

**Declaration from the Mesoamerican Forum for Life**  
**“WATER, LIGHT, AND LAND FOR ALL!”**  
**Cooperativa Unión Maya Itzá, Petén Guatemala**

Unión Maya Itzá, Petén, Guatemala, 23 de marzo de 2002

Between March 21st-23rd, men and women representing 98 organizations and communities from 21 countries met faced with the general preoccupation caused by the plans for the construction of dams with different ends in different regions.

We have shared information and experiences, as well as analyzed the negative environmental, cultural, economic-social effects that have already been caused and the potential damages of these projects.

We have confirmed information that states between 40 and 80 million people in the world have been displaced by the construction of these projects, which have been mostly to the benefit of those with economic power with the support of the international and multilateral financial institutions, highly tied to the projects of the Plan Puebla Panama, Plan Columbia, commercial trade agreements and the Free Trade Area of the Americas.

We have also confirmed that these projects, supported by transnational and national capital, do not comply in its' totality, with environmental legislation at the national and international levels, which obliges us to adopt measure of resistance and to reiterate the validity of the proposed alternatives that have come from the people.

At the end of our discussions we agreed:

1. To oppose the construction of dams in our countries that alter or divert the natural flow of the rivers, flood, affect, or displace people from their communities, destroy sacred and historic sights, and cause the death of ecosystems and biodiversity.
2. To oppose the construction of dams because with their effects they flagrantly violate the auto determination of our communities on our lands, affecting the patrimony and cosmovision of indigenous communities in the region.
3. To reiterate our call to all Latin Americans to continue the popular resistance against the construction of the dams and all complimentary neoliberal politics.
4. Our repulsion and condemnation of the institutions that have financed these projects (World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, Central American Bank for Economic Integration) and the governments that support the transnationals involved in this dirty business (AES, Union FENOSA, Endesa, Harza, among others).
5. Our solidarity with the threatened people and organizations that have been persecuted and have suffered from violations of human rights in the name of the struggle resisting the construction of dams.

6. To stress our rejection of the construction of whichever dam on the Usumacinta River because it would seriously damage the communities and ecosystems in the area. At the same time, we reject whichever project related to the generation of electric energy constructed in the name of the Plan Puebla Panama.

7. To confirm that the plan to displace people from the mountains of Mesoamerica, especially those integrated into the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor, is an inseparable part of the regional plans for the occupation of the basins and constructions of dams.

Immediately we demand:

- a. Immediate justice and comply to the responsibilities related to genocides and the corresponding reparation of damages caused to the affected people by dams already constructed.
- b. The suspension of persecution, intimidation, disappearance, death threats and strategies of disarticulation against people and organization struggling against dams.
- c. To the national governments, the suspension of the imposition of projects that do not benefit the communities and towns in the region.

As a final resolution we agree:

- a. Our solidarity with the movements at the Latin American level in the struggle against dams (Usumacinta in Guatemala-México, Chaparral in Frontera Intibucá El Salvador-Honduras, Itzantún and El Cajón in México, La Maroma in El Salvador, Susuma in Honduras, El Tigre in la Frontera El Salvador-Honduras, Chalillo in Belice, Bayano and Tabasará in Panamá, Guaigüi in República Dominicana, among others).
- b. Our rejection of the complimentary projects to dams such as those in relation to biopiracy, commercial trade agreements, and intellectual property rights.
- c. On the World Day of Action against Dams, we will meet again next year in Colomocagua, Honduras.

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**Organizations which signed onto the declaration:**

**Belize:**

- Belize Alliance Conservation NGOs BACONGO

**Bolivia:**

- Coordinadora por la Defensa del Agua y la Vida de Bolivia

**Colombia:**

- Cabildo Mayor Embera-Katio del Río Verde y Río Sinu de Colombia.

**Costa Rica:**

- Asociación Espíritu de Lucha, Boruca
- Asociación para el Bienestar Ambiental de Sarapiquí ABAS
- Federación Costarricense para la Conservación del Ambiente FECON
- Mujeres Indígenas Espíritu de Lucha MIEL
- Proyectos Alternativos para el Desarrollo Social - PROAL

**El Salvador:**

- Ayuda en Acción
- CESTA- El Salvador
- Comité Ecológico del Cantón La Estancia
- Comunidades Unidas de Bajo Lempa
- Instituto Salvadoreño de Permacultura
- Sistema Económico Social

**Spain:**

- Colectivo de Solidaridad con Chiapas

**United States:**

- Chiapas Support Committee
- CONCERN-América
- Global Exchange
- Natural Resources Defense Council NRDC
- Red Internacional de Ríos / Internacional Rivers Network (IRN)
- Rights Action / Derechos en Acción

**Guatemala:**

- Asamblea Consultiva de la Población Desarraigada ACPD
- Asociación Campesina Río Negro Rabinal Achí ASCRA
- Asociación Civil del Medioambiente Recursos Naturales
- Asociación de Comunidades Forestales de Petén ACOFOP
- Asociación de Desarraigados en Desarrollo del Petén ADEP
- Asociación de Mujeres Ixmucané
- Asociación para la Promoción y el Desarrollo de la Comunidad CEIBA
- CEDES
- Centro de Acción Legal en Derechos Humanos - CALDH
- Centro de Educación Popular Padre Hermógenes CEPASHER
- Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular CIEP
- Centro de Investigaciones de Desarrollo Económico de Centro América CIDECA
- Colectivo Madre Selva
- Comité ProMejoramiento de las Comunidades Fronterizas del Río Usumacinta-Peten
- Comité Promejoramiento Retalteco Petén
- Comunidad Vista Hermosa Los Chorros
- Comunidades Populares en Resistencia del Petén - CPR-P
- Cooperativa Canahan
- Cooperativa Mario Méndez Montenegro
- Cooperativa Nueva Guatemala, Sayaxché
- Cooperativa Unión Maya Itzá
- Coordinadora Nacional de Organizaciones Campesinas CNOC

- Estudiantes Universitarios Petén
- Federación Luterana Mundial
- Foro de ONGs
- Fundación para el Apoyo Técnico en Proyectos FUNDATEP
- Guías Espirituales
- Hijos e Hijas por la Identidad y la Justicia contra el Olvido y el Silencio HIJOS
- Instituto Mesoamericano de Permacultura IMEP
- Ixchel
- Mamá Maquín
- Parroquia Poptún
- Red Comunitaria de América Central para la Gestión del Riesgo
- Sindicato de Carbonera
- Zona de Adyacencia Petén

#### **Honduras:**

- Confederación de Pueblos Autóctonos de Honduras COMPA
- Consejo Cívico de Organizaciones Populares e Indígenas de Honduras COPINH
- Convergencia de los Pueblos de las Américas en Honduras COMPA
- Organización Fraternal Negra de Honduras OFRANEH
- Unión Revolucionaria del Pueblo

#### **Italy:**

- Ya Basta

#### **México:**

- AMOR
- ARIC Unión de Uniones
- Asociación Ecológica Santo Tomas
- Asociación Rural Independiente de Interés Colectivo - ARIC
- Ayuntamiento Huitiupán
- Centro de Investigaciones Económicas y Políticas de Acción Comunitaria - CIEPAC
- Coalición de Organizaciones Autónomas de Ocosingo
- Comunidades Indígenas de la región de Simojovel de Allende CIRSA
- Consejo Ciudadano del Agua del Estado Tabasco A.C. CCATAC
- Consejo de Organizaciones Médicos y Parteras Tradicionales de Chiapas COMPITCH
- Consejo Guerrerense 500 años
- Consejo Guerrerense 500 años de Resistencia Indígena
- Consejo Indígena de Uxpanapa Veracruz - CIUX
- Cooperativa de Ganaderos de Carolina
- Cooperativa Nueva Alianza
- Coordinadoras Regionales de Chiapas de la Sociedad Civil en Resistencia de Los Altos, La Costa, Fronteriza, Norte-Selva y Marqués de Comillas
- Ejido Huitiupán
- Frente Independiente de Pueblos Indios
- Indymedia
- Misión de Guadalupe
- Misión San José Chiapas

- Organización Campesina Emiliano Zapata - OCEZ, CNPA
- Organización de Médicos Tradicionales y de Parteras Hwziltan
- Organización de Obreros Agrícolas y Campesinos CIOAC
- Pastoral de la Tierra
- Patronato Pro Educación
- Red Mexicana de Acción Frente al Libre Comercio
- Resistencia Civil
- Resistencia de la Costa
- Resistencia Independiente
- UMOI

**Panamá:**

- Centro de Asistencia Legal Popular - CEALP

República Dominicana: Comité Pro-Defensa Guaigüi, La Vega