

Second Gathering of the Mexican Movement of Those Affected by Dams and in Defence of Rivers (MAPDER)

The Mexican Movement of Those Affected by Dams and in Defence of Rivers (MAPDER) was born as part of the accords and strategies emanating from the II Gathering of the Meso-American Movement Against Dams which was carried out in La Esperanza, Honduras in 2003. In Honduras, the Meso-American movement made promises to shape national networks to strengthen the fight against the dams that are invading the territory of Plan Puebla-Panama. Hence, the Mexican delegation proposed the launch of the first MAPDER conference in 2004 which was held in Guerrero where communities are battling against the construction of the La Parota dam. Six months later the Second MAPDER conference was held in the Huentitan ravine where only one woman, Guadalupe Lara remained in resistance against the Arcediano dam and refused to sell her lands. Nonetheless, many social and civil organizations, environmentalists from the city of Guadalajara in the state of Jalisco, among others, have rose up to the struggle to defend water, the environment and human rights.

In just six months, MAPDER has made notable advances. Diverse groups and organizations have joined the great alliance. Members of the movement have managed to deepen their analysis and co-ordinate the theme of water, electrical energy, dams, privatizations, the contamination of water and rivers, the processes of commercial accords and the fight for the environment, among other elements. MAPDER members now have greater awareness and, above all, the space for analysis, reflection and the sharing of experiences have bore the fruit of clarity in that it is not only possible to detain the construction of dams but to also take them apart. There remains much to be done to advance the organization and action strategies but in just six months, the fruits are important. The process of MAPDER is bound in the context of three basic elements: that the dams of this country end their useful “life” in 50 years; that the government of Vicente Fox is trying to privatize the electrical and water sectors; and that the process of neoliberal globalization and the free trade agreements lay down the basis for attracting foreign investment which itself will not arrive if there is not sufficient electrical energy which is the motor of this neoliberal development model. From these three contexts arises an unprecedented movement in the history of the country.

The Third MAPDER Conference has once again been summoned for the month of March 2006 in the state of Jalisco, but now in the region where an attempt is being made to build the San Nicolas dam. The communities that will be affected have offered their homes and their hopeful struggle in order to hold the next gathering. At the same time, the II Latin American Conference Against dams has been convoked which will be held in the communities dislodged by the Chixoy dam in Guatemala in the month of October, 2005 (see www.mapder.org).

THE ARCEDIANO DECLARATION

In the community of Arcediano in the municipality of Guadalajara, Jalisco, from March 11th-14th, 2005, we held the Second Mexican Movement of Those Affected by Dams and in Defence of Rivers (MAPDER). The 350 delegates from communities affected by dams and future hydroelectric projects in the country, as well as those affected by the contamination of their rivers, come from 13 entities: Jalisco, San Luis Potosi, Guanajuato, Chihuahua, Guerrero, Michoacan, Chiapas, Tabasco, Veracruz, Nayarit, the Federal District, the State of Mexico and Oaxaca. There were also the organizations invited from Spain, Belize, Guatemala, Italy and the United States.

The 60 organizations present at the Second Gathering of MAPDER consider that the neoliberal development model that the Mexican government is now promoting is a road to maximum capital profit under a development structure that encourages the appropriation of strategic resources into the hands of a few transnational corporations and large, national business groups. In this framework and in the context of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), Plan Puebla-Panama (PPP) and the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) and the European Union-Mexico Global Accord, with the movement toward the privatization of water, electrical energy, our biodiversity, forests and other natural resources, the Mexican government is handing over our sovereignty and the cultural patrimony of the Mexican people in exchange for greater external debt as promoted by the multilateral banks. The construction of infrastructure such as dams and communications projects which have result in the displacement of campesino and indigenous peoples from their lands, health problems and other irreversible damages for people with children and women being the most affected, make the possibility of integral and sustainable development distant, break the productive links among peoples, worsen migration and increase the displacement of people from their place or origin toward belts of misery or the United States and destroy the social fabric of communities. These dams are imposed without consulting the people constituting a violation of Convention 169 of the International Labour Organization (International Worker's Organization), integral human rights and national and state constitutions.

At the Second Gathering of MAPDER we demand:

- 1) The cancellation of all dam projects in Mexico and all of Latin America and we invite the construction of a sustainable development model for and from the people. Though it may be true that water is a renewable resource, present world policies for its use and management are leading us toward the depletion of water resources and the rupturing of the water cycle.
- 2) That the repression, harassment and imprisoning of communities that with legitimate right oppose and resist these projects cease. Similarly we demand that the penal action against Marco Antonio Suastegui Muñoz and Francisco Hernandez Valeriano – opponents of the La Parota dam – desist. No more prisoners of dams!
- 3) The suspension of the process of privatizing water given that it is an inalienable human right and as such can not be seen as merchandise as the World Trade Organization (WTO) has established.

- 4) The disappearance of the bureaucratic and inefficient structure of the National Water Commission (CNA in Spanish) and the creation of a civilian body to carry out the self-management of this resource.
- 5) The immediate dismissal of the Secretary of the Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. Alberto Cardenas Jimenez, as he authorized all of the construction permits for the large dams and approved fraudulent environmental analysis which hid the true effects on the people and on biodiversity. And, given that some academic sectors and university authorities such as those at Guadalajara, Guerrero and the greatest seat of studies in the Environmental University Program (PUMA in Spanish) at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM in Spanish) now have pro-business interests, we are calling for the creation of a civil interdisciplinary body of scientists and independent researchers that would truthfully report on the consequences of plans for dams in the country.
- 6) That the Civilian Watershed Councils be constituted so that these do not fall into the hands of government officials and business interests.
- 7) That instead of building dams (for irrigation, flood control, electrical energy production and water storage) for big corporate capital interests, we promote sustainable development and decentralized alternatives for the benefit of the people with respect to environment and human rights. It is necessary to implement alternatives in the efficient use of water in the countryside and in the city before proposing the construction of dams.
- 8) We request the intervention of the World Health Organization (WHO) to investigate the cases of leukemia caused by watershed contamination and the Ahogado dam in the communities of Juanacatlan, El Salto and Cajititlan.
- 9) The investigation into the cause of death in the dam workers of Aguamilpa (approximately 300 dead with only 37 being officially recognized) and of El Cajon (approximately 30 dead) in the state of Nayarit.
- 10) That the murders of the ejidal commissaries in Nayarit, Valentin Ibarra Navarrete of the “Carretone de Cerritos” ejido and Esteban Abreg of the “San Rafael” ejido, be cleared up.
- 11) The exoneration of the defendants and the immediate freeing of the five prisoners of the Puente Grande prison jailed during the repression of May 28, 2004 at the III Summit of the Chiefs of State and the European Union, Latin American and the Caribbean Governments held in Guadalajara, Jalisco. Similarly we demand an investigation into the acts of torture and the punishment of those responsible.
- 12) The immediate compensation of families flooded with waste waters in the Huizachera zone.

At this II Gathering:

1) MAPDER acknowledges the issues and is in solidarity with the fight and resistance of the people of Jalisco and in particular, Mrs. Guadalupe Lara Lara against the Arcediano dam. Similarly we hold the three levels of government and their subordinates responsible for the physical and psychological aggression that Guadalupe Lara Lara has and may suffer. We reproach the deceit, the pain and the bad faith employed by the government to dislodge the people of Arcediano. MAPDER supports the return of said people to the just replenishing of their lands.

2) MAPDER congratulates the people and organizations of Huitiupan, Chiapas in their struggle which managed to cancel the Itzantun hydroelectric dam.

3) MAPDER celebrates the protection/aid which suspended the construction of the El Cajon dam in Nayarit.

4) MAPDER is in solidarity with the untiring struggle of the ejidos and communities of Guerrero to suspend the La Parota dam.

5) MAPDER congratulates the determined actions of the inhabitants of the Jalisco highlands (los Altos) in peacefully stopping the initial works on the San Nicolas dam.

With this Declaration, MAPDER puts itself in solidarity with the people of Belize against the construction of the El Chalillo dam.

We are in solidarity with the resistance movement of indigenous peoples against the PPP project and the Meso-American Biological Corridor (MBC) project.

MAPDER sends its solidarity to the Mayan people of Guatemala who are resisting in their struggle for compensation for damages caused by the Chixoy dam, financed by the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank which caused the massacre of 400 Achies Maya and we demand the liberation of Mayan prisoners.

With this, MAPDER adds to the calls for the VI Meso-American Movement against Dams Conference and the III Latin American Gathering Against Dams to be carried out simultaneously in the communities affected by the Chixoy dam in Guatemala in the month of October 2005.

Similarly we add ourselves to the calls for the VI Meso-American Forum Against the PPP and the investment mega-projects to be held on December 4th and 5th, 2005 in Costa Rica.

With this MAPDER declaration we announce the definitive cancellation of the Arcediano dam.

The International Day of Action Against Dams and for Rivers, Water and Life, Arcediano, Jalisco, March 14th, 2005.

Jalisco: Fundación Cuenca-Lerma-Lago Chapala-Santiago (AC); Dilo (AC); Federación Estatal Agronómica; La Huizachera; El Barzón Regional; Comité Pro Defensa de Arcediano (AC); afectados de la presa La Yesca municipio de Hostotipaquillo; Instituto Vida AC; Amigos de la Barranca AC; Comité Pro Defensa San Nicolás; Instituto de Derecho Ambiental AC (IDEA); Tianguis Cultural Guadalajara AC; Frente Zapatista de Liberación Nacional Guadalajara; Consejo Indígena Campesino; Instituto Mexicano para el Desarrollo Comunitario AC (IMDEC);

Ciudadanos por el Medio Ambiente AC (CIMA); Red Ciudadana AC; Pastoral Social de la Iglesia Católica; Consejo Ciudadano del Agua; Comunidad Indígena Santa María Tequepexpan; Comité Agua y Vida de Santa Cruz AC; Central de Organizaciones Campesinas y Populares AC (COCYP); Centro de Derechos Humanos Valle de Juárez; Poder Ciudadano Valle de Juárez; Sur Sin Fronteras; Colectivo Ecologista Jalisco (CEJ); Red de Alternativas Sustentables Agropecuarias de Jalisco (RASA); Frente Estatal de Lucha Urbana y Social (FELUS); Coordinadora 28 de Mayo; students of La Salle University and geography and sociology students from the University of Guadalajara.

Guerrero: Consejo de Ejidos y Comunidades Opositores a la Presa La Parota (CECOP); Colectivo Rebelión; Asociación Ambientalista Guerreros Verdes de Acapulco.

Chiapas: Las Abejas; Educación para la Paz (EDUPAZ), Frente Chiapaneco contra las Represas (FCCRP); Centro de Investigaciones Económicas y Políticas de Acción Comunitaria (CIEPAC); Misión de Guadalupe; Coordinadora Diocesana de Mujeres (CODIMUJ); Parroquia de Altamirano; Consejo de Médicos y Parteras Tradicionales Indígenas de Chiapas (COMPTICH); Convergencia de Movimientos de los Pueblos de las Américas (COMPA); Wiltliltón Huitiupán.

Mexico State: Frente de Pueblos en Defensa de la Tierra de San Salvador Atenco.

Tabasco: Movimiento Agrario Indígena Zapatista AC (MAIZ); Red tabasqueña de Acción frente al Neoliberalismo (MAIZ, Comité de Derechos Humanos de Tabasco –Codehutab-, Asociación Ecológica Santo Tomás y el Comité de DH Indígenas de Macuspana).

Guanajuato: Dame AC (those affected by the Tequen dam).

San Luis Potosí: Those affected by the Tamaoín thermoelectric sites; Rescate Ecológica AC del ejido Las Palmas.

Nayarit: Those affected by the El Cajón, Aguamilpa and San Rafael dams; Kupuri; Grupo Ecológico El Manglar.

Mexico DF: Radio UNAM; Red Mexicana de Acción Frente Al Libre Comercio (RMALC), Centro de Derechos Humanos Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez; UPREZ; Habitat International Coalition AL (HIC); Greenpeace México; Espacio DESC; CENAMI; Centro Mexicano de Derecho Ambiental (CEMDA).

Veracruz: Consejo Indígena de Uxpanapa AC (CIUX);

Michoacán: researchers from the Colegio de Michoacán; those affected by contamination of Lake Zirahuén.

Oaxaca: Centro de Derechos Humanos Ñu'ujikandi; afectados por el proyecto hidroeléctrico Ixtayutla; Colectivo Cortamortaja; Unión de Comunidades Indígenas de la Zona del Istmo AC (UCIZONI).

Chihuahua: Those affected by the Los Conchos river.

Belize: Belize Institute of Environmental Law and Policy (Belpo) and We Belizeans Against the Dam (WeBAD).

Guatemala: Frente Petenero contra las Represas (Peten Front Against Dams)

United States: Comité de Ausentes de San Gaspar en Acción (CASA); Salvemos Nuestros Pueblos; International Rivers Network (IRN).

Spain: Coordinadora de Afectados por Grandes Embalses y Trasvases (COAGRET).

THE ARCEDIANO CLOSING

To the Inhabitants of the Guadalajara Metropolitan Zone (ZMG in Spanish)

To the Authorities:

Vicente Fox Quezada, President of Mexico

Alberto Cardenas Jimenez, Secretary of the Environment and Natural Resources

Francisco Ramierz Acuña, Governor of the State of Jalisco

The Congress of the State of Jalisco

To All of the People of Mexico

Those in attendance at the Second Gathering of Those Affected by Dams and in Defense of Rivers (MAPDER), united here in the town of Arcediano in the municipality of Guadalajara, Jalisco, the site where the Governor of the State of Jalisco, Francisco Ramirez Acuña, with the authorization of Alberto Cardenas Jimenez, Secretary of the Environment, is attempting to build the Arcediano dam, declare and stand for the:

Definitive closure and cancellation of all works, projects and/or activities related to the construction of the Arcediano dam based upon the following considerations:

Firstly – The Arcediano project to store water in the Guadalajara Metropolitan Area does not guarantee the inhabitants of the city access to clean water which is a fundamental human right for the existence of all people, in virtue of:

A) Waste waters, even when treated, do not guarantee protection from damaging health effects for the inhabitants of the AMG; because the authorities haven't yet scientifically nor technically demonstrated that the water will be suitable for human consumption.

Secondly – The Arcediano dam does not guarantee the right of each person to live in a suitable environment for her/his development and well-being, in virtue of:

A) The project being approved in an unacceptable manner by the Secretary of the Environment and Natural Resources, who in a completely illegal way changed the conditions imposed upon the dam's construction which had been established prior to

initiating construction of the dam gates and other works. The waters of the Santiago River should be clean and all of the hydraulic treatment infrastructure should be functioning in order to permit the simultaneous initiation of dam gate construction, water storage and water treatment.

B) The costs of the Arcediano dam are not real as they do not incorporate pumping, treatment, environmental and social costs nor the cost of health problems (cumulative over time).

C) The preservation of the Santiago River Basin, known as the Huentitan Basin is not guaranteed. It is one of the main climatic regulators in the ZMG in addition to acting as a natural corridor for wildlife and native flora giving it unique environmental values.

D) The Arcediano project is totally incompatible with the conservation policy for the Huentitan Basin and the Santiago River which, since 1934 have been under decree.

Thirdly – The Arcediano project violates the constitutional guarantee the right that all families have to enjoy dignified and decent housing when, without due process and disallowing the possibility of the inhabitants of the town of Arcediano defending themselves, it displaced more than 30 families who were living there, throwing them out to enlarge the marginalized zones of the city through their henchman Mr. Hector Perez Plazola, Secretary General of the Government of the State of Jalisco and Ms. Carmela Chavez Galindo, now the brand new deputy magistrate elect of the Administrative Tribunal of the State of Jalisco.

As a result, the National Movement for Those Affected by Dams and in Defense of Rivers declare that:

the construction of the Arcediano dam must be definitively closed and cancelled.

We reiterate our unconditional support for Ms. Lupita Lara Lara in all the actions undertaken in the defence of her land in the Huentitan Basin, patrimony of the Mexican people and we demand the end to all harassment by the authorities of the governor of the state of Jalisco toward Ms. Lara Lara and her family.

We demand

1. That the authorities of Guadalajara and the state of Jalisco repair the damage caused in their patrimony and to livelihood now that in a completely arbitrary way they brought it down and plundered it, without yet paying a fair compensation for said damage.
2. That the Attorney General's office of the state of Jalisco stop covering for the officials responsible of this so abhorrent act and that it expedite the earlier inquiry interposed by Lupita Lara Lara into the commission of the crimes of damage, theft, despoliation and abuse of authority.
3. That there be a stop to the construction of dams and to business being disguised by authorities in turn.

Arcediano, Jalisco, March 13th, 200