



Press release

Rennes, Paris, Accra, London, Washington, 3 December 2004

Ghanaian Water : an International Business

In the context of the water sector reform in Ghana pushed by the World Bank, an international coalition is mobilizing in support of the Ghanaian National Coalition Against Privatization (NCAP). The Government of Ghana and the World Bank have signed a loan agreement that intends to privatize the water management system of several cities of Ghana, without consideration of the citizens' concerns and without considering other options for public management models. **Peuples Solidaires and les Amis de la Terre (France), together with World Development Movement (UK) and Public Citizen (US) have launched simultaneous actions to pressure the World Bank and the water trans-national corporations.**

The World Bank has granted a 103 million dollars loan to the Government of Ghana in order to reform the water sector in the main urban centers and give concessions to private operators from the North. For the Ghanaian civil society organizations, this decision represents a threat to safe and affordable water. More importantly, the Ghanaian coalition denounces the total lack of transparency of the reform process and the way the Government together with the World Bank ignored the demands and worries repeatedly expressed by the Ghanaian civil society organisations.

Faced with this outstanding lack of dialogue, the National Coalition Against Privatization (NCAP) has been seeking support from international partner NGOs to pressure the World Bank and the trans-national companies that might be candidates for the bidding process to take place during the first semester of 2005. The international supporting network decided to launch simultaneous actions in the different countries concerned by the process.

In the US, Public Citizen, that runs the Water for All Campaign, managed to get 330 organizations from around the world signing an open letter directed to the World Bank and to the CEOs of the various water companies.

In the UK, World Development Movement is bringing the same message to the British company Biwater and will be maintaining pressure in the forthcoming months.

In France, **Peuples Solidaires** together with **les Amis de la Terre** are launching a campaign to mobilize their networks on this crucial issue. Thousands of citizens will be writing letters to the French water companies **Véolia (ex-Vivendi Environnement), Suez (Lyonnaise des Eaux) et Saur (Bouygues)** asking them not to get involved in a project that gravely threatens the economic, social and cultural rights of the People of Ghana.

It is now most interesting to see whether the water private operators will be listening to the message repeatedly expressed to them by the Ghanaians, or if they will decide to ignore it in order to get a contract that is obviously highly controversial and rejected by their potentially future consumers...

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