



## Invitation to river defenders, community activists and global environmental leaders

- *Free-flowing rivers create life*
- *Dammed rivers die, along with the communities that rely on them*

The common narrative of the hydropower industry is that hydroelectric dams only bring welfare and progress. But for the communities that rely on rivers for food, income, clean water, recreation and cultural values, this promise rings hollow. Instead they endure the destruction of ecosystems, food systems and may be forced to relocate. Many national and transnational investments to build hydropower dams involve corruption and are a means of appropriating wealth at the expense of the affected communities. Hydropower dams can spark intense international disputes, for example, the dispute between Egypt, Sudan, and neighboring Ethiopia, owner of the “Great Renaissance Dam” which threatens to disrupt the flow of the Nile River impacting millions of lives downstream. Sadly, the influence of the hydropower industry is also linked to threats, attacks and even murders, such as that of Berta Cáceres, on March 2, 2016.

Because hydropower dams require large amounts of business associations, governments and companies promote them as “clean,” “green” and “sustainable” energy in an effort to secure funding or approval. Companies routinely deny their destructive impact through inadequate environmental studies and their approval is facilitated by a technical bureaucracy that often collaborates with and concedes to these interests.

To strengthen this industry’s image, the International Hydropower Association (IHA) has organized the **World Hydropower Congress**, from September 7 to 24, 2021 in Costa Rica, a country it wants to showcase as a successful example of “clean and sustainable energy”, according to its draft San José Declaration<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.hydropower.org/publications/la-declaracion-de-san-jose-sobre-energia-hidroelectrica-sostenible-borrador-de-consulta>



In response to the IHA Congress organizations in Costa Rica in coordination with environmental and socio-environmental movements from all continents will carry out the **GLOBAL MOVEMENT FOR RIVERS AND PEOPLE**, with the aim of creating an alternative space for discussion and mobilization in defense of rivers and the people of the planet.

**Proposal for actions:** our Global Movement will consider the following ideas before and after the IHA Congress, aimed at strengthening our collective capacities to protect rivers and communities:

- We ask that representatives from each country collaborate to generate a **National Statement** about the impacts of hydropower dams. If it isn't possible for all involved to arrive at just one message statements can be issued by individual groups. These national statements will be compiled and shared with everyone.
- We want you to share your experience with hydroelectric plants in **Inter-Country Virtual Forums**, for which we ask you to share whom you want to participate with and on which topics.
- This can also be done by way of **audio or video statements** (Technical instructions below).

In your statements and other text, audio and video recordings, we invite you to present your criteria and vision opinion on aspects such as:

- public and private, national and international investment and the history of corruption,
- ecological impacts of hydropower and destruction of ecosystems,
- the false claim of clean and sustainable energy and the history of inadequate environmental impact studies,
- The carbon emissions of hydroelectric dams and the worsening of climate change,
- Intimidation tactics, including threats, criminalization, displacement and killings,
- harassment and invasion of indigenous territories,
- integration of women in the defense of rivers and territories,
- efficiency and problems of scale for existing hydroelectric plants,
- loss of national and social-community control of water and energy resources.

Based on the **Healthy Rivers Declaration for a Fair and Green Recovery**<sup>2</sup> we hope that you will also share your vision on:

- a global moratorium on new hydroelectric plants,
- increased investment in renewable energy and energy storage,
- new energy matrices and democratically distributed generation, and
- safeguarding vulnerable areas and legal recognition of the rights of rivers<sup>3</sup>.

Although the IHA Congress is virtual, in Costa Rica we will hold local/community meetings and mobilizations (taking into account restrictions due to Covid19). One of our tasks is to deny that Costa Rica is a "model" of "sustainable hydroelectric energy"<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.rivers4recovery.org/spanish#callspanish>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.rightsofrivers.org/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://semanariouniversidad.com/opinion/represas-y-mentiras-sobre-energia-verde/>



## Technical advice about your contributions:

- National statements and other texts should be limited to 750 words.
- Audio recordings and Videos should be no longer than 3 minutes (you can send several) for podcasts and radio production that will be published in the REDLAR media, "El Chapuzón"/Costa Rica, and in all social networks and channels of social movements in each country.
- We ask that the act of sharing your contributions count as permission to use them in our publications.

**Sound quality:** record in places without noise (rain, wind, cars, people, others). Do not record in very closed spaces (such as bathrooms). Keep the phone 10 cm from your mouth.

**Video quality:** we prefer natural light and to avoid dark environments, paying attention to sound, as with the audio recordings. Place the phone in a horizontal position 1 meter from the speaker.

## Send your texts, videos and audios simultaneously to:

**Raquel Bolaños, ph / whatsapp 00 506 89730660**

**Silvia Sandoval, ph / whatsapp 00 52 1 55 36095210**

## and to emails:

**raquelbd@gmail.com**

**comunicacion@red-lar.org**

**and Mariana Porras Rozas: mariana@coecoceiba.org**

**We ask you to SEND YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS STARTING FROM NOW to carry out the audiovisual production and prepare the JOINT DECLARATION FOR RIVERS AND PEOPLES. Hopefully before AUGUST 21, 2021. Likewise, we will continue to receive contributions as part of the "MOVEMENT".**

Our sincere thanks,

**FECON-Costa Rica Team, REDLAR, Otros Mundos-México and International Rivers**

