RALLY FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE! PROTEST AGAINST COCA-COLA!

**November 30, 2009  
Mehdiganj, Varanasi, India**

**November 2, 2009:** This year, India is experiencing its worst drought in the last forty years.

Monsoon rains are the lifeline for India, and the rains failed to arrive in usual fashion this year. June 2009 was the driest June in the last eighty years in India.

Close to 70% of Indians make a living related to agriculture and the vast majority of farming in India is dependent on rainfall. Hundreds of millions of people in India continue to suffer from the impacts of drought as our crops fail and water sources dry up.

The climate has changed and communities such as ours in Mehdiganj - primarily a rural, farming community - are feeling the impacts.

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| Coke Sucks |
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The injustice is that people such as ourselves - farmers, rural and low-income - have not contributed much to causing climate change because our way of life has not relied heavily on burning fossil fuels (oil, coal, gas) - the primary cause of climate change. We live simple lives. Yet, we are the hardest hit by a changing climate.

And Coca-Cola is adding to our climate woes by its indiscriminate use of water in Mehdiganj.

In complete disregard for the communities in which it operates, Coca-Cola has continued to extract millions of liters of water from the common groundwater resource even as the community has been struggling to meet its basic water needs, including water for farming, our primary source of livelihood.

And in a particularly brutal practice, Coca-Cola reaches its maximum water use in the summer months - exactly when the water shortages to the community are most acute - exponentially exacerbating the water crisis. To add insult to injury, Coca-Cola has also polluted the groundwater and land in Mehdiganj.

It is no longer a question of whether access to water - our fundamental human right - and our ability to make a living is under threat by climate change. It already is. And it is made much worse by the continued operations of the Coca-Cola company in Mehdiganj.

As governments deliberate towards the climate conference in Copenhagen from December 7-18, 2009, they must work towards an agreement rooted in fairness, equity and justice. Industrialized countries must lead the way by agreeing to significantly curb their unsustainable lifestyles based on unbridled consumption, and acknowledge the climate debt they have incurred as a result of their fossil fuel based industrialization.

A just climate policy must also challenge multinational companies like Coca-Cola that continue to operate in drought areas such as Mehdiganj and Kala Dera in India, significantly compounding the impacts of climate change already being experienced by the communities. Access to water is going to become more challenging in years to come because of climate change, and corporations must be held accountable for misusing water resources locally that make already-existing climate impacts on communities much worse.

We refuse to accept a development paradigm and climate policy that places the interests of private water profiteers like Coca-Cola above the basic water needs of communities.

For companies like Coca-Cola, climate change becomes a business opportunity where they can sell water for more profits in a climate-induced water constrained world. Recognizing the growing threats to its business by climate change and communities asserting their rights over water resources, Coca-Cola has resorted to outright lies to market a sustainable image of itself by announcing that it is becoming water neutral in India by 2009. The suggestion that Coca-Cola has no impact on water resources - water neutral - is a preposterous claim that has no basis in reality or science. It's greenwash.

We reject the notion of selling water for profit. Water is life, and access to water is a fundamental human right.

We have been campaigning for the closure of the Coca-Cola bottling plant in Mehdiganj because Coca-Cola's need for water and the community needs for water cannot co-exist. Coca-Cola has depleted groundwater in Mehdiganj as a result of its thirst for water, and, compounded with climate change, is making access to water even more difficult.

For us, climate justice means placing communities at the center of any decision making process on the use of our water resources and ensuring that the community needs for water are met first and foremost. For us, climate justice means Coca-Cola shutting down its bottling plant in Mehdiganj.

**Join us as we rally for CLIMATE JUSTICE and march against COCA-COLA in Mehdiganj on November 30, 2009.**

There will be a conference on Climate Justice, Water Rights and Corporate Accountability on November 29, 2009.

We also seek to highlight the ongoing crisis in Bhopal, which will be observing the 25th anniversary of the lethal gas leak on December 3. Close to 8,000 died during those days in 1984 as a result of Union Carbide's negligence, and nearly 25,000 more died subsequently. A new generation of Bhopalis continue to be poisoned as a result of the toxic contamination of the water and soil in the area that Dow Chemical, which bought Union Carbide, refuses to admit liability for.

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