



SOCIAL FORUM 2022 (3-4 November 2022)

Interactive Dialogue on: Water for Climate, Resilience and Environment

Oral statement delivered by: Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII (APG23)

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Mr. Chair,

APG23 thanks the moderator and the distinguished panellist for the compelling discussion.

As a civil society organisation working on the ground, we have too often witnessed how degradation and exploitation of natural resources, together with adverse effects of climate change, have negatively impacted the lives of individuals, groups, and communities, especially those who are already enduring poverty, discrimination and systematic marginalisation.

Today, we want to bring here the voice of the Mapuche people, the largest Indigenous group in Chile who keeps struggling to protect their ancestral lands. Hydroelectric power plants, dams, and the expansion of extractive plantations of exotic trees severely affect natural resources, threatening the ecosystem, polluting water sources, as well as destroying the environment and biodiversity.

In the Mapuche worldview, water is a generator of life, not just a commodity to be exploited; the preservation of natural elements is an essential part of their spirituality and cultural integrity.

As Pope Francis reminds us, “Water is a common heritage that should be universally used for each generation”.

The worldview of Indigenous peoples offers us a fundamental key to facing the challenges of climate change, pollution, and water scarcity; in this regard, the right of Indigenous peoples to free, prior, and informed consent has to be always respected. The full participation of the indigenous communities in the decision-making process has to be provided in order to develop strategies aimed at the sustainable use of natural resources, including sustainable water management, sharing the benefits of biodiversity, and respecting the ecosystem.

Thank you!