

Water Justice

Civil Society Struggles for Equitable Water Rights and Democratic Water Policies

Conference-seminar, part of the “No to commercialisation of Water” programme,
taking place during the Fifth World Water Forum , Istanbul, 16-22 March 2009.

Wednesday 18 March, 13.30 – 18.00 hrs.
Makina Muh. Odasi, Room 2
Ipek Sokak (Ipek Street), Taksim

Co-organised by Trade unions ABVAKABO FNV, PSI and Wageningen
University/IWE–Sub Dept Water Management.

In this seminar, civil society organisations show how in different parts of the world there is and has been a multitude of civil society struggles for “water justice”. The participants develop a fundamental critique on both mainstream bureaucratic and neoliberal water policies and the ways in which class-, gender- and ethnic discrimination appears to be an integrated part of “Integrated Water Management Policies-in-Practice”. They challenge the hidden “water politics” in conventional and so-called expert policies, which mask their profoundly political choices behind the discourse of efficiency, objectivity, and neutrality.

In some cases, civil society struggles focus on the right to sufficient and clean water. In others they concentrate on empowering public and collective forms of water control, preventing privatisation and expropriation of water from (local) government or communities - a fight against water accumulation and decision power in the hands of powerful elites or multinational enterprises and the adverse effects privatisation has on water users, citizens and on workers. The seminar also presents cases of struggles for ethnic and gender recognition and democratic water governance, and popular, peasant and indigenous mobilization to materialize such alternative water management rationalities

Various conferences will highlight the diversity of water rights, access and democracy struggles and after the presentations there is a debate on how these different civil society groups (unions, NGO’s, local communities, women groups, academics) can work together to achieve their common goal, which basically is (to keep or to regain) an equitable access and democratic control over water.

Organisers:

1. ABVAKABO FNV: Jerry van den Berge: jvandenberge@abvakabo.nl
2. Wageningen University/IWE: Rutgerd Boelens: rutgerd.boelens@wur.nl

Language: English

Programme:

1. Opening and welcome to participants	13.30 hrs
2. Jerry van den Berge (ABVAKABO FNV, The Netherlands) on union water justice struggles and the public nature of water services	13.45 hrs
3. Adriana Marquisio (FFOSE, Uruguay) on union water justice struggles and the public nature of water services	14.00 hrs
4. Philipp Terhorst (TNI, Germany) on local-global water policy struggles and reclaiming public water management	14.15 hrs
5. Mary Ann Manahan (Focus on the Global South, Philippines) on local-global water policy struggles and reclaiming public water management	14.30 hrs
6. Public Debate	14.45 hrs
7. Rutgerd Boelens (Wageningen University, Netherlands) on peasant/indigenous/grassroots water rights and justice struggles	15.30 hrs
8. Aline Arroyo (Concertación/ Ecuadorian Water Forum) on peasant and indigenous justice struggles and legal and policy alternatives	15.45
9. Sarah Ahmed (Gender and Water Alliance, Asia) on gender-water justice struggles and alternatives	16.00 hrs
10. Public Debate with Panel	16.15 hrs
11. Closure	17.30 hrs

During the conference-seminar, water rights, justice, democracy networks and initiatives can present their materials, publications, posters, etc.