



Jubilee South Asia Pacific Movement on Debt and Development (JS-APMDD)

Submission to the United Nations Independent Expert Review on Private Sector Participation in the Provision of Water and Sanitation Services

Discourse in the United Nations seem to have been mainly focused on ascertaining duties and obligations of the state if and when a so-called third party is permitted to provide water and sanitation services. Hence, General Comment No. 15¹ states: “where water services are operated or controlled by third parties, States parties must prevent them from compromising equal, affordable, and physical access to sufficient, safe and acceptable water.”

This dangerous and narrow framework has been challenged and must be challenged. A more fundamental question to raise is whether or not the private sector can indeed take on providing water in such a way that everyone can have “sufficient, safe, acceptable, physically accessible and affordable water for personal and domestic uses”. It is high time to question whether profit maximization can be pursued and at the same time ensure the enjoyment of the human right to water, in its entire content and intent.

I. The Right to Water

Water is life. Living things are mostly water and most activities utilize water in some form. The use of water involves extraction of a finite natural resource. Most importantly, to live a life of dignity, an adequate supply of water must be secured for each individual regardless of economic capacity.

Such is the nature of water that access to it is guaranteed as a human right. It entails that no interference must keep anyone from exercising this right and those without access yet must be given equal opportunity to enjoy it.

Access, as a component of the right to water, is so crucial that the General Comment No. 15 have specified four elements to define it: physical accessibility, economic accessibility, non-discrimination, and information accessibility. Two of these elements – economic accessibility and non-discrimination – pertain specifically to prohibit exclusion of any person or segment of a population from enjoying the right to water. Economic accessibility means water must be affordable for all, the costs incurred to provide the service notwithstanding. Non-discrimination means every single human being must be able to access water services, regardless of race, gender, location, and especially income or economic status.

Delivering water to people entails huge investments in infrastructure for the pipe network, water treatment, and disposal. The way these are carried out makes water vulnerable to contamination, pollution, and depletion. This raises the question on who will be taking the huge responsibility to provide water for everyone.

¹ The Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights' "General Comment No. 15: The Right to Water" was published in 2002 to elaborate upon Articles 11 and 12 of the Covenant, which specify the right to water.

II. The policy of privatizing water

The manner of providing water – whether public or private – is a question of policy. For generations, governments have been expected to take up this role. However, the opening up of essential services, like water, power, and communication services to the private sector has been implemented as a policy of Asian governments since the 1990s.

Privatization proponents argue that states are unable to provide sufficient financing to ensure delivery of adequate, affordable, and quality services. They point to poorly maintained, antiquated and inadequate facilities and infrastructures and the obvious need for huge investments on the one hand, and on the other, the tight financial situation of most South governments. What they conveniently gloss over is the fact that the debt problem is one of the fundamental factors that led to this situation.

For many countries in the South, the servicing of huge public debts has been eating up a large part of government resources for more than two decades. Consequently, revenues from taxes are not enough to finance government spending. This in turn leads to restrictions on expenditures, leaving little money for basic services and investments in public utilities. It also leads to deeper indebtedness as governments resort to borrowing even more in order to augment revenues from taxes.

As a logical recourse, governments were told that poorly-maintained, debt-ridden service institutions and public utility companies must be privatized. They were convinced that selling off of assets or leasing of public infrastructures would provide extra revenues and bringing in the private sector would ease social expenditures.

III. Private provision of water

Privatization refers to various contractual relationships wherein assets or operations are transferred partly or fully to the private sector. Some of the more common arrangements are in the form of operation or management (O & M) contracts, lease or concession agreements, or full asset sale. These various modalities vary on the source of private sector income, control over tariff structure, responsibility on infrastructure investment, length of contract, and ownership of assets.

Ownership of assets is a vital element with regard to the realization of the right to water. Ownership translates to control and control translates to having the capacity to provide and/or withhold. When governments delegate some form of ownership, they give the private sector a free hand on how to manage water sources, prioritize among competing uses, and deliver to whoever or wherever they deem profitable. This arrangement makes water a property – something that can be bought and traded, owned and sold.

Control over the tariff structure determines who sets the price of water. Water corporations are driven by full-cost recovery and revenue-raising goal, which mean that the entire cost involved in finding or buying the water source to water treatment to water delivery and back to treating water disposal will be part of water's price tag and the price tag should guarantee profit. This price tag will be borne in turn by

the consumers as a necessary prerequisite for enjoying the service. This price tag makes water a commodity – it is exchanged at a specified value in monetary terms.

These two fundamental aspects of private sector provision of water contradict with the nature of a human right to water that does not discriminate. Private sector provision constitutes a given hindrance to the freedom to enjoy this right. Transferring ownership and control to the private sector is corollary to transferring the capacity to bestow the right to the private corporations. In such a circumstance, the intent, purpose, and definition of a right to water is undermined.

IV. Asia's experience in water privatization

Asia is witness to how private corporations implemented price hikes one after another, excluding thousands from their supply of water for daily domestic use. If this appears counterintuitive for business, we have only to realize that water is so vital that poor families will do everything they can to obtain it – either from reconnections, which means corporations rake huge profits on exorbitant reconnection fees or through illegal water operators, who sell water for as much as tenfold the normal price.

One of the most common water privatization mechanism implemented in Asia involves contracting-out the management and operations of the distribution system to a private operator while ownership of utility assets remains with the state. Some of the early guinea pigs for this model were Manila (Philippines), Jakarta (Indonesia), Selangor and the Federal Territories of Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya (Malaysia), and Tiruppur in the state of Tamil Nadu (India) in mid to late 1990s. After that, several operations and management contracts swept several Indian states like Mumbai, Nagpur, Hubli-Dharwad, Bangalore, and Delhi. These privatization endeavors promised, on the one hand, to make water service delivery more efficient so that rates will go down, while on the other hand, to make water utilities financially sufficient so that services can be extended to all.

The following experiences belie the justifications used to allow private sector intrusion in water services.

Philippines' Case: From MWSS to Maynilad and Manila Water

In 1997, the World Bank designed and undertook the biggest water privatization project at that time in Metro Manila, the urban capital of the Philippines. The operation of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS), the government water agency, was divided into east and west zones and awarded to two private corporations through 25-year concession contracts.

This undertaking was supposed to free MWSS from its US\$800 million debts to international financial institutions while solving the host of problems plaguing MWSS operations – among them the meagre 16-hour daily average water supply to only 67% of 12 million coverage population, perennial failure to realize projected revenue for losing two-thirds of water supply due to broken pipes and pilferage.

Concessionaires promised to lower water rates, extend uninterrupted, 24-hour water supply to all connected consumers by 2000, provide universal water supply by 2006, among others. The bidding

water rates of Manila Water and Maynilad were Php2.61 and Php4.96 per cubic meter. In ten years, these have unacceptably ballooned by 353% and 509% respectively². Worse, 212 communities in the supposed service areas remain waterless while several other households are unable to enjoy access to water due to high installation costs – more than a half-month's salary of a minimum-wage earner.

Until now, only 55% of Metro Manila benefit from household connections, a glaring testament to the concessionaires' failure to expand service provision. In many cases, as many as 6 households share a single connection, which means these poor families ironically suffer from the progressive rate scheme when the intent in fact was to provide lower rates to families that consume water for their most basic needs.

Indonesia's Case: TPJ and Palyja

The water privatization experience in Jakarta also provides a vivid illustration of how privatization is not only a story of unfulfilled promises but also of how peoples' right to water was disregarded in favor of private profit and vested interests. Also designed by the World Bank, the Jakarta concession divided water provision in the city into east and west zones in 1997 – Thames PAM Jaya (TPJ) in the east and PAM Lyonnaise Jaya (Palyja) in the west.

Twelve years hence, water service and quality in Jakarta remains a problem under the privatized set-up. In many cases, consumers still boil their water while frequent water interruptions continue to occur leaving them without water for days. Most poor communities remain without piped water due to unaffordable connection charges and informal tenure arrangements.

Residents of Muara Baru in Northern Jakarta are now waging a double war for their water. For six years they have been receiving and paying water bills from PT Palyja (west zone operator) without getting water from the taps, which prompted them to file a class suit against the company. At the same time, they are left with no option but to buy expensive water from illegal water operators that get water using hydrants that siphon off and divert water paid for by the residents. Their attempts to exact action from PT Palyja on this issue created hostile tension between the residents and illegal water operators, who are now threatening them not to demand the company to install new pipes.

Malaysia's case: PNSB

For the Sungai Selangor Water Supply scheme, a 30-year concession contract was awarded to Puncak Niaga Sdn. Bhd. (PNSB), one of the biggest integrated water services company in the country, by the State Government of Selangor in Malaysia in 1994. This contract allowed PNSB to take over, operate, maintain, manage, rehabilitate and refurbish 27 existing water treatment plants formerly under the management of the Selangor Waterworks Department (JBAS). PNSB's treated water is distributed by JBAS to Selangor and the Federal Territories of Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya.

² 2007 average rates for residential connection without sewerage are Php15.90 for Manila Water and Php22.47 for Maynilad.

By 2004, water distribution has also been transferred by JBAS to a private company called SYABAS (Sdn. Berhad Syarikat Bekalan Air Selangor Sdn Bhd), which is a subsidiary of Puncak Niaga Sdn. Bhd. (PNSB). With this integration, it became the biggest water supply privatization in the country, resulting to a devastating water disenfranchisement of a large sector of the population.

In 2006 alone, 178,000 consumers were disconnected from the service because they are unable to pay water tariffs that have hiked up 15% since privatization. In total, about 25% of its 1.5 million household consumers are now disconnected from water services. Since its takeover of water distribution, SYABAS has amassed RM³ 18.2 million in profits just for reconnections. These unjust developments prompted the new government of the Selangor state to reclaim the management of the state's water services from the private operators.

Water consumers from Asia all learned the unfortunate truth about privately provided water: it discriminates. It flows to where the money is. Revenues and profits are what drive private water corporations, not any obligation to respect the right to water of everyone, especially the poor and marginalized. In Tiruppur, India, like in many other places in the world, residential consumers adjust their lives according to water rations while neighboring industries get uninterrupted supply.

We are told however, that the responsibility to protect peoples' access falls on the state, especially when there is private sector participation. It is therefore necessary also to look at the kind of role that states have played in a privatized set-up of delivering water services.

V. State's "duty"

The State's duty to protect the right to water requires the establishment of a regulatory system empowered enough to enforce laws, recognize and curb abuses if and when they occur. Such regulatory system must be in place even in a system of public provision of services. This regulatory system is even more crucial in privatized set-up.

Unfortunately, regulatory bodies have mostly facilitated the transfer of private losses to the public's already-depleted purse.

The Case of NTADCL

In Tiruppur, Tamil Nadu, India, the New Tiruppur Area Development Corporation Ltd. (NTADCL) was set up by the state government in 1995 to execute a 30-year concession contract worth INR 1,023 crores⁴. NTADCL is a consortium of Infrastructure Leasing & Financial Services Limited (IL&FS), Mahindra and Mahindra, United Utilities, North West Water, Larsen and Tubro and Bechtel.

The project would transfer water through a 55km long pipeline from the river Bhavani and supply 185 million liters of water per day to nearly 1,000 textile units and more than 1.6 million residents in

³ RM is Malaysian Ringgit.

⁴ INR is Indian Rupee. A crore is equal to ten million.

Tiruppur and its surrounding area, making it the first public-private partnership for both industrial and domestic water supply. NTADCL would earn revenue through the water supply rates that it charges the industrial units in Tiruppur, Tiruppur Municipality and the adjoining villages.

By 2009, the company has accumulated losses of INR177 crore, prompting it to ask INR65 crore refinancing from the state government. The government do not seem to have any problems pouring in more taxpayer's money to a project that serve mostly private sector's needs, without improving the access to water of villages in Tiruppur.

This trend of running to the government to solve liquidity and debt problems of private water corporations is shared by many countries in Asia. In several cases, automatic adjustments are negotiated after the contracts have been signed and government institutions that are supposed to regulate are held hostage by private interests. This is the glaring reason why rates in Manila after privatization have increased more than 500% in the west zone.

Maynilad's Automatic Tariff Adjustment

By 2000, Maynilad's foreign exchange losses were estimated to have reached Php3 billion⁵. It then proposed several tariff-adjustment mechanisms, which necessitated changing the provisions of their Concession Agreements. The government entered into these bail-out schemes when Maynilad threatened to periodically cut off water supply (a water "blackout"), citing financial incapacity to continue its operations. The so-called Amendment 1 engineered by Maynilad and MWSS provided for the following anti-consumer mechanisms⁶:

- Accelerated Extra-ordinary Price Adjustment (AEPA) for the recovery of Maynilad's past foreign exchange losses incurred from August 1, 1997 to December 31, 2000, during the period October 15, 2001 to December 31, 2002 (instead of the remaining life of the contract);
- Foreign Currency Differential Adjustment (FCDA) for the recovery of accrued foreign-exchange losses or gains starting January 1, 2002, subject to quarterly review of the MWSS Regulatory Office, arising from the servicing of foreign-denominated MWSS debts (shouldered by concession fees) and concessionaire loans;
- Special Transitory Mechanism (STM) for the recovery of other foreign exchange losses incurred from January 1 to December 31, 2001 not covered by the AEPA and FCDA;
- A mandatory rate rebasing in 2002, which, among others, would seek to correct flawed business assumptions of the concessionaires.

These amendments were released to the public matter-of-factly; prior public consultation was very minimal. Protests against these provisions prompted the regulatory body to retract their approval, only to amend the contract and then allow for the same automatic tariff adjustments. Maynilad was even able to charge consumers for the AEPA beyond the authorized period. Overcharges arising from this

⁵ Php is Philippine peso.

⁶ Originally, Maynilad was pushing for an Automatic Currency Exchange Rate Adjustment (Auto-CERA), a mechanism that would provide for automatic price adjustments based on foreign exchange losses to be implemented without prior approval from the MWSS Board.

violation reached PhP10 billion as of 2004 and until now not a single cent was returned to the public. Expectedly so, the other concessionaire also implemented these amendments.

The Case of the Jakarta Water Supply Regulator Body (JWSRB)

Since 2004, an Automatic Tariff Adjustment was implemented by the Jakarta concessionaires, which allowed them to propose tariff hikes every 6 months to the regulatory body, subject to the approval of the Jakarta Governor. Apparently not enough for the private operator, they also decided to unilaterally implement customer category adjustment (in Jakarta there are seven customer categories and are charged differently) that also hiked up bills received by the consumers. Yet, the Jakarta Water Supply Regulator Body (JWSRB) did not take any action to penalize the two companies. To rub salt in the wound, the requirement of approval by the Governor for rate hikes has been removed.

Not only are regulators incapacitated in protecting consumers from the abuses of the private sector, they are also pathetically non-performing on their duty to exact compliance from companies on their performance targets. In 1997, the non-revenue water (NRW) of PAM Jaya (Jakarta's state water company) was 45%. As an enlightening illustration to the myth that private operators are always more efficient, the NRW rate now is 53% for Palyja (west zone) and 55% for RWE-Thames (east zone). Suez' promise to increase service coverage to 70% remains to be on paper while investments fall short by US\$200 million.

Hence, we see that the state's role has been modified not from service provider to regulator – instead to one of guaranteeing private sector involvement, regardless of their shortcomings. The privatization policy will not work unless government institutions sold to the necessity of private sector involvement in water services are set up. Unfortunately, the so-called regulatory bodies, instead of protecting peoples' rights and the country's vulnerable water resources, became the de facto allies of the private providers and their benefactors.

If the poor and marginalized that make up majority of Asia's population have suffered from private sector provision of water, if governments still carry the risks and incur financial obligations, then the question is: who have possibly gained? This points us to those who came to us bragging of hundreds of years of expertise in providing water – the global water corporations.

VI. Who Gained?

There are just a handful of global water corporations that are operating in over 100 countries. Through the enabling policy environment promoting private sector participation religiously implemented by governments, the three biggest water transnational corporations are already involved and continue to deepen their control over water sectors across the region – Suez, RWE-Thames, and Veolia.

Suez, RWE Group, and Veolia belong to the world's top 100 non-financial transnational corporations, ranked 20th, 34th, and 46th respectively in 2007. Suez, the giant among the three, now has 36 subsidiaries, including Degremont, Lyonnaise des Eaux, Ondeo, and United Water. In 2009, its revenues amounted to Euro 12.3 billion. Twenty-four percent of its revenues come from its international

operations and Asia covers 4% of its geographical presence. Suez and its subsidiaries are present in the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, India, Bangladesh, China, and South Korea. Veolia and RWE are likewise present in Malaysia, Thailand, India, China, and South Korea. Other water transnational corporations present in Asia are Saur (Vietnam, India) and United Utilities (Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand).

In working in these different Asian countries, these global water corporations work in cahoots with the local elites. For instance, each of the corporations awarded with the concession contract in Manila was a joint venture between an international water company and a firm owned by a local elite clan – the Manila Water Company (East Zone) between International Water Ltd, formed by the US-based Bechtel Overseas Corp and UK firm Northeast Water and the Ayala clan while the Maynilad Water Services Inc (West Zone) between French firm Lyonnaise Des Eaux and the Lopez clan. The Ayalas and the Lopezes are long-time family oligarchs in the Philippines that have respective conglomerates. Similarly in Jakarta, the company operating the west zone is owned by Suez (51%) and the east zone is operated by a company owned by Acuatco Pte. Ltd (95%) while the local companies they partnered with were owned by the son of the previous dictator Suharto.

These global corporations and their local allies are increasingly expanding their base in the developing world. By 2001, five of the biggest water transnational corporations are serving 80% of the population served by private operators in developing countries.⁷ From 1991-2000, the number of countries that implement water privatization projects increased from 4 to 38.⁸ During this period, the number of people served by private operators reached 93 million, of which 14 million are in Manila and Jakarta.⁹ This number increased to 160 million for the period 2001-2007.¹⁰ During this period, the number of consumers in East Asia relying on privatized water jumped from 14 million to 50 million, making it the biggest market for private water providers.¹¹

The intensification and expansion of private corporations' presence in Asia is a direct threat towards the realization of the human right to water, as we established in the nature of their operations and have been proven by many water privatization projects. The profit motive and transfer of ownership and control over nature's most precious resource cannot be expected to alleviate the plight of the 500 million people without access to safe drinking water and 1.8 billion without access to basic sanitation in the region.¹²

We now know who gained – the water corporations, and who lost – the government and majority of Asian peoples – in this disastrous experiment of transferring the responsibility of water provision from the public to the private sector. Nevertheless, in order to come up with proposals on how to resolve this mess, one question is left for us to answer: how did this policy come about in the first place?

⁷ The five TNCs are Suez (36%), SAUR (15%), Veolia (12%), Aguas de Barcelona (11%), and Thames (6%). Public-Private Partnerships for Urban Water Utilities. A Review of Experiences in Developing Countries. Philippe Marin 2009 The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Figures from Regional Document – Asia Pacific, 5th World Water Forum, March 2009.

Knowing the source and peddlers of the policy of water privatization and stopping it is a huge step towards the fulfillment of the human right to water.

VII. IFIs – drivers of the privatization agenda

International financial institutions (IFI) – primarily the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and regional development banks like the Asian Development Bank – have been vending the privatization policy to countries in Asia for two decades now. They impose privatization policies through lending criteria and conditionalities, provide loans to government projects that create the conditions and fulfill the requirements for the entry of private corporations and investors in the water sector, extend credit and ensure risk-free investments for these same private corporations, and provide expertise during the design and implementation of privatization.

Privatization policies and projects are either explicitly included as part of loan criteria and conditionality, and/or implicit in broader economic policy prescriptions, and/or implemented in order to meet fiscal targets required by these IFIs from borrowing countries.

The removal of public subsidies and the implementation of full cost recovery principle have become recurrent conditionalities in the approval and release of loans. The Adaptable Program Loan instrument of the World Bank has been used for water-related loans, including a US\$280 million loan to the Philippine government aimed at opening the water sectors of 1,000 Philippine municipalities to private business. The Bank also released a US\$300 million Water and Sanitation Structural Adjustment Loan to Indonesia, contingent on the passage of pro-water privatization laws. When Thailand suffered from the 1997 Asian financial crisis, the IMF rescue package included the privatization of state-owned enterprises like the Metropolitan Waterworks Authority and Provincial Waterworks Authority.

The World Bank and the ADB finance projects that pave the way for privatization. For instance, the general descriptions of many WB and ADB-financed water projects give the impression that these are for the purpose of developing public water services. But further reading of the project documents reveal that these are actually aimed at facilitating the private takeover of services by putting in place requirements for profitability such as infrastructure improvements and financial, managerial, and technical preparations.

To further advance water privatization in a more entrenched and irreversible way, loans from these IFIs have increasingly involved sector reforms and restructuring. So-called “restructuring” or “sector reforms” projects are usual rhetoric to mean overhauling and converting the entire water sector into a market – implementing full cost recovery, increasing tariffs, eliminating subsidies, and massive lay-off of workers. This also includes establishing institutions for regulation, the real purpose of which we have established above. Just in India, almost US\$1.3 billion in loans were approved by the ADB from 2005-2009 for reforms and restructuring projects in the states of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, and Tamil Nadu.

These IFIs have also been very persistent in continuously financing several attempts to push for pro-water privatization policies extending more than 10 years. The establishment and restructuring of the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (Pakistan) has received a total of US\$241.9 million financing from the World Bank since 1983 but several aspects of the plan are heavily resisted by civil society groups, especially the provision on tariffs and utility staff. The passing of a National Water Policy to introduce private sector participation in water supply in Sri Lanka has been going on since 2001.

The ADB partners with the World Bank in the region, boasting of its vision of a region free of poverty. Water operations have been an important part of the ADB's lending portfolio since 1968, reaching more than 25% of the Bank's lending until the mid-1980s (annual average of 30% in the early 1980s to 16% in the 1990s). Just last year, the ADB extended a total of US\$461.5 million in loans and grants for water supply and sanitation projects.

Since the ADB believes that "water must be utilized by those who render the most economic advantage", governments lining up to avail of water sector loans from the bank must adopt and implement policies and legislations that jive with this principle. Based on the report of their policy review, five countries (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Pakistan, China and Sri Lanka) have conducted comprehensive water assessments, while a total of nine countries have already "updated" water legislations (Indonesia, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Nepal, Philippines, China, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, and Vietnam). As of the 2003 survey, eight countries are undergoing water sector reforms with ADB assistance.

Hence, the policy of water privatization implemented in several Asian countries came in as an imposition by international financial institutions guided by a developmental model that puts premium on the private sector as a driver of growth. No matter how much these IFIs repeatedly vow that they exist to reduce poverty or provide "water for all", we have seen that the principle of water as an economic good that must be priced at the full cost of obtaining and delivering it has been a bitter prescription which severely compromised the right to water of the poor and marginalized.

VIII. A Call to the United Nations

The grave implications of water privatization as a policy and how it contradicts the realization of the right to water require a host of immense solutions. We in the social movements in Asia will bring our struggle to every possible and available front. It is only reasonable that we raise the challenge to water privatization and its violation of the right to water to the institution globally recognized to enshrine and define the rights to be upheld by countries of the world – the United Nations.

We believe that United Nations, with the weight of the universal recognition, is in the best position to enjoin all nations to recognize the flawed privatization model that have compromised the realization of the right to water. It is only through this recognition that the United Nations can begin to ask its member countries to adopt national policies that can best provide the human right to water and guard themselves against policies that compromise the human right to water.

Thus, we in the social movements **urge the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to spearhead a UN system-wide recognition of the inherent contradiction between water**

privatization and the right to water. The data we have presented point to the unavoidable conclusion that water privatization led to the marginalization and lack of access of the majority of the Asian population. It is high time that the UN flex its muscle to stop this.

Corollary to this, **we enjoin the UN to oppose the policy prescriptions and interventions towards water privatization of IFIs such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the Asian Development Bank** that have caused undue and irreversible harm to peoples' rights and the environment. UN's declaration of human right to water will always be compromised unless the source of policies that undermine it is stopped.

The UN will not be in this alone. Social movements, mass organizations, trade unions, sectoral formations, consumer groups, and non-government organizations across Asia united under the network Right to Essential Services and Natural Resources are already gathering up collective strength to advance its opposition to water privatization and back the UN in its mission to compel countries to advance the realization of human right to water.

From Dhaka to Karachi to Colombo, people's movements are working to ensure that private corporations fail to overtake water services and deny equitable access to water. From Manila to Jakarta to Selangor, suffering citizens are already pushing for a wider recognition of the fact that water privatization is a violation of the right to water. A UN action is a significant boost to the struggle to provide water services for all.

****This report is prepared by JS-APMDD with contributions from the following organizations – Freedom from Debt Coalition (Philippines), Indonesian Peoples Coalition on the Right to Water (Indonesia), Monitoring Sustainability of Globalization (Malaysia), Labor Union of Metropolitan Waterworks Authority and Public Services International-Thai Affiliates Council (Thailand), Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum (Pakistan), Manthan Adhyayan Kendra (India), and Center for Environmental Justice (Sri Lanka).*