



March 24, 2023

Final Statement for Directors of the UN 2023 Water Conference

Addressing: Water for Climate, Resilience, and Environment

Dear UN 2023 Water Conference Directors and Staff (*including and especially all of the anonymous many who made the Conference possible and will hopefully will soon have a rest*):

On behalf of ACA (Surcos Digital), a grassroots media platform based in Costa Rica, we thank you for the opportunity to participate in the UN 2023 Water Conference. We appreciate the efforts you have made to include a group like ours, without experience in taking part in international events like this one, and without staff. It's meant much to us to have the chance to join and deeply learn!

Our final statement, in keeping with all of our submissions these past several months—and especially after attending Conference events these past two days—**focuses on the urgent need to transparently challenge the role of the private sector, especially corporations, in shaping global water policy, and at the level of the basin.** We believe that it is urgent, as water policy continues to be formed through successive international fora, to place all dialogue about it within the context of openly discussing capitalism and radical alternatives to it. **We believe that it is impossible to arrive at the profound planetary transformation the climate emergency demands without talking about capitalism and alternatives to it, and wonder why so little of this kind of dialogue took place at the Conference?**

It is of course impossible at this point to even begin to fathom what the Conference adds up to. Nonetheless, we see (intuit) three trends emerging from this historic event: an amplified cry to place Indigenous communities and wisdom at the center of global water policy; solicitation of private capital as a primary solution for both drinking water and sanitation, and to heal and strengthen rivers, aquifers, the ocean and ecosystems (Nature-based Solutions); the fascinating ways in which these trends may complement one another, and also negate one another.

We return to the tiny example of the basin where we live in the south of Costa Rica, where a subsidiary of the transnational corporation Fresh Del Monte, Inc., planting pineapple for 40 years, has partnered with GIZ (German Agency for International Cooperation) and allies to reforest the upper part of the basin – to ensure that there will be water for pineapple, and employment. While reforesting the upper basin is important, it pales next



to transition immediately away from pineapple, hard to do while continuing the narrative about the need for pineapple.

Wishing you all the best,

Oscar Beita and Madeline Kiser
Project Leads for AC (Surcos Digital) for the UN 2023 Water Conference