USA
International Rivers Network
Japan Center for a Sustainable Environment and Society (JACES)
Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation Network - Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary, USA
Juventud Caribe, Dominican Republic
Juventud Obrera Catolica de Venezuela
Lourdes Ledezma-Siana, USA
Management School of Restorative Business, Japan
Manthan Adhayan Kendra, India
Mesa de Trabajo Mujeres y Economia / REMTE Colombia
Midling & Associates, USA
Midwest Coalition for Responsible Investment, USA
Misionera Scalabriniana, Brazil

Missionnaire d'Afrique
Morton County Citizens for Responsible Government, USA
Movimiento de Trabajadores Independientes, Dominican Republic
Nicaragua Center for Community Action, USA
Obed Watershed Association, USA
Oregon Health & Science University, USA
PACS / Jubileu Sul - Brasil
Pan African Vision for the Environment (PAVE), Nigeria
Parlement Africain des Jeunes Mali
Peoples Alliance for Livelihood Rights, India
Plataforma para un Desarrollo Alternativo (PAPDA), Haiti
Plataforma Peruana de Derechos Humanos, Democracia y Desarrollo
Pontifica Universidad Catolica del Peru
Presbiterio Occidental de la Iglesia Presbiteriana de Venezuela
Presbyterian Church (USA)
Presbyterian for Restoring Creation, USA
Programa de Monitoreo y Analisis, Mexico
Proyecto Derechos Humano de la Universidad Anahuac del Sur, Mexico
Public Citizen, Water for All Campaign
Public Services International
Rapal - Ecuador
Red de Sindicatos del Sector del Agua de Latinoamerica
REDES - Friends of the Earth Uruguay
Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary, USA
San Francisco Area Jubilee Debt Cancellation Coalition, USA
Saras Transformacion SC, Mexico
School Sisters of Notre Dame - Global Justice & Peace Commission, USA
Seccion Mexicana de Fian Internacional (FIAN), Mexico
Servicios Koinonia y Agenda Latinoamericana, Nicaragua
Sierra Club, USA
St. Augustine Shores Civic Association, USA
Swaziland Campaign Against Poverty and Economic Inequalities
Task Force Food Sovereignty
Trade Aid, New Zealand
Tribunal Popular Supremo
Two Cedars Art
Unidad Ecologica Salvadorena (UNES), El Salvador
Unitarian Universalist Church, USA
Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, USA
United Church of Christ Network for Environmental & Economic Responsibility, USA
David Barkin, Universidad Autonoma Metropolitana – Xochimilco, Mexico
M. Luiza de C. Armando, Universidade Federal do RGS, Brazil
Suzanne Lessard, University of California - San Francisco, USA
Mary Anne Connell, University of Guelph, Canada
Pedro Arrojo Agudo, Universidad de Zaragoza, España

Water and Energy User's Federation – Nepal
Welfare Warriors, USA
Westminster Presbyterian Church, USA
Women and Environments International Magazine, Canada
Women For Orange County, USA
World Bank Boycott, USA
World Centric, USA
WTO Watch Qls, Australia
ZIMCODD, Zimbabwe