



Cesar Herrera, Cristobal Jaime  
4<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum Secretariat  
Insurgentes Sur 2416 Piso 4  
Ala Sur Copilco 04340  
Mexico City  
Mexico

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Dear Sirs

We were involved in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> World Water Forums as members of the NGO Major Group and are following the preparations for the 4<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum in Mexico City. We are writing to you in the hope that the lessons learnt in previous Forums on the challenges of creating an open democratic space will be acted on for the 4<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum.

Over the past 15 months, FAN and other NGOs have presented you with some practical recommendations to support good levels of participation in the Forum by social organisations, but if action is not taken soon, we fear that planning will be too late to allow for participation by many local actors, not just the NGOs.

We would also like to see a representative mix of perspectives and experiences presented in Mexico City and welcome the way the process is evolving for the Americas, where a more participative and inclusive process is being developed. However, we regret that the other Regional Multi-Stakeholder Committees have not yet met this challenge.

The issue of funding for local actors remains unresolved, but unless significant levels of funding are secured to support participation by organisations working at the local municipality, watershed or village level the 4<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum will fail in its mission. We believe that the World Water Council and the Government of Mexico should allocate part of their budget for participation of local organizations and should announce this at the Stockholm Water Week. This money must be independent of funding being provided to the Beacon Organisations, and potentially should match such sums. Beacons have already got access to money and influence; it is the grass roots that need the support in an event such as this.

We would like to improve liaison between NGOs and the Forum Secretariat. There are enough experienced networks and organisations in the NGO sector, beyond the partners and members of the World Water Council (WWC) and Beacons, to help you with liaison and communications.

The selection process remains unclear to most people, but we recommend a proportion of sessions are reserved for NGOs and other civil society organizations and financial and logistical support is provided to facilitate this.

We urge you to prioritise these issues. Time and money are the most significant barriers for participation of civil society organisations, community-based organisations and indigenous peoples, and many will be considering their own participation in light of the response they receive.

Yours sincerely

Freshwater Action Network  
Both ENDS  
CapNet South Asia  
BPW International Taskforce Women for Water  
WaterAid  
Women for Water Partnership  
WWF  
IPANEMA  
Centre for Organisation Research Education  
International Rivers Network  
NGO Forum for Urban Water and Sanitation  
Modern Architects for Rural India  
Red Centroamericana De Acción Del Agua  
Centre for the Built Environment  
Centro Lationamericano de Estudios Hídricos (CLAEH)