

A world map is visible in the background of the top section, showing various countries in shades of green and blue. The title 'Declaration of commitment' is written in large, white, sans-serif font across the top.

Declaration of commitment

To the democratic, sustainable and equitable management
of 15 river basins worldwide

This commitment by the undersigned civil society organisations from all over the world will officially be presented and discussed in the Citizen's Forum on Participatory IWRM at the World Water Forum in Marseille.

*Friday March 16th 2012 from 9.30 to 11.30 hrs.
at 'Maison du Citoyen et de L'eau' - Hall 3, room 1.2.4*

The challenge

The increasing scarcity of freshwater in both quantity and quality throughout the world has generated a range of institutional responses over the last few decades. Of these, the most well-known is probably the call for Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM).

Though the principles and concepts of IWRM are widely accepted, its implementation in practice has had mixed results. Plans tend to be centralized and engineering driven while due diligence calls for a decentralized interdisciplinary approach which is based on extensive local consultations and effective participation. IWRM plans are often based on assumptions about the needs of local communities and the local state of water resources rather than being directly rooted in those realities. Local communities are rarely involved in decision making on water resources allocation or utilization. Local customs, traditions and laws related to water management are insufficiently recognized or accommodated into IWRM frameworks or national water legislation. Often concerns with the long-term environmental sustainability of water management practices are not taken into account and available water is inequitably allocated, some-

times even infringing on the human right to water for personal purposes and undermining the human right to (produce) food.

These are the central challenges facing us.

Our solution

We are civil society organisations working on bottom-up, inclusive and sustainable approaches to IWRM in various river basins all over the world. Our approaches and initiatives show that local actors have detailed knowledge of their natural environment and automatically adopt an ecosystemic and holistic approach to resources management. They are able express their needs, challenges and ambitions with regard to water uses and take a lead in water management at river basin level. For the sake of equity and sustainability, a truly participatory process leading to negotiated arrangements for sharing water amongst local communities, sharing water with nature itself, food production and with future generations is imperative.

Our solution is to base water resource management plans on the direct input and initiatives of local people and facilitate profound negotiation processes between all stakeholders, reserving sufficient water in each catchment for the needs of ecosystems.

This way long term resource renewal through sound catchment management and the realization of the human Right to Water and Sanitation will be ensured.

Our commitment

This 6th World Water Forum in Marseille explicitly calls for concrete solutions and commitments. We, the undersigned civil society practitioners of equitable and sustainable IWRM, hereby express our strong commitment to take a lead in participatory river basin management in 15 river basins in the world. We wish to cooperate with government agencies at local, provincial and national levels to provide locally negotiated water sharing arrangements to achieve the criteria of the human right to water and sanitation and scale these up to the basin level.

Our commitment is to directly contribute to sustainable access to clean and sufficient water for consumption and production for all inhabitants in 15 river basins now and in the future.

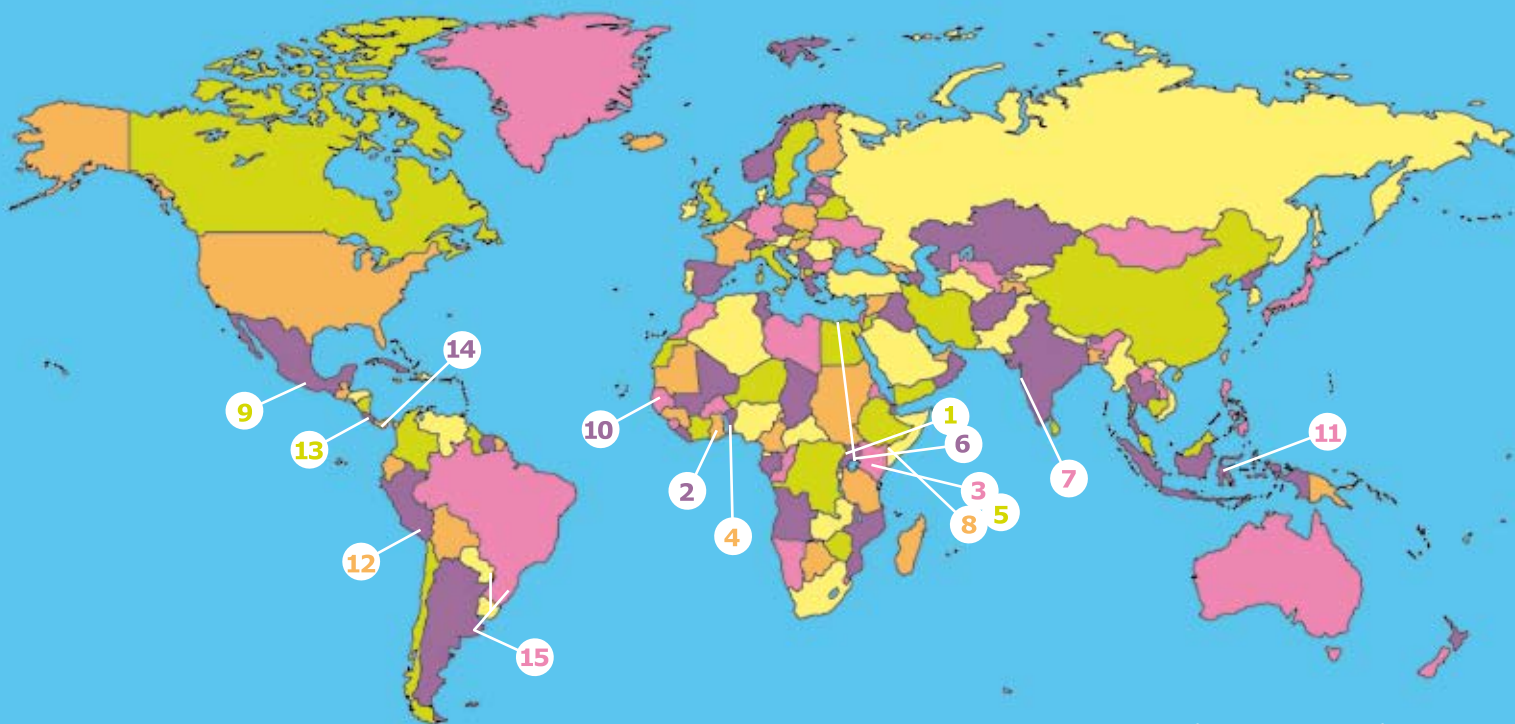
Our request

Government authorities, water experts and donors must recognize that locally rooted civil society organisations are fully-fledged players in water resource management planning and implementation. These organisations have demonstrated capacity to implement participatory, equitable, sustainable IWRM. They however need an enabling environment and the active support and willingness to cooperate from governments, donors, and institutes at local, national and international levels.

Our request is that you join and support us in the implementation of genuine bottom-up approaches to IWRM in the 15 river basins described below as an important step and example to achieve water security for all.

For more information please contact
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15 river basins



Original map © Margo Vlamings

15 river basins and organisations

1

Lake Albert catchment area (Uganda)

The National Association of Professional Environmentalists (NAPE) links community level activities to advocacy on key national environmental governance questions. NAPE has contributed to the protection of Ugandan lakes and rivers and of catchment areas that capture, purify and regenerate freshwater. NAPE is currently working to protect the shores of Lake Albert from the dangers of rapidly expanding oil mining, and has established sustainability schools to train local communities on sustainability issues.

2

Dayi River Basin (Ghana)

Development Institute (DI) is active in the Dayi Basin, a sub-basin of the Volta River Basin, aiming to increase the resilience of communities and the ecosystem in the basin and ensuring climate-proof water management. DI works in close cooperation with the national Water Resources Commission who is responsible for developing IWRM plans for all basins in Ghana (see www.adapts.nl). The efforts of DI already led to significant results. Civil society is now represented in the Basin Board of the Dayi River and climate change is integrated in the Basin Management Plan.

3

Tana River Basin (Kenya)

Environment Liaison Centre International (ELCI) is a strong network organisation working both on advocacy against threats facing the Tana River Basin, including the planned 65000 ha of jatropha plantation and the High Falls Dam, as well as on alternative and sustainable livelihood options, such as ecotourism, nature based enterprises and alternative energy sources. They are actively involved in providing inputs to the current Master Plan for the Tana Delta.

4

Mono River basin (Togo/Benin)

Jeunes Volontaires de L'Environnement (JVE) is the largest youth-led environmental organization in Africa, dedicated to promoting sustainable development through youth and women empowerment. They initiated a dams dialogue in answer to the impacts of the Nangbeto hydroelectric dam in Togo and are currently engaging in dialogue around the planned Adjarrala dam and the creation of a Mono Basin Authority.

5

Omo River basin (Kenya) *Friends of Lake Turkana* is an NGO devoted to the survival of Lake Turkana and its ecosystem, a desert

lake formed by the delta of Ethiopia's Omo river. The area is home to seven different communities who derive a livelihood from the local ecosystem and whose survival is currently threatened by the proposed construction of Gibe 3 dam.

6

Nile River Basin

The Nile Basin Discourse is an international network of more than 300 civil society organisations in 11 countries along the course of the Nile River. Its aim is to strengthen the voice of civil society in the development of water related initiatives along the course of the Nile. It has ten national chapters and a regional secretariat based in Entebbe.

7

Bhima River Basin (India)

Gomukh Trust came into existence as a response and reaction to the inadequate watershed development programme of the Indian Government. One of its projects is working on an alternate water management plan for the Bhima Basin in Maharashtra. Gomukh has successfully scaled up local negotiations on water sharing for livelihood improvement to the subcatchment level and thereby piloted the Negotiated Approach which Both ENDS now applies as a standard.

8

Southern Ethiopia/Northern Kenya

LVIA Solidarity and International Cooperation is an Italian organisation dealing with solidarity and international cooperation. In the Borana lowlands, the most important water resources are the wells, the ella, which are managed through a complex set of social regulations. Large water projects are threatening traditional water sources and other natural resources, LVIA aims to strengthen the planning and management role of Borana communities and their institutions because they are the key to sustainable development.

9

Pixquiac Watershed (Mexico)

SENDAS AC member of the Freshwater Action Network in México (FAN-Mex) is working with the *Institute of Social Research (IIS-UNAM)* on a project devoted to the Integrated Management of the Pixquiac Watershed. Since this watershed is of great regional importance, one of the main interests is to create co-responsibility between urban and rural and to search for alternatives to revert the deterioration process that affects the basin, working along with landowners, research institutes and municipal and federal authorities.

10 Senegal River Basin *Eau Vive* works alongside rural communities in Africa to provide better access to water and to implement actions in the fields of health, education, training and agricultural production. In Senegal the organization is working together with local partners and local communities to elaborate an integrated inter-sectoral plan for the management of the Senegal River Basin.

11 Lamasi River Basin (Indonesia) *Telapak*, a national organization supporting local initiatives throughout Indonesia, together with local NGO PBS, responded to growing conflicts over water by creating a platform where water users can discuss their problems. Their work also led to a district regulation for watershed management and conservation. *Telapak* works to support the autonomy and integrity of groups of indigenous peoples, fishers and farmers in sustainable relationships with their immediate environment.

12 Ocoña River Basin (Peru) *La Asociación Especializada para el Desarrollo Sostenible (AEDES)*, together with the Peruvian Environment Ministry, Water Authority, municipal governments and universities, supports adaptation to climate change through research, local capacity building and Integrated Basin Management in the Ocoña river basin. The concept is the promotion of local solutions and tools that take climate change into account, in order for them to be incorporated in planning and water governance on local and regional level.

13 Pirris River Basin (Costa Rica) *The Freshwater Action Network Central America (FANCA)* and the *Association Committee for the Rescue, Conservation and Protection of aquifer recharge areas and water sources in Los*

Santos (COPROARENAS) work on the protection of the Pirris River Basin, which is being destroyed and exploited to meet the high demand for food, water and shelter. These groups advocated for the formulation of the 'Pirris river basin management plan' and with respect to aquifer recharge areas, have presented a proposal for protected area to be declared covering an area of 2,600 hectares which is home to four communities and various aquifers and springs which feed several community water systems.

14 Pocora River Basin (Panamá) *The 'Grupo para la Educación y Manejo Ambiental Sostenible' (GEMAS)* and *FANCA* are working together to counter the environmental degradation that exists in the Pocora river basin, especially in its middle and upper parts. Their approach is based on participation and community organization, therefore cooperation and communication between all stakeholders is exemplary. This is achieved through workshops, meetings and exchanges where members convene a monthly user's network representing all communities.

15 Rivers Paraná and Paraguay, and Entre Ríos wetlands (Argentina) *M'Biguá* promotes the linking and sustainable management of the wetland system around the rivers Paraguay and Paraná, which run through Brazil, Paraguay and Argentina. At provincial level in Entre Ríos, the organization works on the protection of the wetland system between and around the Paraná and Uruguay rivers. At the regional, river basin level, it promotes not only the adoption of a sustainability strategy - developed by NGO network 'Alianza Sistema' - by the regional authorities, but also its incorporation into the official strategy for the river basin and the region around it.

