

# Invitation to Press Conference Invitación a la Rueda de Prensa

21 March 2006

Mexico



**Invitation to Press Conference, 21 March 2006**  
**Time 17:00 PM Taller A**  
**Press Area, Benamex, Mexico City**

***EPBR Bangladesh, Women in Europe, Aqua Tuya Bolivia and Consam Colombia present how women providing water and sanitation in conflict and disaster areas are the “fire-fighters”, putting water on the flames. This is an important but forgotten aspect of risk prevention.***

**Women’s organizations have better negotiation positions with guerilla groups. Women’s organizations help the poorest populations increase their income, and to be less dependent on payments by drugbarrons or terrorist groups. They often risk their lives. But the effect of their work is probably as important as sending military peace forces. However, these women’s initiatives in conflict areas hardly receive any recourses.**

The session 5-17 also presented the important role of women providing sanitation and safe drinking water in disaster areas. The women’s engineering network NetWwater of Sri Lanka were the only one’s to provide emergency toilets to the thousands of refugees after the Tsunami. The women’s institute in Bangladesh promotes solutions to give women a voice in trying to find solutions to the annual floods, as well as the arenic pollution of wells. The women’s organisation in the Aral Sea region, is supporting the local women to adjust to the largest men-made ecological disaster on this planet, but only international efforts can reverse the drying up of the 4th largest inland sea.

The women in Cochabamba Bolivia have seen lives lost in the water war against the water tariffs imposed by the privatized company. Now that the private company has been thrown out, the citizen’s are trying to establish community based water companies, providing water and sanitation at tariffs which the poorest can afford.

***Gloria Amparo, director of Consam Colombia:*** “The guerrilla and para-military groups have more confidence that we as a women’s organisations will provide real support for the communities in their regions. But providing safe water to these communities is often not possible with convential technologies, which are too expensive, support by donors and the state is necessary. This brings possitive effects, as less families enlist with the guerillas and fewer families mirgrate to the slums of the capital”

Women in Europe and Women for Water have helped to initiate the Women’s Coalition of the WWF-4, where over 50 women from all over the world are presenting session at the World Water Forum-4.

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