

Waters for Peace Charter

Document-Synthesis from the Second International Conference on Water and Transdisciplinarity

"We must flow like the rivers that flow along paths designated by Mother Earth, and we must learn to flow like water so that we will know how to walk with the rhythms and cycles of life" - Principles of living well from the Original Andean Peoples

The participants of the Second International Conference on Water and Transdisciplinarity, which was organized by a group of leaders from civil society, governments, institutions and universities and held in Brasilia on January 11-14, 2018, signed the **Waters for Peace Charter** as a contribution towards strengthening a transdisciplinary approach to water, recognizing it as a BEING, in its subjective and objective aspects, and its relevance to the expansion consciousness and to building a culture of peace. Therefore, considering:

- The urgency for special attention to the relationship between humans and water, as the womb of life on this planet, a necessity, and an unalienable right of all living beings;
- The ethical and ecological roots of environmental problems depend on a change in the current pattern of civilization, aimed at exacerbated consumption and the consequent social and environmental degradation;
- On our planet, 884 million people do not have access to potable water; more than 2.6 billion people do not have access to basic sanitation, and close to 1.5 million children as old as five die each year due to illnesses stemming from problems with water (UN General Assembly Resolution 64/292, passed on July 28, 2010);
- The context of climate change compounded by the increase in greenhouse gas emissions generates multiple impacts, such as the reduced availability of water in some regions, with consequent harmful effects on health, agriculture, the economy, social and human relationships, and rural and urban environments, with increasingly dramatic forecasts for the future in terms of environmental disaster and scarcity;
- The quality of life on our planet depends on the preservation and regeneration of aquatic ecosystems: marine, coastal and continental. Water cycles must be respected and cared for in order to guarantee continuity of life on Earth, especially considering that barely 2.5% of all water on the planet is fresh water, and only 0.01% makes up bodies of surface water.

- The indisputable importance of oceans, which hold 97% of the planet's water, and harbor a rich biodiversity that is, in part, still unknown; aside from being the source of food for billions of people. Oceans are an essential tool for regulating the planet's climate and are essential for life on Earth. At the same time, they are under growing pressure from factors such as global warming, acidification, pollution, overfishing and degradation of coastal and marine ecosystems;
- That human education must include multidimensional aspects, from the relationship with oneself to a sense of belonging to life on the planet in its biological, anthropological and social expressions;
- That non-hegemonic knowledge, culture, and ways of life regarding the care of water, life, Mother Earth and people are under threat of extinction and are important knowledge for the culture of sustainability on the planet;
- That in the history of humanity, water has been a central element, capable of uniting human groups of the most diverse ethnicities, traditions, religions, cultures and economic systems through cooperative actions and peaceful coexistence supporting the survival of all communities of life;
- That the threat of dispute, conflicts and wars for the right to water creates the need to strengthen a culture of peace, care and cooperation as a condition for preserving the right and access to water as a common good;
- As an element constituting all forms of life and essential for its maintenance, access to water cannot be appropriated or "privatized", because this threatens all life on the planet, including human life;
- There is a need for a transdisciplinary view of water that is open and inclusive, and able to recognize the multiple original forms of knowledge from communities, traditions, arts and religions, conferring upon them the same legitimacy as academic knowledge, and in this way supporting participatory, cooperative and sustainable water management.

We propose that human actions, either individual or collective, in private or public spheres, in civil or governmental societies, be guided by the following principles and propositions:

1. Valuing the element water in its multiple aspects: symbolic, artistic, spiritual, ecological and socio-environmental;
2. Guaranteeing the collective right to water as an unalienable public patrimony, based on respect for nature, human rights and Mother Earth's rights, social and environmental justice, the culture of peace and human values, principles also shared by the Earth Charter;

3. Acknowledging, valuing, promoting and strengthening non-hegemonic knowledge and ways of life regarding the care of water for having gained essential knowledge to preserve the culture of sustainability and for having culture as the link that promotes peace;
4. Acknowledging planet Earth as a living organism and common home for all human beings, whose sustainability depends on an ethical commitment to respecting life and understanding the connections among all living beings;
5. Promoting the idea that water, as a living entity, is the subject of rights to be incorporated in relevant legislation in every nation, giving water the right to have a voice and defend itself, according to pioneering experiences established in countries like Ecuador, Bolivia, New Zealand, India and Colombia;
6. Unconditional defense of access to clean and safe water, and basic sanitation, as an essential human right in order to fully enjoy life and all other human rights, according to UN General Assembly Resolution No. 64/292, passed by 122 countries on July 28, 2010, supporting these rights, safeguarding the sovereignty of nations in the administration of this principle;
7. Prevention and significant reduction in marine pollution, especially that which is caused by activities on land, including marine debris and nutrient pollution, in order to protect marine and coastal ecosystems;
8. Reclaiming an international fund that contributes along with social movements and individual initiatives, to advance the process of environmental education and the production of technical-scientific knowledge related to sustainability and the responsible and cooperative use of water;
9. Strengthening mechanisms for cooperation among countries for the cross-border and transdisciplinary management of water in the Amazon River Basin, the La Plata River Basin and the Guarani Aquifer, in a new diplomacy that is truly holistic and participatory;
10. Promoting and supporting scientific research, innovation, and generation of transdisciplinary knowledge about water, and its application through good practice;
11. Acknowledging and promoting, through all accessible means, the advances that have occurred in recent years about water's molecular properties and its ability to retain and transmit information; expanding knowledge, research and technical-scientific exchange for new knowledge related to water, such as homeopathy, hydrotherapy, cryotherapy and others;

12. Proposing educational practices based on a transdisciplinary perspective of openness and inclusion of knowledge, such as sensitivity and openness to dialogue in the production and transmission of knowledge, based on the ethics of care and a commitment to the sustainability of life cycles;
13. Adopting principles of cooperation and transparency in political, economic and social relations, allowing democratic access to all information about water that is managed by public and private entities;
14. Supporting and strengthening public policies in all spheres; local, national or international, that adopt the integrated care of water in its ethnocultural, ethical, ecological and spiritual aspects;
15. Adopting public policies for the maintenance and improvement of water quality, both surface water and groundwater, with special attention to the indiscriminate use of agricultural toxins, residues from industrial activities, mining, disposing of waste in bodies of water and other practices that are harmful to water;
16. Strengthening policies of preservation and conservation of water sources, areas with aquifers, permanent areas of preservation and aquatic ecosystems;
17. Acknowledging the role of forests in the production of water and the maintenance of ecological services that sustain water cycles;
18. Strengthening and promoting public policies that adopt watersheds as units of management and conflict resolution related to water, stimulating the participation of communities and embracing their knowledge for the systemic understanding and integrated approach towards water cycles in their atmospheric, surface and subterranean dimensions;
19. Integrating environmental policies, territorial water management, with watersheds as units of management;
20. Adoption of the Universal Declaration of Water Rights, a document redacted by the UN in 1992, as a guiding principle for actions in management, use and human interaction, prioritizing cooperative actions and the promotion of peace wherever there is conflict over water access and reduced availability of water;
21. Supporting the promotion of a culture of peace, which considers water as a collective good and incorporates its symbolic, ethical, ecological and cultural dimensions, so as to promote principles of peace in conflict mediation and a relationship of solidarity in its use and preservation;

22. Supporting and strengthening the participation of local communities in managing water use and sanitation;
23. Strengthening strategies to reduce meat consumption, which is greatly responsible for deforestation and excessive water consumption, such as establishing meatless Mondays;
24. Promoting conflict resolution, transdisciplinary water management and nonviolent communication training for members of all watershed committees and water resource management systems;
25. Instituting the symbolic act of reserving one minute of silence at the beginning and the end of actions and events related to water, as a form of internalization and reverence;
26. Adopting principles from the Earth Charter as ethical guidance for human society, especially in projects involving hydraulic systems;
27. Adopting the Transdisciplinarity Charter as inspiration for a values system compatible with dialogue about knowledge that is necessary for sustainable water management, and other principles and proposals treated in the charter;
28. Reclaiming a World Citizenship Water Charter, integrating voices about different realities and challenges experienced by all peoples;

The present **Charter** is adopted by the participants of the “Second International Water and Transdisciplinarity Conference- Waters for Peace” and will be presented at the 8th World Water Forum and the alternative World Water Forum-AWWF, to introduce the perspective of transdisciplinarity, ethics, care and culture of peace in debates.

Deliberations Committee
Second International Water and Transdisciplinarity Conference

