

**Joint Call to halt Ilisu Dam Development
on the Occasion of the
International Day of Action Against Dams
and for Rivers, Water and Life
14th March 2008**

In the year 2000, the World Commission on Dams presented its recommendations for the future practice of large dam building and set out strategic priorities for decision-makers. These include the gaining of public acceptance; comprehensive options assessment; addressing existing dams; sustaining rivers and livelihoods; recognising entitlements and sharing benefits; sharing rivers for peace, development and security. Eight years later, the implementation of these recommendations and priorities is still a distant prospect.

A blatant example for a failed dam policy and violation of the WCD's recommendations and other international standards is the Ilisu dam in Turkey. Situated 65 km from the border to neighbouring countries Iraq and Syria, its development will create a gigantic reservoir in the Kurdish regions of Southeast Turkey. Around 400 sq km of the - as yet largely free-flowing - Tigris river and its confluents will be gravely damaged or destroyed. Unique cultural goods will be drowned in the reservoir, including the over 10,000 year old town Hasankeyf, which hosts remnants of over 20 past cultures and must be considered a cultural heritage site for all humanity. 55,000 to 78,000 people will be affected by the project, losing their means of existence either partially or completely. Their participation in planning the project, as stipulated by international standards, was a mockery, and no realistic plan is in place whereby they can obtain new livelihoods. Their cultural and social uprooting will increase the destabilisation of a region which has been subject to over 30 years of violent conflict and decades of human rights violations. Resistance against the project in the region is fierce. In addition, the rights of neighbouring downstream countries to be consulted on the project were ignored, which constitutes a breach of international law.

European governments, companies and banks are deeply involved in - and profiting from - the Ilisu dam project. Public export credit guarantees from Germany, Austria and Switzerland secure funds which Société Générale, Bank Austria Creditanstalt / Unicredit and DekaBank have loaned the European companies involved: Andritz, Zueblin, Alstom, Colenco, Stucky, and Maggia. Such loans and guarantees make possible a project which would never have been permitted to be built in any European Union country.

150 conditions attached to the export credit guarantee contracts and an international committee of experts are meant to bring the project in line with World Bank standards. They cannot remedy the project's fundamental flaws, however, like the lack of participation and public acceptance in the region, the lack of resettlement land, the complete inadequateness of the cultural heritage "salvage" plan, and the massive and unacceptable environmental destruction that the dam will cause. Reports by the committee of experts published on March 5th, 2008, clearly show that none of the conditions attached to ECA support for the project have been fulfilled since the guarantees were awarded in March 2007. The reports also demonstrate that, 26 years after the design of the dam was

approved and 10 years after a first contract to build it was awarded to an international consortium, basic information on the cultural goods and flora and fauna are still missing. This alone is a severe breach of international standards which, if adhered to, would never have allowed European governments to enter the project.

On the occasion of the International Day of Action Against Dams and for Rivers, Water and Life on March 14th, 2008 and in the light of the upcoming Kurdish Newroz celebrations on March 21st, 2008, we, the undersigned organisations, urge

- The Government of Turkey **to cancel its plans to build the Ilisu dam and develop a truly participatory sustainable development plan for the region instead**

- The Governments of Austria, Germany and Switzerland, the chief executives of Société Générale, Bank Austria Creditanstalt / Unicredit and DekaBank, and the chief executives of Andritz, Zueblin, Alstom, Colenco, Stucky and Maggia **to acknowledge that the project does not meet crucial international standards despite of the 150 conditions attached to the export credit guarantees, and to withdraw from the project, as conditions have grossly been violated until now by the Turkish officials.**

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