

## **ZARAGOZA'S DECLARATION**

**R**epresentatives from: CARE, AVINA, Ecología y Desarrollo (ECODES), conjoined under the Agua Clara Consortium; FUNDES, Observatorio ciudadano de servicios públicos, Instituto de Desarrollo Urbano CENCA, Perú and the Community Water Management Boards of: Junta de Saneamiento de Itaugua (Paraguay), Chirigual (Cajamarca – Perú), ACOSAMA (El Salvador), AC Mar de Plata (El Salvador), JAPOE (Honduras), met between the 3rd and 4th of September, 2008, in Zaragoza, Spain, taking advantage of **Zaragoza Expo 2008 - Water and Sustainable Development**, in order to discuss the following points:

### **1.- General Considerations**

- The Community Organizations, called Water Management Boards, Water Committees, Community Aqueducts, and Water Cooperatives, as well as water and sanitation service providers in Latin America, are known as community operators who primarily offer services to rural populations, peri-urban and small and medium-sized cities and have come to fill the gap left by traditional water and sanitation service providers.
- For over 30 years, Latin America has counted on community or municipal organizations who have been offering water and sanitation services to distinct populations. According to statistical data<sup>[1]</sup>, community organizations provide drinking water to approximately 40 million Latin American residents.
- There is a risk of not reaching the proposed Millennium Goals, if the present water and sanitation services' deficits persist.

Based on the above-mentioned considerations, the **Agua Clara Consortium** promoted a space of dialogue and learning, resulting in proposing the following statements, to be considered by the collective members.

Deficiencies in access to adequate potable water and sanitation in Latin America, generate poverty, a loss of abilities, and eventually may lead to death, particularly among children.

The solution should come from each country's government, in an efficient and effective manner, in collaboration with civil society and the private sector, with each assuming its own responsibilities.

In the Latin American context, the Community Organizations represent a viable and efficient model that is resolving the provision of water and sanitation services, and is capable of developing concrete and effective solutions for an important number of people.

The Community Organizations have a series of conditions that deserve to be recognized, valued and replicated:

- They are permanently accountable, thus generating important levels of credibility and transparency.
- They generate social, economic and environmental results.
- They constitute a space of reflection in regards to the roles between men and women, promoting, above all, women empowerment.
- They work based on the demands of the population and they act equitably towards all the citizen groups.
- They generate important local-level work.
- They contribute to strengthening the democratic governance of water in the local and national environment.

Because of this,

We should urgently promote the recognition and formalization of community water management within local and national legal frameworks;

We should promote a joint vision and perspective among public players, both private and community, for the sustainable provision of these services;

Future actions must have a clear approach towards the sustainability of services provided by these organizations;

It will be important to construct Alliances, including with the International Cooperation, that identify and take advantage of the strengths of different contributors.

As water is a Human Right, we must treat it as a public good, a good that must reach ALL, with the same quality.

Because of all that is written above, we urge the pertinent players that, until obtaining adequate coverage of potable water and sanitation in Latin America, **it will be necessary that Governments assign at least 1.5 of the GIP in next the 5 years for the strengthening of the sector.**