

# Confronting the Challenge: Resisting Privatisation of Resources and Services

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We the participants from various social movements, civil society groups, trade unions and political parties are deeply engaged in challenging and resisting the onslaught of neoliberal globalization.

Privatization of basic services and natural resources, one of the major policies of the neoliberal agenda, is being relentlessly promoted and imposed in many countries. The transfer of control of basic services from national governments to private providers especially big national and international corporations is a deliberate erosion of national sovereignty, human rights, and the quality of people's lives.

It takes away what little access the poor women, men and children have to basic services and resources. It separates those who can pay for services and those who cannot. It leads to deepening poverty, the increased discrimination and social exclusion of women and marginalized communities, and the destruction of the environment.

Privatization of basic services is an abdication of responsibility by all levels of governments, and surrender to national and international corporations and private providers that do not recognize social responsibility nor accountability to people and communities.

There is overwhelming evidence that social progress has slowed down since the adoption of structural adjustment and privatization policies. We urge governments to acknowledge this, and undertake further gender impact assessments.

We remind governments that the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals requires investment in rights and quality public services and is impossible under the neoliberal paradigm and policies.

We call on Governments to:

- Restore and uphold rights of citizens and communities to control and access natural resources and basic services.
- Stop corporatization and privatization of basic services such as health, education, welfare, electricity, housing, water and sanitation, and natural resources such as land, water, forests.
- Ensure that multilateral trade agreements are consistent with international human rights commitments and treaty obligations.
- Not to enter into bilateral or multilateral trade and investment agreements that grant local and foreign investors rights (including the right to sue the state at international tribunals) without any matching obligations.

- Enact and enforce laws on peoples' right to information.

Further, we urge governments not to close down but instead further expand the critical political space for developing and demonstrating alternatives that restore and uphold rights of citizens and communities, including women, to access to and control of natural resources and basic services

We call upon the International Financial Institutions and the Governments that dominate these institutions to:

- Stop privatization and liberalization of services, de-regulation of natural resources, and trade liberalization using the instruments of aid, trade and debt.
- Undertake total and unconditional cancellation of debt of developing countries.
- Provide untied grant aid for basic services

We urge civil society organizations, social movements and people's movements to actively fight for these demands. One immediate step is for likeminded groups to come together and launch-or consolidate- actions and initiatives targeted at all Governments and IFIs on our positions and demands.

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