



WATER AND SPIRITUALITY DECLARATION

The meeting of religious and spiritual leaders on the World Water Day, 22 March, in the Special Session "Water and Spirituality: An Encounter with the Sacred - 8th World Water Forum" is a collaboration of testimonies and local knowledge that strengthen the sacred bond between water, spirituality and human life.

The goal is to practice a spiritual and transdisciplinary outlook on water, able to contribute to making the sacred in the human relationship with water stand out by means of the varied religious, philosophical, and humanistic knowledge, originating in traditions, as well as in the arts and sciences.

The symbolic dimensions bring new strength to, and broaden the perception of, this vital element and deepen the outlook on the real environmental problems. Thus, it drives a new civilizing pattern, in which coexistence may occur with gratitude for the gift of life, with humility for being human, with spirituality in the face of the cosmic mystery of existence, and with ethical and ecological care.

Water can unite human groups of different ethnicities, traditions, religions, cultures and economic systems with peaceful coexistence in favor of the survival of the whole community. At the same time, its appropriation and scarcity cause poverty, conflicts, and wars for the right to water, with grave consequences.

The quality of life of our planet depends on the relationship of people and societies about what water determines in our lives and how this dimension is collective to the whole network of planetary life. And, therefore, we stand in defense of the life of water in the planet, understood as a sacred element and nourishment among the most diverse peoples.

The natural and spiritual cycles of water must be respected and cared for to ensure the continuity of life on Earth, and in this sense, ancestral knowledge is fundamental to the culture of sustainability of the planet. The cultures and ways of life of nations, peoples and traditional communities are a reference point of resistance in the history of humanity and must be protected because they are under the threat of extinction.

The 8th edition of the World Water Forum in Brasilia had essential advances in the involvement of different sectors of society so that water may be a topic present in the life of the common citizen and so that the participatory management of waters takes place in favor of what is best for society as a whole.

This construction should include everyone, without exception, having as a basis one of the main messages of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs – UN 2030 Agenda) that "we commit ourselves to act so that nobody is left behind."

For us to move forward, it is necessary to practice a culture of peace and cooperation that recognizes water as a right and as an inalienable human right, the common good of



all communities. By recognizing the planet Earth as a living being in the Cosmos and shelter for all, we understand that sustainability is an ethical commitment to the respect for life, and based on the sacred connection between water, spirituality and living beings, we express our mission to contribute to this journey.

This **Statement** brings together the contributions of nominated leaders, organizers, and participants in the Special Session "Water and Spirituality: An Encounter with the Sacred," with the purpose of collaborating for a holistic approach to water, sustained by a spiritual, ethical, and ecological vision and the culture of peace.

This **Statement** adds to the basis of support of the campaign "Water and spirituality," launched in India, in 2013. It aims to request from the UN the recognition of the immaterial and spiritual dimension of water and the unprecedented choice of the theme "Water and spirituality" for the "World Water Day."

To enhance social participation and recognize the spiritual dimension of water, an important legacy of the edition of the World Water Forum in Brazil, this collective speaks up along with the World Water Council to **declare** that it is essential to safeguard and strengthen the spaces of interaction and debate with society and to deepen the sacred and spiritual dimension of water in upcoming editions of the World Water Forum, in particular in 2021, in Senegal.

The goal is to flow like water. With strength and as a collectivity, we walk the path of sharing and human development with spirituality, democracy, social justice, peace, and sustainability.

This Statement, read by all participants of this Special Session, was signed in Brasilia/DF, on 22 March 2018 (World Water Day), during the 8th World Water Forum, by the following leaders (signatures in the Portuguese version):

Márcia Helena Gonçalves Rolemberg

Maria Alice Campos Freire

Baba Pecê (Sivanilton Encarnação da Mata)

Don Leonardo Ulrich Steiner

Ekedji Rosy Mary (Rosy Mary Jesus Santos)

Arismar Leon Alves Pereira

Sheikh Abdelhamed Mohamed Aly Metwally

Monk Sato (Ademar Kyotoshi Sato)

Bishop Rodovalho (Robson Rodovalho)

Tainá Marajoara (Tainá Paiva Godinho)