

**22 March is World Water Day
and the clock is ticking for donors
to take action on the humanitarian
and ecological water crisis that
leaves one billion people without
access to clean water.**



Over the last decade the European Commission has persistently promoted private sector participation in water and sanitation services. However, experiences from Bolivia, Guyana, Tanzania and elsewhere demonstrate that privately-operated water services do not bring the necessary investment or efficiency gains to deliver affordable water to the urban poor.

Despite these failures, the Commission continues to promote policies and funding mechanisms to encourage private sector involvement in water and sanitation services, whilst also pressing poor countries to open these sectors to European multinationals.

We now call for changes in this approach, changes that recognise access to water as a human right and which give poor countries the support needed to make this right a reality.

Worldwide, 90 per cent of piped water provision is publicly provided, with strong public utilities in Brazil, India, Uganda and elsewhere delivering water and sanitation services to increasing numbers. The challenge is to scale-up this good performance by improving other public providers.

We welcome recent comments that the Commission will look to introduce 'smart aid' policies. In relation to water and sanitation, this should mean that the EU:

- **Stops using aid money to facilitate private sector involvement.**
- **Drops requests for market access within trade talks.**
- **Greatly increases aid and public investment in the sector.**
- **Supports the development of strong public utilities in the Global South through 'public-public partnerships' that enable the exchange of expertise between public providers, working hand-in-hand with local communities.**

For more information visit www.worldwaterday.eu

11.11.11; ABVAKABO FNV; ActionAid International; Africa-Europe Faith and Justice Network; Afrika-Europa Network Netherlands; Association of African Engineers and Scientists International; Attac Flanders; Blue Planet Project; BothEnds; Bread for the World; Campagna per la riforma della Banca Mondiale; Centre national de Coopération au Développement; Comisión Nacional en Defensa del Agua y la Vida/ Red VIDA (Uruguay); Corporate Accountability International; Corporate Europe Observatory; Ecologistas en Acción; Ecumenical Water Network; Engineering Without Borders (Catalunya); Environmental Rights Action/Friends of the Earth Nigeria; European Federation of Public Service Unions; FIVAS - Association for International Water Studies (Norway); Focus on the Global South; Food and Water Watch; France Libertés Fondation Danielle Mitterrand; Friends of the Earth Europe; Friends of the Earth (Finland); Friends of the Earth International; GATS Platform (Netherlands); Italian Water World Contract Committee; Latin America Solidarity Centre (Ireland); Les Amis de la Terre; PROTOS; Public Services International; The Springs Foundation; Transnational Institute; UNISON; UNISON Scotland; Unser Wasser Hamburg; Verdegai; War on Want; Wasser in Bürgerhand; WaterAid; Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (UK); World Development Movement.