

"SMALL STREAMS MAKE THE GREAT RIVER OF LIFE" THE GREAT NATIONAL WATER MOBILIZATION

Beginning on Friday November 9th, together with the people of Cajamarca, a wide range of groups and social movements have mobilized to have a National Long March for Water. Many social organizations, defense fronts, citizen groups, university students, artists, unions and progressive democratic parties, like small streams, have joined the March to defend the right to water. Throughout the length and breadth of the country, the development and dissemination of posters, songs, pictures, organized meetings, vigils and days of prayer in Catholic and Protestant churches, articles, murals, demonstrations, cultural events have taken place. In addition, hundreds of electronic communications have circulated, increasing the numbers involved, and there have been interesting contributions through social networks, online photo spreads, artistic and creative music videos and testimonies that have illustrated the struggle of the Andean peoples around water. All are citizen initiatives that have been springing up in support of the noble struggle of the people of Cajamarca who are defending themselves from the aggression of Conga Mine ecocide, stating that water is an inalienable human right.

Recently, in Lima, we had a gathering of more than 70 delegates from various regions, unions, and citizen groups in the country. The spirit was one of brotherhood, solidarity and a commitment to defending the right to water in the context of climate change, which increases the vulnerability of the poor. The agreements made were marked by the generosity of those who come together to support the cause of this social movement that claims the right to be consulted, to be respected and heard in decisions about its development

model, socially-just participation in economic growth, the prohibition of mining in the headwaters of rivers and mining with cyanide and mercury that is causing so much damage to land and water. Those protesting have also experienced much suffering because they continue to be slandered, persecuted, reported, repressed, imprisoned, injured and sometimes even killed as has happened in Piura, Cajamarca and the Tambo Valley.

The March for Water will leave Cajamarca on February 1st and will arrive in Lima on Thursday February 9-10 where it will culminate with the convocation of the National Justice Water Forum. There, water issues and proposed laws and policies to be promoted for the future will be discussed and proposed.

Elite sectors in the country that are racist and corrupt, will do everything possible to discredit the character of the March for Water, seeking to create confusion and fear among those in Lima to discourage them from joining in solidarity with the people marching. Do not let the creators of fear interfere with the creation of solidarity in Lima! The March has a fully peaceful character; it is broad, democratic and even festive. None of the organizations and citizens are coming with suspicious or vested interests, but rather, with the hope of change: to contribute and work, calling for more and more citizens to join, promoting, minka type, the multiple knowledge and capacities of the peoples of the Amazon, that highlands and coast meet and shake hands to build an awareness and a new political attitude. This attitude is one of the defense of human dignity, and respect for environmental rights of all living things. We are welcomed by the Pachamama. We feel undeniably active and committed, knowing that we can not afford, in Peru, to live with the luxury of not defending the land and water on her back and

the confiscation, destruction and contamination that has been occurring.

Those who participate in the March we will be vigilant that it is not infiltrated by those who promote injustice, abuse, or corruption, either from the companies, violent political groups, or even from a legitimate public outrage that is tired of waiting for change in this serious situation. The marchers want to restore hope. We know that a public expression of defense of life such as the Water March can not in any way justify the use of violence, and must reject what has been spread by the major media of the capital: misconceptions and calumnies that have well-planned policy objectives: to delegitimize and discredit, further allowing the abuse to continue against the poorest people and the destruction of Mother Earth and water.

Against those who denigrate the people who defend the right to water, organizers say that as the conveners of the March we shared democratic values with the vast majority of Peruvians: the unrestricted defense of human rights, territorial rights of the indigenous people and peasant communities, the need to decentralize and strengthen the power of municipalities, the need for environmental awareness more broadly, the struggle against discrimination, racism and all forms of social exclusion, respect for cultural diversity, artistic, sexual, ethnic freedoms, combating corruption, respect for religious freedom in a secular state, in short, all values that are help to enrich and deepen democracy.

Since we need to coordinate actions and promote greater participation, adding creativity and spontaneity necessary for the March to succeed, we call on all to make contact, disseminate information, support in multiple ways, actively

involve their organizations and family and friends so they can join this citizens' initiative in solidarity with the struggle of the people of Cajamarca. As there are many scheduled tasks, generosity, availability, trust and friendship is needed.

Our march is not a sacrifice; it is joyful and full of hope, a way for people to come together with others who know that just the fact of our joining will create the way for a better country for those who come after. Therefore, join the March in the spirit of building a new country, challenging the pessimism of those who believe that all is lost. The walkers of the March know what is needed and can not be stopped by greed, selfishness, indifference, or by those who have traditionally held economic and political power and who continue to manipulate the mass media to defend the interests of small groups of power. A more just and fraternal solidarity has begun. The defense of water and the Pachamama summons, inspires, unites them.

Welcome to the GRAND NATIONAL WATER MARCH, where every one of you is part of the small springs and streams that feed the great river that gives life and gives us hope.

Marco Arana Zegarra
NATIONAL COORDINATOR OF PROGRESS.