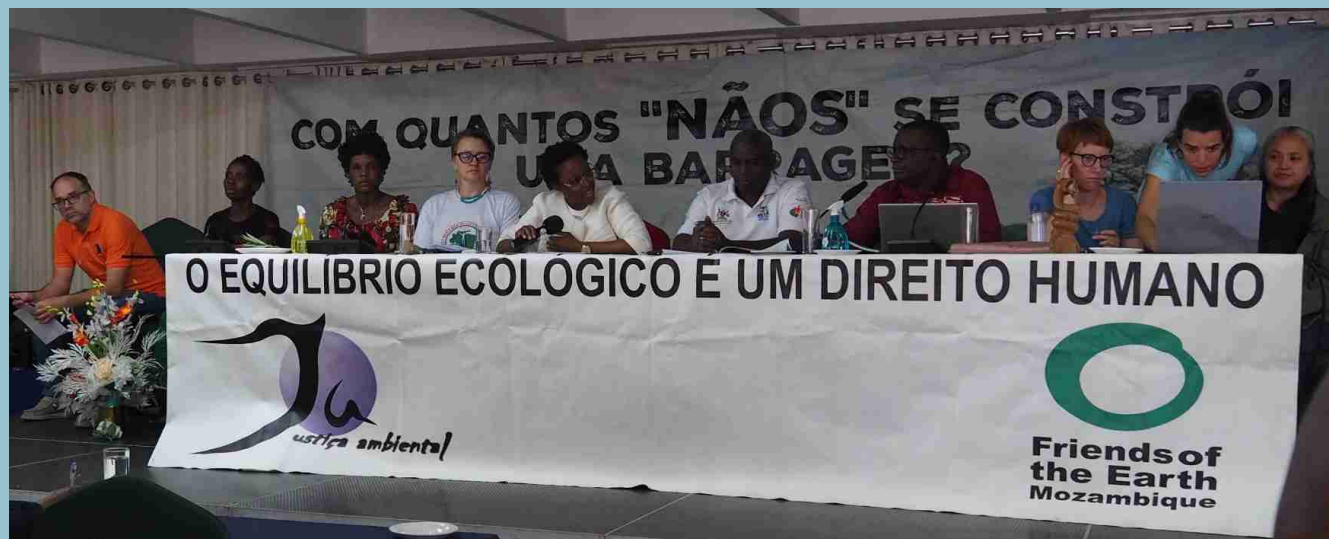


# The Maputo Declaration on Rivers and Dams

## 6 July 2023



### PREAMBLE

We, the social movements, civil society organisations, grassroots communities, lawyers, academics, experts and others, from several provinces of Mozambique and also from South Africa, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, Nigeria, Cameroon, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Brazil, Cuba, France, Ireland, Switzerland and Bosnia-Herzegovina, have met at our **4<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Rivers and Dams in Maputo, Mozambique, on 6th July 2023.**

We acknowledge the decades-long history of dam struggles, this declaration builds on the Manibeli declaration 1992, Curitiba 1997, Rasi Salai 2003 and Temaca 2010, and we move towards the fourth International Meeting of People Affected by Dams, to take place in the Brazilian Amazon, in 2025.

We note that we live in a capitalist, imperialist, neocolonial, patriarchal and racist system that is the main enemy of rivers and communities, that places profits above life and grabs territories and common goods. We commit ourselves to build an alternative to this system of death, violence and destruction, and to continue mobilising at all levels towards an energy model for peoples, in defence of life, peace, health, education, water, energy, food and decent work. We stand for internationalist solidarity, system change and power to the people.

We denounce the human rights violations of dam-affected communities across the world, including past injustices which have still not been redressed. We reiterate that any struggle in defence of territories and human rights is legitimate, fair and necessary. Specifically, we denounce the intimidation and persecution of local communities by the Mphanda Nkuwa dam project proponents in Mozambique for speaking up and resisting against this project and we reaffirm our solidarity with all affected peoples.

### CONCERNS

We note with concern that over 200 million people globally have already been displaced due to dam projects, while millions more have lost their livelihoods. Africa, Asia and Latin America

are the regions most affected by dams, with many displaced peoples. In Africa, for example, 57,000 people in Zimbabwe and Zambia were displaced by the Kariba Dam in the late 1950s; 100,000 people in Egypt and Sudan by the Aswan Dam; 80,000 people in Ghana by the Akosombo Dam and thousands in the Democratic Republic of the Congo by Inga I & II. In Asia, for example, the Sardar Sarovar Dam on the river Narmada in India displaced 200,000 people; China's Three Gorges dam displaced 1.2 million people; Kaliwa dam in the Philippines stands to inundate 28,000 hectares of forestland in indigenous ancestral domain, and many others.

We are concerned that the human rights of dam-affected communities, particularly indigenous peoples, are systematically violated. They face harassment, intimidation, incarceration and other abuses. Compensation is usually unfair, inadequate, and delayed, if it takes place at all.

We note that as the climate crisis worsens, the hydropower industry is attempting to recast large dams as a climate-friendly energy source but nothing could be further from the truth. Dam reservoirs, particularly in the tropics, are a globally significant source of methane, a potent greenhouse gas. Free-flowing rivers, on the other hand, play a crucial role in trapping carbon. Dams are uniquely vulnerable to floods and droughts – which are only increasing in frequency and severity with climate change – raising the risk of dam failures during floods and power outages when reservoirs run dry. Also, big dam reservoirs flood forests and agricultural land and destroy biodiversity and fisheries, while leaving downstream wetlands and forests dry. These impacts worsen the ability of ecosystems and the indigenous and rural peoples that depend on them to adapt to climate change.

We note with concern that now the hydropower industry is again trying to rebrand dams as green by promoting hydropower as a key fuel source for hydrogen. This is another false solution which carries huge risks and is not designed to provide energy for local people, but rather for export to foreign markets.

We denounce international financial institutions, banks and companies that are involved in financing and construction of dams while disregarding the negative impacts to peoples and planet.

We understand that not only mega dams but also small dams and run-of-river projects bring negative environmental and social impacts to society and ecosystems. Hydropower is presented as clean energy, but the construction and use of hydropower causes permanent damage to the environment and the destruction of river-dependent ecosystems.

We are encouraged by the World Commission on Dams (WCD) report, released by President Nelson Mandela 23 years ago, in 2000, whose key findings demonstrated that the purported benefits of large dams are regularly undermined by cost overruns and delays while most dams, particularly in the global South, under-perform, and that the social and environmental costs of dams borne by affected communities, downstream communities, taxpayers and the natural environment have been “unacceptable and often unnecessary”.

## **DEMANDS**

We strongly call upon the governments, corporations, financiers and United Nations bodies to:

1. Stop construction of all dam projects on our rivers until the guidelines of the World Commission of Dams (WCD) are fully followed, and decommission all old and inefficient dams while redressing past injustices caused by these dams.

2. Stop international financing and public subsidies going to dam projects, from the World Bank, Belt Road/Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, African Development Bank, and others.
3. Address the historical injustices perpetrated against displaced communities for the last many generations, by the Narmada, Belo Monte, Inga I and II and Kariba dams, and against many other victims of dam displacements globally.
4. Protect the land, forest and other rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, including customary rights.
5. Focus on energy access for almost 800 million people worldwide, 600 million of whom are in Africa. We demand community-owned, locally-appropriate renewable energy options instead of big damaging dams.
6. Stop the criminalisation of dam-affected communities and struggles, and the militarisation in dam-affected areas.
7. Ensure Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) of Indigenous Peoples and affected communities, including their right to say NO.
8. Adhere to the World Commission on Dams (WCD) guidelines for public participation and consultation in decision-making related to rivers and water at all stages of planning.
9. Ensure that existing dams have acceptable ecological flows and that biodiversity, natural species and sensitive habitats are protected, not turned into commodities, as a real solution to tackle the climate crisis.
10. Swiftly finalise, adopt and implement a strong and effective UN binding treaty to stop the impunity of transnational corporations, which is relevant and appropriate in responding to the struggles of peasant communities, fisherfolk, and people affected by extractivism in the global South.
11. Stop the export of the resources of Africa and the global South, including hydrogen, for the benefit of others.

### ***RIVERS FOR LIFE, NOT FOR DEATH!***

***ADOPTED BY THE INDIVIDUALS, ORGANISATIONS AND COLLECTIVES PRESENT AT THE 4th INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON RIVERS AND DAMS, JULY 6th 2023:***

#### ***Organisations and collectives***

1. *Action pour les Droits, l'Environnement et la Vie ADEV (Democratic Republic of the Congo - DRC)*
2. *Alternativa - Acção pela Emancipação Social (Mozambique)*
3. *Basilwisi Trust (Zimbabwe)*
4. *BioVision Africa (Uganda)*
5. *Centre Congolais pour le Développement Durable CODED (DRC)*

6. *Center for Environment (Bosnia and Herzegovina)*
7. *Centre for Applied Legal Studies CALS (South Africa)*
8. *Centre pour la Justice Environnementale (Togo)*
9. *Centro de Educación y Promoción de Desarrollo Sostenible CEPRODESO (Cuba)*
10. *Centro Memorial Martin Luther King Jr. CMLK (Cuba)*
11. *Coalition pour la Réforme et le Suivi de l'Action CORAP (DRC)*
12. *FishNet Alliance (Africa)*
13. *Friends of Lake Turkana (Kenya)*
14. *Friends of the Earth Africa (Africa)*
15. *groundWork (South Africa)*
16. *Grupo de Jovens Activistas de Moatize GJAM (Mozambique)*
17. *Health of Mother Earth Foundation HOMEF (Nigeria / Africa)*
18. *Justiça Ambiental JA! (Mozambique)*
19. *Legal Right and Natural Resources Center LRC (Phillipines)*
20. *Missão Tabita (Mozambique)*
21. *Movimento de Atingidos por Barragens MAB (Brazil)*
22. *Movimiento de Afectados por Represas MAR (Latin America)*
23. *Mulher, Género e Desenvolvimento MuGeDe (Mozambique)*
24. *Observatório das Mulheres (Mozambique)*
25. *Pro Natura / Friends of the Earth Switzerland (Switzerland)*
26. *Right to Say No Campaign (South Africa)*
27. *Solidarité des Femmes sur le Fleuve Congo SOFLECO (DRC)*
28. *South African Waste Pickers Association SAWPA (South Africa)*
29. *South Durban Community Environmental Alliance SDCEA (South Africa)*
30. *Southern Africa Campaign to Dismantle Corporate Power (Southern Africa)*
31. *Vaal Environmental Justice Alliance VEJA (South Africa)*
32. *Women of Change (Lephalale, South Africa)*
33. *WoMin African Alliance (Pan-african network)*

### **Individuals**

1. *Alexandre Morais (Mozambique)*
2. *Alex Chipissani (Mozambique)*
3. *Allan Basajjasubi (Jurist – South Africa)*
4. *António Morais (Mozambique)*
5. *António Vicente Sede (Mozambique)*
6. *Aparício de Nascimento (Mozambique)*
7. *Ana Brígida Novela (Mozambique)*
8. *Anabela Lemos (Mozambique)*
9. *Apollin Koagne Zouapet (Human rights lawyer - Cameroon)*

10. *Bertrand Sansonnens (Switzerland)*
11. *Carlos Mhula (Mozambique)*
12. *Celso dos Anjos Pereira Dias (Mozambique)*
13. *Charles Artur (Mozambique)*
14. *Ching Maganiso (Mozambique)*
15. *Christopher Mweembe (Zimbabwe)*
16. *Daniel Américo (Mozambique)*
17. *Daniel Ribeiro (Mozambique)*
18. *David Sthuntsha Mokoena (South Africa)*
19. *Desmond D'SA (South Africa)*
20. *Dipti Bhatnagar (Mozambique)*
21. *Eliana N'Zualo (Mozambique)*
22. *Erika Mendes (Mozambique)*
23. *Farelo dos Reis (Mozambique)*
24. *Fátima Lenade (Mozambique)*
25. *Fazbem Artur (Mozambique)*
26. *Félix Manuel (Mozambique)*
27. *Janete Eusébio Cantiga (Mozambique)*
28. *Jorge Josefa (Mozambique)*
29. *Juan Francisco Santos Estévez (Cuba)*
30. *Latifo Patreque (Mozambique)*
31. *Lenine Francisco (Mozambique)*
32. *Lídia Zacarias (Mozambique)*
33. *Lourenço Cesário (Mozambique)*
34. *Lucas Atanásio Catsossa (Mozambique)*
35. *Lucy Pitse Duba (South Africa)*
36. *Mahomed Shahid Jusob (Mozambique)*
37. *Mai Taqueban (Philippines)*
38. *Mantwa Mokoena (South Africa)*
39. *Manuel Passar Luciano (Mozambique)*
40. *Moisés Cuambe (Lawyer, Mozambique)*
41. *Neli Vicente (Mozambique)*
42. *Nino Cesário (Mozambique)*
43. *Patrick Martin Bond (Center for Social Change, University of Johannesburg, South Africa)*
44. *Paulo Afonso (Mozambique)*
45. *Rachida Quirino (Mozambique)*
46. *Ruth Jossefe (Mozambique)*
47. *Rodrigues Bicicleta (Mozambique)*

48. *Salima António Canhoca (Mozambique)*
49. *Samuel Gabriel Mondlane (Mozambique)*
50. *Saquina Mucavele (Mozambique)*
51. *Saúde Almeida (Mozambique)*
52. *Saúde Tiago (Mozambique)*
53. *Simson Mwale (Zambia)*
54. *Soniamara Maranhão (Brasil)*
55. *Stiven Azevedo (Mozambique)*
56. *Sven Peek (South Africa)*
57. *Terezinha da Silva (Social activist, Mozambique)*
58. *Timóteo Bento (Mozambique)*

*For more information: [jamoz2010@gmail.com](mailto:jamoz2010@gmail.com)*