

Media advisory

Civil society calls for public water delivery as World Water Forum approaches

“Public Water for All - Symposium on Improving Public Water Delivery”, Mexico City, Wednesday 15 March

-- please forward to media representatives covering the World Water Forum in Mexico City (16-22 March)-

Amsterdam, 10 March 2006

Public water operators still account for over 90 per cent of water supply worldwide, but past experience of the World Water Forum in The Hague (2000) and Kyoto (2003) shows that it is likely to overlook the positive lessons coming from the public water sector.

In response, civil society groups will host an international symposium entitled “Public Water for All” on 15 March in Mexico City to discuss improvements to public water delivery. The symposium will include numerous water managers whose successful public utilities debunk the myth that ‘private sector participation’ is needed to improve access to clean water and sanitation in developing countries. Their perspectives provide some vital balance in the debate on the provision of water, in contrast to continued calls for privatisation and other forms of ‘private sector participation’. They also offer innovative examples of how public-public partnerships are providing new models for the transfer of expertise and best practice on a non-profit basis.

Several symposium participants are available for interview, including:

Silvano da Costa, president of the National Association of Municipal Water and Sanitation Services (ASSEMAE), Brazil. Da Costa will present a new book published by ASSEMAE which analyses twenty case studies of successful public urban water delivery in Brazil.

Abimanyu, Director of the water utility (PDAM) of the city of Solo and Secretary General of the Association of Water Utilities, Indonesia. The Solo utility is amongst the most efficient in Indonesia but, despite this, it is currently threatened with privatisation.

Michel Partage, Mayor of Varages, France - one of the dozens of cities in France which have recently cancelled or chosen not to renew contracts with Suez and other water multinationals.

Vibhu Nayar, Project Director, Tamil Nadu Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project (TNRWSSP), India – a public water company which, over the past three years, has been democratised to make it a more people focused organisation.

Guillermo Amorebieta, Water and Sanitation Works Trade Union of the Province of Buenos Aires (SOSBA), Argentina. Amorebieta is involved in the worker’s cooperative which manages the public water utility ABSA in the province of Buenos Aires (Argentina)

Santiago Arconada, Water Technical Tables, Venezuela. Arconada will present the achievements of communitarian water delivery in Venezuela

Julián Pérez, Federation of Neighbourhood Committees (FEJUVE), El Alto, Bolivia. Pérez will introduce the proposal for the transition towards a “public-social company” in the city of El Alto; a new model without private sector participation.

Paul A.C. Bonné, Manager International Co-operation, Amsterdam Waternet, The Netherlands

Steen Bjerggaard, Stockholm Water Company, Sweden

Nguyen Van Thanh, Director of Hue City Company for environmental and public works, Vietnam

Catherine Legna, France Libertés, France

Anne Le Stratt, president of Eau de Paris, France

A longer list of participants available for interview and further biographical details are available on request.

The symposium will also be the Mexican launch event for the new Spanish language edition of the book "Reclaiming Public Water -Achievements, Struggles and Visions from Around the World", which catalogues a wide range of examples from around the world of how the democratisation of water management has boosted the efficiency and responsiveness of utilities.

The symposium is free of charge, and forms a pre-event to the International Forum in the Defence of Water, hosted by the Mexican civil society coalition COMDA on 17-19 March. The free entry stands in marked contrast to the World Water Forum itself, which charges entrance fees of between \$240 and \$600. This puts it beyond the reach of an overwhelming majority of Mexican citizens.

The programme of "Public Water for All - Symposium on Improving Public Water Delivery" and CVs of the speakers are online at

<http://www.tni.org/altreg-docs/water.htm>

The symposium (Wednesday 15 March from 9.00 to 18.00) takes place at the Auditorio No.3 of the "Unidad de Congresos del Centro Médico" located in the Av. Cuauhtemoc No.330 Col. Doctores C.P. 06720, Mexico City. A full programme and biographies of all the speakers are online at <http://www.tni.org/altreg-docs/water.htm>

Free copies of the book "Reclaiming Public Water - Achievements, Struggles and Visions from Around the World" will be available during the symposium for representatives of the media. For more information about this book, see <http://www.tni.org/books/publicwater.htm>

Free copies of a new 20-page paper on Public-Public Partnerships will be available at the symposium. The paper, titled "Public Water for All– the Role of Public-Public Partnerships", is also available online at <http://www.tni.org/water-docs/pubwaterforall.pdf>

For more information contact:

- Olivier Hoedeman (Corporate Europe Observatory – CEO) in Mexico: **tel +52 55 2048 8281** (from abroad), **044 55 2048 8281**(domestic call), email [<olivier@corporateeurope.org>](mailto:olivier@corporateeurope.org)
- Satoko Kishimoto (Transnational Institute) in Amsterdam : tel 0031 6 4797 4811, email [<satoko@tni.org>](mailto:satoko@tni.org)

Notes

1. The symposium is co-hosted by the Transnational Institute (TNI), Corporate Europe Observatory (CEO), Coalicion de Organizaciones Mexicanas por el Derecho al Agua (COMDA), Friends of the Earth International (FoEI), Sobrevivencia (Friends of the Earth Paraguay), Friends of the Earth France, Council of Canadians, World Development Movement (WDM), Bread for the World, and numerous other groups from the 'Reclaiming Public Water' (RPW) network, a new international coalition promoting alternatives to water privatisation.

2. For more information about the International Forum in the Defence of Water (17-19 March), see <http://www.comda.org.mx/> The venue of the International Forum is: Main Building Sindicato de Telefonistas de la República Mexicana (Villalongín 50, Col. Cuauhtémoc)