



# *General Water Presentation*

Spring 2008

# Objectives

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1. Convey urgency of global and national water crisis
2. Examine key water issues facing Canada
3. Convey need for a national water policy
4. Highlight global water issues & concerns
5. Share knowledge of water to facilitate community involvement and raise public awareness of water issues

# Structure of Presentation

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## **PART I - Introduction**

- Global Stats & Facts

## **PART II - The Business of Water**

- Privatization
- Investment
- Industry

## **PART III - Water & Canada**

- The Need for a National Water Policy

## **PART IV - Global Water Movement**

## **PART V - Taking Action**

- World Water Day: Empowering People and Communities
- Conclusion

## PART 1 - Global Stats & Facts

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- 1.1 billion people around the world have no access to clean drinking water.
- 2/5 of global population lacks access to proper sanitation, (this has led to massive outbreaks of waterborne diseases.)
- Half of the world's hospital beds are occupied by people with an easily preventable waterborne disease.

# Global Stats & Facts

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- The World Health Organization reports that contaminated water contributes to 80% of all sickness and disease worldwide.
- In the last decade, the number of children killed by diarrhea exceeded the number of people killed in all armed conflicts since the Second World War.
- Every eight seconds, a child dies from drinking dirty water.

# Global Stats & Facts

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## **WHY a Global Water Crisis?**

- Depletion
- Pollution
- Mismanagement of fresh water supplies
- Deeply inequitable access to water services
- Urbanization (paving of soil inhibits prevents water from filtering into ground)
- Privatization of a public resource

# Running out?

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- *Doesn't water regenerate itself?*
- *Could we really ever run out of water?*

“The world may not exactly be running out of water, but it is running out of *clean* water.

90% of wastewater produced in the Third World is discharged, untreated, into local rivers, streams and coastal waters.

As well, humans are now using more than half of accessible run-off water, leaving little for the ecosystem or other species.

In China, 80% of the major rivers are so degraded they no longer support aquatic life, and an astonishing 90 % of all groundwater systems under the major cities are contaminated. China is now home to seven out of the ten most polluted cities in the world.”

*(Maude Barlow, Blue Covenant, p.7)*

# Part II

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## The Business of Water

- Privatization ● Investment
- Industry

“Perhaps in anticipation of this emerging water market, water entrepreneurs are hunting for new sources of water and buying up bulk water and water rights and holding them for future profit.”

*(Maude Barlow, Blue Covenant, p.80)*



# Privatization

## The false appeal of privatization:

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- Quick injection of funds
- Simplification of water crisis to simple notion of **access** vs. question of **rights**
- Limited responsibility of government
- Band-aid solution to finance replacement of aging infrastructure
- Economic leverage for countries considering exports
- Reducing water to the status of a tradable commodity can open doors to companies claiming rights to water under trade agreements
- Misguided belief that the private sector operates with the interest of **people** as its foremost concern, when in fact the market dictates a prime concern with **profit**
- Many governments can secure large **World Bank** loans if they agree to privatize public utilities like water

# Public-Private Continuum

- **Fully Public:**

People own and have stewardship over a public asset through their local, provincial or federal governments (no money to private sector; people have a say in operations; workers are usually unionized. For ex. schools, hospitals, public works facilities.)

- **P3s:**

Government pays a private partner to fund/build/operate a facility/service that would normally have been in the public domain. Workers risk shifting to non-union, low-paying versions of old jobs; profits to private sector are often guaranteed (growing numbers of hospitals, schools, public work facilities)

- **Contracted Out:**

Parts of a public asset/service are handed over to a private company that operates service for a profit (ex. janitorial, laundry, payroll). Private partner accountability is limited to contractual obligations.

Not accountable to the public.

- **Privatized:**

Governments sell a public institution to the private sector for its own use and profit (private owners are not accountable to the public except through laws/courts; there is a vast wage disparity between low-waged workers and CEOs.

## More on P3s

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- **Public/Private Partnerships (P3s)** are ventures in which the private sector becomes the lead provider of public services.
- **P3s entail:** Private financing, design, construction, operation, maintenance and even ownership of public services, facilities or infrastructure.

# Access vs. Rights

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## The notion of access to water:

- Increasingly a part of the private sector water lexicon.
- By reducing water strictly to a question of access (instead of also one of rights), arguments in support of privatization may appear convincing.
- In reality, many examples point to how the private sector lays down pipes but keeps taps locked if individuals cannot pay for the service.

In this sense, the company facilitated access through pipe construction, but water remains inaccessible to those that cannot pay.

# Investment

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## **Follow your money:**

- You could indirectly be encouraging water privatization at home and abroad without even knowing it
- Canadian funds are often invested in P3 initiatives

# Investment

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- Governments look for many ways to manage deficits. One of these is to secure investments from **bonds**.
- Until recently, all of the *Canada Pension Plan* reserve fund was devoted to **public sector** investment.
- Today, pension funds are actively solicited as a source of investment in **privatization** initiatives.

## The Canadian Pension Plan (CPP)

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- **CPP invests in private water companies.** The CPP investment board recently teamed up with a consortium to purchase *Anglian Water*, one of Britain's largest private water companies, for \$4.1 billion US.
- More than 16 million Canadians contribute to, or benefit, from the CPP.

## INVESTING: 3 Things You Can Do

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1. **Ask to see a**  
***Statement of Investment Policy***

Most pension plans have a *statement of investment policy* that describes the investment objectives of the pension plan and the types of investments included or excluded. This allows you to **make choices more in line with your personal values.**



## INVESTING: 3 Things You Can Do

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- 2. Carefully choose your investors or financial advisors.** Interview *them* on *their* policies, ethics and record. This gives you an opportunity to determine whether a portfolio currently holds P3/privatization investments, or whether there are any restrictions against them. This is a valuable opportunity for **expressing concerns about investment policy.**

## INVESTING: 3 Things You Can Do

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### 3. Ask for a “Socially Responsible”

**Investment Policy** – There are a number of plans that have developed some form of *socially responsible* or *ethical* investment policy. These policies can help you **steer clear from companies or governments that have a negative record** on human rights issues, on environmental issues, or on the promotion of essential public services.

# Water & Industry

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- Water is used not only domestically but also industrially and agriculturally.
- Sometimes, water is necessary for the growth of a product, such as tomatoes, but also for the manufacturing and production or distribution of the good in question
- Between 2 and 4.5 barrels of water are required to extract 1 barrel of oil, and 90 % of that water is permanently removed from the hydrological cycle.
- **Virtual water:** is the amount of **water** embedded or hidden in food or other products needed for its production.

Canada:  
80% of water use = industrial sector

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The production of  
1 tonne of steel requires  
231, 620 litres of water



The production of 1 new  
car + 4 tires require  
144, 633 litres of water



# Water & Production

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- 1kg of potatoes?  
1000 litres



- 1 kg of paper?  
324 litres



- 1kg of beef?  
99 980 litres



## Part III - Water in Canada

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### **Myth-busting:**

- 1) Canada does not have a surplus of water.
- 2) Canadians do not respect and love their water heritage as much as we may think we do (42% of water discharged untreated into waterways; mining operations; damming)
- 3) The Canadian government is not actively taking steps to protect our water.

# Part III - Water in Canada

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- Canada has about 6.5% of the world's renewable water
- 60% of it flows north
- The supply of water along the Canada-US border (where 90% of Canadians live) is only 2.6% of the world's total
- At least 30% of Canadians depend on groundwater sources for their water
- Canada's major glaciers hold 50% more water than the Great Lakes
- 1300 glaciers have lost between 25% - 75% of their mass since 1950 and are all predicted to disappear.

Minimal water consumption to meet "basic needs": 20-50 litres

## **Canadians: 343 litres/day (home)**

- **Bathing** approx. 120 litres/day
- **Toilet** approx. 102 litres/day
- **Laundry** approx. 69 litres/day
- **Kitchen/Drinking**  
approx. 34 litres/day
- **Cleaning** approx. 17 litres/day

# Water & Canada

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Canada is not prepared to face a water crisis:

- No national strategy to address urgent water issues
- Current federal water policy is outdated (20 yrs old-predates the tragedies of Walkerton, North Battleford, and the Kashechewan)
- One quarter of municipalities faced water shortages in the 2005-2006 and provinces regularly issue boil-water alerts.
- Chronic under-funding = approx \$60 billion needed to upgrade crumbling infrastructure
- For-profit water companies are angling for a new market.
- Approx. 80 First Nations communities are now under a boil-water advisory and 21 communities are deemed at severe risk.



# Water & Canada

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- The Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP) means that Canada's water is on the table. The SPP was agreed to in 2005 by the leaders of Canada, the U.S. and Mexico with no debate by Parliament or the public.
- Bulk water exports would permanently remove water from the ecosystem/cycle and are not a sustainable solution to the global water crisis.
- Dams and water diversions are not sustainable solutions either.

# Water & Canada

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- Bulk water exports will not address the issues of water scarcity, urban sprawl and waste.
- Allowing water to be exported would create a market system that would determine access to water by ability to pay.

# Public Opinion

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- 84 % of Canadians strongly agree that Canada should adopt a comprehensive national water policy that recognizes clean drinking water as a basic human right. *(April 2004, Ipsos-Reid)*
- 97 % of Canadians expressed their support for water to be recognized as a human right. *(April 2004, Ipsos-Reid)*
- 76% of Canadians oppose bulk water exports.

# Key Water Goals in Canada

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A **National Water Policy** that addresses:

- The urgent need for infrastructure investment
- National standards for drinking water quality
- A ban on bulk water exports
- Protection and preservation of water for all forms of life and for future generations.
- Committed federal funding for municipalities and First Nations communities to upgrade public water utilities.
- A provision to ensure water does not become a tradable commodity in current and future trade deals.

# Canada and the Right to Water

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- In 2002, Canada was the only country to block progress toward the recognition of a right to water by voting against the appointment of a special rapporteur on the right to water at the United Nations.
- Access to clean fresh water is a human right and a requirement for leading a life in human dignity. **Recognizing the right to water in Canada** is a first step toward ensuring equal and adequate access to water for all people.

## Part IV - Global Water Movement

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*“The origins of this movement, generally referred to as the **global water justice movement**, lie in the hundreds of communities around the world where people are fighting to protect their local water supplies from pollution, destruction by dams and theft—be it from other countries, their own governments or private corporations such as bottled water companies and private utilities backed by the World Bank. Until the late 1990s, however, most were operating in isolation, unaware of other struggles or the global nature of the water crisis.”*

*(Maude Barlow, Blue Covenant, p.102)*

# Resistance outside of the 4<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum

World's largest water mobilization  
approx 30,000 people - 16 March 2006 - Mexico

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# International Water Campaign: the Blue Planet Project

- [www.blueplanetproject.net](http://www.blueplanetproject.net)



- The **Blue Planet Project** is an international civil society movement started by the Council of Canadians to protect the world's fresh water from the growing threats of trade and privatization.
- We are a not-for-profit group that brings together international, like-minded organizations and individuals who share the belief that the right to water must be protected.



## Blue Planet Project

### Key Principles

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- Water is a fundamental human right.
- Water belongs to the Earth and all living beings (all must protect access to it, for all forms of life, and for Earth itself)
- Water is a PUBLIC GOOD: management must be in the public sphere, social, community-based; participatory and not based on profit.
- Water should not be privatized and should be withdrawn from all trade and investment agreements.

# Public Water for All : Democratic Water Management

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Alternative Models to water **P3s**:

- Public authorities & Communities**
- Public authority & Public authority**
- **Short term:** Educate people about what their rights are and how to protect them.
- **Medium term:** gain increased understanding of how services & regulation work, to better monitor water departments.
- **Long-term:** get involved in strategic decision-making to determine how resources are to be allocated.

# 5th World Water Forum

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- The Blue Planet Project is already very active in mobilizing for the 5th World Water Forum set to take place in Istanbul, Turkey, in 2009. The coming months will be filled with strategic organizing and international meetings between the BPP and other global coalition groups.
- The common objective is to ensure that the voice of civil society resonates loudly *before, after, and during* this corporate-minded event. Resistance to the corporatization of water was strong at the 2006 4th World Water Forum in Mexico City. Water activists from around the world will once again come together to call for water justice for all and will seize the opportunity presented by this international reunion to strengthen the movement and the communication among water activist networks.

## Part V - Taking Action

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**Be the change  
you want to see in this world.**

# Get Involved!

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- Ask questions & learn all you can about water
- Share your knowledge with others
- Voice your opinion and concerns to elected politicians
- Join the Council of Canadians
- Sign up for free e-newsletters
- Think before you buy/invest
- Try to consume less water at home
- Try to avoid buying into the commodification of water (bottled water)
- Celebrate World Water Day!

# World Water Day (March 22)

Find materials on our website to help you!

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- **Use and distribute our factsheets!**
- **Lobby your elected representatives.** [Meet with your representative](#) and share the Council of Canadians' call for a National Water Policy
- **Organize a film screening.** Many films on water exist. Copies of *Dead in the Water* are available for chapter use. Use the [discussion guide](#) to help organize public screenings, house parties or community events.
- **Make a splash in the media** with [tools](#) like a template for public service announcements and media advisories. An op-ed emphasizing the need for Canada to take action on the water crisis at home and abroad is also available for you to adapt and submit for publication in your local paper.
- **Work with teachers.** The Council has developed several water themed lesson plans designed for primary and secondary students. You may download these teaching modules and meet with local teachers to encourage them to use them in their classrooms.
- **Keep us in the loop** Let the Council know what kind of event you are planning so we can share success stories with other chapters across the country.



*Thank-you*

[www.canadians.org](http://www.canadians.org)

[www.blueplanetproject.net](http://www.blueplanetproject.net)

[www.righttowater.ca](http://www.righttowater.ca)

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