

June 24, 2015

Statement on corporate accountability and the human right to water

Endorsed by: Women's Major Group, Indigenous People's Major Group, Workers and Trade Unions Major Group, Major Group for Children and Youth, NGO Mining Working Group, Blue Planet Project, Council of Canadians, Sisters of Mercy, International Presentation Association, Association for Women's Rights in Development, Women's Major Group, Public Services International, UNANIMA International, International Disability and Development Consortium, Asia Dalit Rights Forum and Education International,

Corporations have unprecedented power within a dominant economic model that puts profit above all else and turns public goods into commodities - trade agreements and investment treaties, being among several tools at their disposal. We therefore join other major groups in calling for a declaration that provides a framing narrative that demands systemic changes to the global economic system that generates impoverishment, inequalities and environmental degradation.

We propose the following:

1. The declaration must make explicit its commitment to a human rights approach that is distinct from a charity or market-based approach.
2. Given that the global water crisis poses a tremendous and increasing crosscutting threat to the SDG agenda, an explicit commitment must be made to the human right to water and sanitation, to ensure that water is not denied to those who need it the most. (We echo this week's statements by Bolivia, Palau and Costa Rica in this regard.)
3. Ensure universal access to essential services including water and sanitation by ring-fencing them from privatization and private financing. The Global Partnership platform should not serve as a vehicle to privatize services that are part of the commons and

central to the human rights obligations of states. Financial crisis should not become a ruse for undermining global public goods by promoting profit in sectors where privatization has had disastrous results. We call for the principles of non-retrogression and maximum available use of resources to be applied.

4. Ensure the effective and meaningful participation of people as rights-holders, including indigenous peoples, rather than grouping them with corporate stakeholders forcing marginalized communities to negotiate with more powerful actors whose interests may conflict with their own.

Given the limited time, we will propose specific textual changes in writing from groups endorsing this statement.