



The International Water Court: towards universal access to a limited resource

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USA TOMORROW

Water, an irreplaceable vital resource, and therefore a powerful economic and geopolitical instrument, has been clouded in the past by pollution and ecological imbalance, a growing demand and scarcity in an increasing number of places in the world, and it has been concentrated in major industrial and financial groups with a view to short-term profits.

Yesterday, in view of the need for world-wide governance to guarantee universal access to this scarce and vital resource, the International Water Court was created in El Cairo (Egypt). If it is evidently acknowledged as an economic asset, the Court declared yesterday that the water problem is essentially of a political nature. It was declared to be a social asset, requiring an "inverted globalisation" process based on solidarity and co-operation between countries and regions.

This new organisation has appealed for transparent and participative (with special emphasis on the involvement of women) water management, based on the principle of "active subsidiarity" focused on territories and cultures. It will promote a new irrigation order (to fight against soil salinisation, hydromorphism or reservoir mud damage), independent experts to guarantee ethical management and social educa-

tion encouraging saving water, to guarantee sustainable development and water for the future generations.

In the era of interdependence, the creation of this international organisation confirms that water should be the subject of global reconciliation, dialogue and co-operation.

Protection for the Cucap tribe

Among thousand of other projects, the Court will make sure that the Cucap, or "river people", can continue to live on the delta of the Colorado river, to the south of the United States-Mexican border.

This native community has been living there for over 2,000 years, and their survival is threatened by the salinisation of the delta, where they grow their crops, and the lack of water in a river that now disappears in the desert. A large number of dams and deviations built in the west of the United States send part of the water in the Colorado river to be used in the cotton fields of Arizona, the swimming pools of Los Angeles and to generate electricity for Las Vegas.

The Court will encourage dialogue between the two countries, particularly between the people directly involved, to guarantee the native community's water rights and promote new irrigation systems and the sustainable use of this resource.

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