

INFOSHOP NEWS Coca-Cola, Others Charged With Greenwash **Infoshop News, December 4, 2008**

SAN FRANCISCO - December 4 - The Coca-Cola company and other water companies including Pepsico and Nestle Waters were challenged in San Francisco by a broad coalition of groups, charging the companies with greenwashing and abusing water resources.

The water companies were in San Francisco for a meeting entitled "Corporate Water Footprinting: Towards a Sustainable Water Strategy" on December 2 and 3, 2008 to ostensibly outline water conservation strategies.

The coalition organized a capacity-filled Water Rights conference on December 2nd as well as a protest, including street theater, at the corporate conference venue today.

"A conference geared towards sustainable use of water is indeed welcome, but having the largest water abusers in charge is not," said Maude Barlow, chairwoman of the Council of Canadians and Senior Water Advisor to the United Nations.

"More than a billion people lack access to safe drinking water, and climate change is further depleting freshwater resources," said Wenonah Hauter, executive director of Food & Water Watch. "Given the absence of perspectives from those without access to water, the corporate conference appears aimed more at polishing the images of some of the world's biggest water abusers rather than addressing the very real global water crisis."

"Providing access to water cannot be ensured through privatization and must not be subject to the whims of the market. Over 3 billion people live on less than US \$2.50 a day and the commodification of water literally means that a substantial part of the world - particularly the poor and the marginalized - will be unable to afford water," said Amit Srivastava of the International Campaign Against Coca-Cola and the India Resource Center.

Coca-Cola's role in the corporate conference, in particular, was harshly criticized because of the company's announcement to become "water neutral".

"Coca-Cola's own concept paper on water neutrality states that the term is misleading and troublesome because it is impossible to become water neutral. Yet the company has decided that the term makes for good marketing and is pushing it, regardless of the fact that the company continues to destroy water resources for tens of thousand of people in India," said Srivastava.

The Coca-Cola company is the target of community-led campaigns across India for denying access to water, and two Coca-Cola bottling plants have been shut

down as a result. The Coca-Cola company has responded by increasing its advertising budget and increasing its "corporate social responsibility" initiatives, of which water neutrality is a part.

Also speaking at the conference were Mark Franco from the Winnemem Wintu Tribe and Mateo Nube from Movement Generation.