**Civil Society Organisation “Las Abejas”**

***Sacred Land of the Martyrs of Acteal***

 Chiapas. México.

*13th March 2013.*

To the social and political organisations
To all the defenders of human rights

To the defenders of mother other

To the liberal and alternative media

To the international a national press
To the Otra Campaña and
To public opinion

**Brothers and Sisters,**

On this International Day of Action Against Dams and in Favour of Rivers, Water and Life; we Las Abejas are protesting so that the local government of Ch'enalvo know we reject the plans to construct dams that will damage the local environment and local communities.

**Why we do not want dams? Why are we defending the rivers? Why do we want to protect the water? And we are we asking that life be respected?**

We do not want the dams because the consequences to the environment and to human life will be devastating. We tsotsiles, descendants of the first settlers of this land before colonization, have inherited this land not only to work but also to care for.We are the guardians of mother earth. We are the protectors and we have to ensure that there is balance and harmony between nature and humans. Neoliberal mega projects such as the hydroelectric dams are disrupting the harmony with nature and bring destruction and death with them. We have learnt from the experiences of other communities who have been promised development and better living conditions but have been left without proper reparation let alone development.

We want to stress that dams are not needed by our communities. They are a lucrative business for the profit of a few people at the expense of the poor and regardless of other economic, political, cultural and environmental consequences. The exploitation of human rights and the rights of indigenous peoples are not a consideration for these large neoliberal businesses. It is illogical to destroy the harmony and balance of nature for the sake of a ‘development project’.

We Las abejas will not stop the fight against the construction of dams and in favour of life. We the people say NO to megaprojects. We will not allow more neoliberal projects in our territories, not here in Chiapas, elsewhere in Mexico or other Latin American countries.

 

The government has not listened so the time has arrived for we the people to find our resistance. The Mexican government knows that they have a legal responsibility under Article 15 of the International Labour Organization (ILO) to consult communities before they construct megaprojects on their land.

*‘The rights of the communities concerned with the natural resources pertaining to their lands should protect them, especially. ... governments should establish or maintain procedures with a view to consult the concerned communities​​, to determine if their interests would be prejudiced, and to what extent, before undertaking or permitting any programs scoping or extraction of resources pertaining to their lands.’*

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in its Article 10 also states;

*‘Indigenous peoples shall not be forcibly removed from their lands or territories. There will be no relocation of communities without the free, prior and informed consent of the indigenous peoples concerned and an agreement on just and fair compensation and, where possible, the option of return.’*

The reasons for our rejection of dams project and other mega projects exceed us. There are several international instruments and treaties that guarantee the defence of our territory and its natural resources. However, the corrupt governments of Mexico and other countries trample these agreements, even though they themselves have signed and ratified them. It is very clear that governments are not going to defend these laws and treaties, because they govern under the subordination of neoliberal transnational corporations. If we want to follow the path of balance and harmony with nature we have to stand and fight against neoliberalism.

Our protest is not against one person, we do not harass, manipulate or attack anyone. Our actions are based on non-violent struggle and it is entirely peaceful. These projects make our indigenous brothers and sisters stand up and fight. The strategic policy of the corrupt leaders and multinational companies is dividing our communities, creating confusion between brothers and sisters and criminalizing our struggle for justice. We want to tell our brothers and sisters who are not yet resisting that they should not be fooled by the words and bribes that mock the poverty of the poor. This struggle is not only for us but for all the people who are humble, oppressed and poor.



Today we not only reject the construction of dams and other mega-projects, but also by high electricity prices. We Las Abejas agreed several years ago not to pay anything to the Federal Electricity Commission (CFE) for our electricity use. Historically the CFE have stolen and plundered our natural resources. Our state of Chiapas is the most important primary source of electricity in the country. But we the inhabitants of Chiapas don’t receive good access to electricity or service, but above all the CFE does not respect us.

Another fact that we want the people to know is that companies like Salinas Group (Elektra, Coppel) and other partner companies of the corrupt government do not pay for electricity at all. But, when we the people fall 3-4 days behind in our bills our power gets cut off. This form of treatment has a name it’s called RACISM. Join us in our fight, we will not allow cheating, we will not let the CFE continue to charge absurdly high rates. While many continue to pay for electricity, Electricity is for the people and the CFE does not have the legal backing to force you to pay. Only when the electricity is in the hands of the people rather than the wealthy few will we pay for electricity.

Desde Acteal Tierra Sagrada y sede de la Organización Sociedad Civil Las Abejas saludamos al *Movimiento Mexicano de*[Afectados](http://www.ecoportal.net/ecoportal/keyword/afectados)*por las Presas y en Defensa de los Ríos (MAPDER), a la Red Latinoamericana contra Represas (REDLAR),*y de otras organizaciones de Chiapas y del mundo defensores y defensoras de la Madre Tierra y de la vida. Sigamos luchando juntos y juntas.

!No a las presas!

!Ríos Libres, Pueblos Vivos!

!Los ríos, el Agua y la Vida no se venden, se Defienden!

!No al pago de la luz, porque la luz es del pueblo!