

## Our call for a global political response to the water crisis

To mark World Water Day, celebrated on March 22, we are asserting that water is the major social and ecological issue of the 21st century. The world is facing two major challenges: on the one hand, to provide access to safe drinking water and sanitation to everyone, while billions of people are still deprived of this basic human right. On the other hand, ensuring sustainable, equitable and inclusive water management, while water resources are subjected to increasing and multiple pressures, i.e. pollution, overexploitation, grabbing, destruction of ecosystems... The competition for our increasingly degraded water resources is a threat to peace.

The World Water Forum, which is taking place from March 21 to 25 in Senegal, was intended to be a large-scale political mobilization to discuss these challenges. We regret that, for many reasons, neither of the two announced summits, the summit of heads of states and the extraordinary summit of the African Union, is taking place. A strong political commitment to the issue of water and the preservation of this vital resource is essential, given that the last - and only - intergovernmental conference of the United Nations on water which was held dates back to 1977.

Water is mainly managed locally, but the water crisis is global: it concerns the entire international community. Water is a cycle, it is a single resource. It is strongly impacted by climate change and, like the climate, it knows no borders. This is why we need global responses to deal with these challenges.

Our organizations and their members, from 5 continents, call for 5 major political changes to address the water crisis:

- 1. Stronger political will.** Because political inaction is the main obstacle to progress in many countries.
- 2. Stronger water governance.** Because water is a common good that must be managed in a democratic and sustainable way.
- 3. Actively involved citizens and civil society.** Because water is everyone's business, especially for women and young people.
- 4. Strong and transparent financial commitments.** Because we must quadruple annual investments to reach universal water and sanitation coverage by 2030, while ensuring access to information and transparency in decision-making and funding.
- 5. A renewed multilateral framework.** Because we need diplomatic commitment from the entire international community to make the collective decisions that are needed.

Meeting the challenges of water and sanitation is not impossible but it requires urgent political action. Forty-six years after the 1977 conference, the United Nations will organize an intergovernmental conference on water in March 2023 in New York. One year before this major deadline, we need a global leap for water!

**Signatories:**

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