

Press Statement

**Indian Organisations Condemn Arrests at World Water Forum:
Reiterates their Opposition to Water Privatisation**

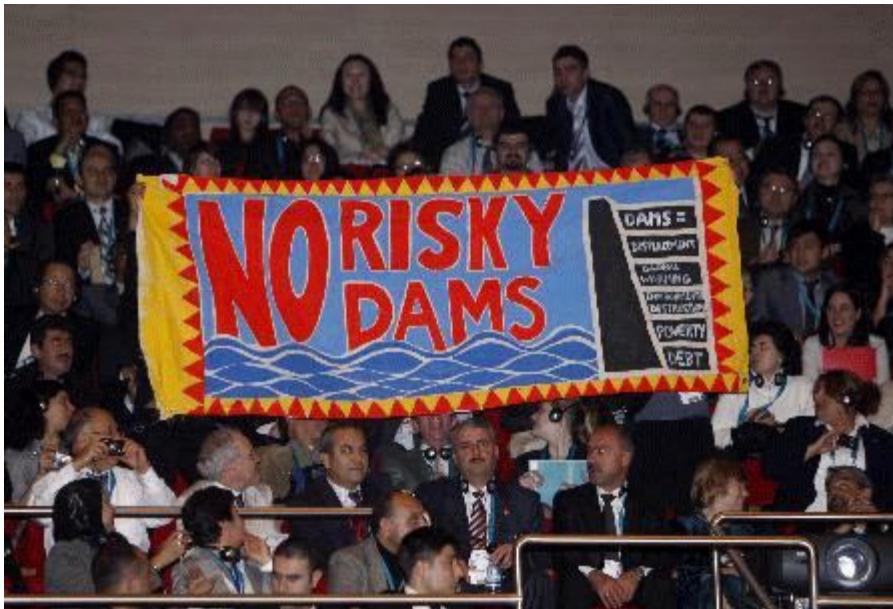
New Delhi: March 18, 2009

Nearly 100 representatives of people's movements, civil society organizations and concerned individuals from India condemned the arrest, deportation and repression of protestors at the World Water Forum (WWF), on March 16 at Istanbul, Turkey.

In a joint statement released today they said: "We condemn the undemocratic nature of the World Water Forum and urge the World Water Council to respect and support the rights of all people to speak freely and protest peacefully."

Two activists were arrested, detained and later deported for unfurling a banner reading "No Risky Dams" at the opening ceremony in protest at the World Water Forum's promotion of destructive dams. They were deported later. Riot police used water cannons and tear gas against 150 peaceful protestors, for protesting outside the conference hall before the inaugural.

The statement said, "We call on the participants of the World Water Forum to embrace democratic, smarter and cleaner solutions and recognise Right to Water as a fundamental right and not to advance the agenda of privatization and commercialisation, with huge social and environmental costs." They also demanded that the World Water Forum should not be organised by the World Water Council, but by United Nations.



The banner that was unfurled in the WWF inaugural session, which led to the arrest and deportation.

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Original Statement and List of Signatories

March 18, 2009

We, the representatives of people's movements, civil society organizations and concerned individuals from India, condemn the arrest, deportation and repression of protestors at the World Water Forum (WWF), in progress at Istanbul, Turkey on March 16.

Outside the conference center just before the inaugural function of the World Water Forum riot police used water cannons and tear gas against 150 peaceful protestors who shouted "water for life, not for profit" in opposition to the WWF's agenda of water privatization and river destruction. Seventeen protestors were arrested.

As the opening ceremony of the WWF began, International Rivers' South Asia Director Ann-Kathrin Schneider and Climate Campaigner Payal Parekh unfurled a banner reading "No Risky Dams" in protest at the World Water Forum's promotion of destructive dams. They were arrested and are in jail since then.

The World Water Forum takes place every three years. It is organized by the World Water Council, a private organization whose most influential members are private water companies and some of the world's biggest dam construction companies, funders and government agencies.

We condemn the undemocratic nature of the World Water Forum and urge the World Water Council to respect and support the rights of all people to speak freely and protest peacefully.

The water and energy policies promoted by the WWF around the globe destroy communities and the environment. The past experience of mega dams in India and elsewhere points towards that. We call on the participants of the World Water Forum to embrace democratic, smarter and cleaner solutions and recognise Right to Water as a fundamental right and not to advance the agenda of privatization and commercialisation, with huge social and environmental costs. The World Water Forum should not be organised by the World Water Council, but by United Nations.

Signed by:

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