



Brazil, March 2022

**To the IX World Alternative Water Forum -
Dakar, Senegal, from March 21 to 25th, 2022**

Message from the waters of Brazil to the waters of the world

On the occasion of the IX World Alternative Water Forum, which will take place in Dakar, Senegal, from March 22 to 25, 2022, where people from different parts of the planet, environmental organizations and other civil society organizations will meet to reflect on the condition of water on this planet and how the planet is in relation to water, we express our presence in solidarity and commitment to all the initiatives that promote the objective of the IX FAME: to ensure the right to water as a common good. As the Ecumenical Water Network-Brazil (REDA-Brazil), we are part of this objective, promoting water as a common good, a human right and a divine gift.

REDA-Brazil understands that the holding of the IX FAME is a call for a worldwide movement of care for the waters, strengthening a convergence of different cultures for the awareness of the centrality of water for all forms of life. We feel summoned to a planetary pact for life, in a biocentric and ecocentric posture that affirms the right to life extended to all ecosystems and biodiversities, seeking a new sustainability that requires a regenerative culture of the web of life.

We, environmental organizations and other civil society organizations, feel summoned by the waters to hold the IX FAME. They are the waters of polluted rivers that clamor for the recuperation of their original quality; the waters of springs that have dried up and want to resurface; the dammed waters that long to recover their freedom; the waters of the streams and rivers that cross our cities and want to become a source of beauty, leisure and life; the waters of the oceans and the flying rivers; the waters that are offered as merchandise in local and international commerce and on the stock exchange, that struggle to be recuperated in their nature as gift and free.

We are intellectuals, activists, politicians, religious and spiritualists, economists, journalists, NGOs/CSOs, unions, women, young people, children and the elderly... We are water bodies and water consciousnesses. And we share with FAME 2022 our convictions and experiences in favor of "full and abundant" life, which requires an awareness of fraternity and planetary co-responsibility. Together, we want to strengthen the paths to an environmental conversion of humanity, reviewing its relations with the resources of nature, especially water. Thus, we want to commit our peoples and our governments to the affirmation of the "constitutional right of access to water," but also a natural, human, and divine right. A right of origin and not of conquest.

The water situation in Brazil

Brazil is a country of continental dimensions and extraordinary hydric wealth, with the freshwater networks of its rivers forming dozens of Hydrographic Basins, especially the Amazon, São Francisco, Tocantins and Prata River Basins. This country contains 12% of the fresh water of the entire planet and 53% of Latin America's water. The Brazilian coasts of about 8,500 km in length are washed by the blue and green waters of the Atlantic Ocean. Besides the surface waters, Brazil has immense groundwater aquifers such as the Guarani in the south of Brazil, with 1.2 million km²; and in the north, the recently revealed Alter do Chão Aquifer, considered the largest aquifer in the world in volume of available water, 86.4 thousand km³ of water, in an area of 437.5 thousand km², running through several states in northern Brazil.

But what is the situation of Brazil's waters today? Like what happens globally, Brazil suffers from climate changes that affect the ecosystems and threaten the diversity of life expressions in the different biomes. The causes of such changes are more human than natural, such as pollution by toxic products, deforestation, and mining, among others. Water is one of the elements that suffer most from this situation, with the disappearance of springs, the decrease in the volume of the flying rivers, as well as the 15% decrease in the volume of water in the Brazilian biomes in the last 20 years. As a consequence, Brazil has 70% of its rivers polluted. Added to this is the poor management of water resources, the growth of their commodification, and the culture of waste. Despite all the abundance of water, the Brazilian socio-economic-political system does not make access to quality water available to the entire population, even though it is an article of the Brazilian Constitution.

We know that it is not only Brazil that suffers serious water problems. The problem is, unfortunately, planetary. And this justifies the realization of the FAME, calling on all peoples, with their cultures and their creeds, to promote water justice. As REDA-Brazil, we want to contribute to this cause as one, presenting concrete proposals that we consider urgent. As REDA-Brazil, our central statements are

- Affirm the rights of the Earth, as a living being that needs to be respected and valued in its own dignity and purpose: to generate and sustain life.
- To affirm the rights of the Waters, to be recognized as a common vital good, and not private; to be returned to nature in its maximum purity; to have a public management of its services to the populations (Danielle Mitterand model).
- To affirm a tripartite conception of water: as a universal common good, which cannot be subjected to the logic of the capitalist market; a human right and of all creatures that need it to survive; a divine gift, which characterizes it as a common good and a universal right, having its roots in a Transcendent Horizon where everything originates and is sustained;

To guarantee the realization of what we affirm, we assume the commitment to PROMOTE:

- Planetary Universal Citizenship, articulating all peoples for a culture of creational fraternity, aiming to call attention on the destiny of humanity, which requires new paradigms in the experience of the here and now in connection with the land, the water, the mountains the biodiversity, the creation as a whole.
- Open spaces to deepen reflection, the debate of democratic ideas, the formulation of proposals, the free exchange of experiences, and mobilize civil society to oppose the capitalist exploitation of the common good that is water.
- Environmental, social, and citizen management of the right to water, its preservation, and its distribution among its various uses. The participation of citizens, communities and peoples is a crucial element for the democratic management of water.
- Resistance to the capitalist culture that makes water a commodity, opposing the neoliberal and mercantilist system with its initiatives of financialization of water bodies and ecosystems, as well as the privatization of every natural resource.
- A concrete alternative to the World Water Forum (WFME) organized by the World Water Council, developing platforms that enable the implementation of citizen actions for the preservation of water resources and their democratic, community-based and truly ecological management.
- Carry out an international campaign to raise awareness and demand that States include the right to water and sanitation in their Constitutions.

With REDA-Brazil having the objective of articulating forces that promote water justice, WE CONCLUDE:

Civil society and organized social movements, to:

- Affirm water as a principle of life, a right of all living beings and a common good of planet Earth and humanity, opposing all forms of depredation of life on the planet, particularly water life.
- To organize ourselves as volunteer groups in defense of the planet's drinking waters, supporting and strengthening the River Basin Committees.
- Demand that all party programs and the demands proposed to candidates for all levels of representative politics, commit to agendas that include the care of water and the concrete defense of rivers and watersheds of the country and the region where they live.
- Create means of articulation of the peoples in a great Movement of Citizenship for the Waters affirming its Centrality for Life.

The faiths and spiritual traditions, we call for:

- Affirm the spiritual dimension of water, recognized in its sacramentality as a creature that has a transcendental nature and links us with the Transcendent;

- Promote the meaning of creation in the different cosmologies and theodicies that express the sacredness of all creation, with an attitude of reverence and respect towards water.
- To develop a spirituality of integral ecology from the perspective of the original peoples.
- That the doctrines, liturgies, and practices of the faiths engage the believing communities in concrete actions for socio-environmental justice.
- Develop in their doctrines and liturgies the relationship between the Superior Being/God and water.

The academies and educational entities, we call upon to

- Develop educational processes that form a socio-environmental culture, involving society in the search for solutions to the current global water crisis.
- Review the principles and values that guide our human presence on Earth and the concepts of sustainability, favoring the creation fraternity through an ethic of reverence and care for life in all its forms.
- To prioritize an education of society at all levels regarding Water as a source of life for Earth and for all living beings, in an inter/transdisciplinary perspective that integrates water in its different meanings.
- That UNESCO recognize and recommend that water be placed, on the strength of its transversality, as a theme in the educational curricula of children and young people.
- To scientifically deepen the bases and reasons for educational processes that generate and sustain new relationships with nature's resources.
- To develop an environmental education that includes the culture of water linked to the promotion of citizenship.
- To provide human and technological resources for the knowledge and preservation of different ecosystems, their biodiversity, and natural resources.
- Educate for a loving relationship with the waters and with all of creation, which supposes revaluing the cultures of the original peoples and relearning with them how to relate to the land, the waters, and life in a communal way and with reverential respect.

Governments, we call for:

- To reach agreements that regulate with social and ecological meaning the practices of management, conservation and common use of water.

- Develop community water distribution and management systems, guaranteeing accessibility to all people.
- Develop a water policy that roots technical and economic criteria in ethical principles and socio-environmental justice.
- Establish a Fund to support the most fragile countries in terms of water resources.

These proposals are intended, finally, to encourage a sense of urgency for concrete actions for water justice. It is urgent to develop a planetary citizenship that safely guides the destiny of humanity, with new paradigms in the fraternal coexistence of all created beings, in a close connection between Earth, water, mountains, valleys,..., with their biomes and ecosystems. Every human being has the responsibility to care for the Earth and its resources, as the oikoumene - our common home. May FAME 2022 strengthen initiatives in this direction.

The Founding Organizations of REDA - Brazil are signatories of this document:



**Conselho Nacional de Igrejas Cristãs do Brasil
(National Council of Christian Churches of Brazil)**



**Ágora dos Habitantes da Terra – Brasil
(Agora of the Inhabitants of the Earth – Brazil)**



**Núcleo Ecumênico e Inter-religioso – PUCPR
(Ecumenical and Interreligious Nucleus - PUCPR -
Pontifical Catholic University of Paraná)**



**Iniciativa das Religiões Unidas
(United Religions Initiative)**



**Coordenadora Ecológica de Serviço
(Ecumenical Service Coordination)**



**Centro de Estudos e Ação Social
(Center for Studies and Social Action)**



Instituto Oca do Sol