

## Thursday, 15 March 2012

### Butterfly Effect reaction to 6th WWF ministerial declaration

#### **Press release on the Butterfly Effect response to the Ministerial Declaration of the 6th World Water Forum in Marseille (March 15, 2012)**

The Butterfly Effect is a dynamic initiative that brings together over 90 civil society organizations, NGOs and networks around the world to promote efficient and equitable local solutions, that have a lasting impact on access to water and sanitation for all.

The ministerial declaration is a crucial outcome of the World Water Forum, as it represents a political statement of 139 states on the future of the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene. Although this text does not have the value or the weight of a resolution of the UN General Assembly (itself subject to a vote of Member States and not by consensus), it is a collective basis, bound by its principle of consensual validation, which is the basis for the establishment of national sectoral policies. There is also a terminal in sector governance, and a showcase for the entire international community.

The Ministerial Declaration, which was approved on March 13, 2012 in Marseille, has some specific features that the Butterfly Effect wishes to highlight.

First, we are pleased that, for the first time in the history of the forum, the process of drafting the text, has been a participatory one in which civil society has been largely involved.

Secondly, for the first time since 1997, the explicit affirmation of the right to water as an inalienable human right and the determination for signatory states to implement it, are recognised.

Finally, because the notion of humanitarian crisis, preparing for disasters and emergency response, is officially recognized by this declaration of states as a priority. The Butterfly Effect has actively pushed for this recognition and our voice was heard.

However, it is regrettable (following the advice of Catarina de Albuquerque, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Drinking Water and Sanitation) that the text does not explicitly mention the commitment of states to implement this right in accordance with the UN process. Indeed, only this would make them fully accountable towards their population.

The Butterfly Effect believes that good governance of water and sanitation will only be brought about through a human rights based approach which requires adequate investment in informed and effective civil society participation. We greatly welcomed the 2010 UN resolutions recognizing the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation as legally binding and now urge all actors to support national governments to implement this right for all people and to recognise and effectively support local knowledge and community management as important contributions for implementing this right.

We also regret that, in affirming the prevention of natural disasters, no mention is made of the International Framework of Hyōgo (2005 - 2015) which commits more than 100 states anticipating a concrete and structured ways to solve and manage crises.

Similarly, the Ministerial Declaration does not mention the need for ratification by States of the United Nations Convention on International Watercourses of 1997 to ensure sustainable and equitable access to resources for basic needs of all.

Finally, some states have not cooperated by including civil society in the drafting process of the Ministerial Declaration.

The Butterfly Effect appreciates the progress made since the first World Water Forum in 1997. We call for Forums, and in particular South Korea, the next host of the Forum, to take a concrete step towards the full use of policy tools developed within the UN framework.

We also ask that in the future, involvement and participation of civil society will broaden and we will carry the messages of the Butterfly Effect to the UN conference in Rio +20.

Let us work together for the institutional, political, legal, economic, technical and human resources to stop the unbearable death of over 2 million people each year through lack of water and proper sanitation!