

# Alliance Against Conflict of Interest (AACI)

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**AACI/2014/03**

**October 7, 2014**

Shri Narendra Modi  
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Subject: AACI condemns Coca Cola's association with the Cleaning of India's Rivers

Respected Sir/Madam

New Delhi, October 7, 2014: Alliance Against Conflict of Interest (AACI), a group of organisations and individuals – doctors, lawyers, women and child health groups, environmentalists, researchers, activists and media, strongly condemns the Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation for giving the keynote address at the Dialogue on 'Cleaning of India's Rivers – Design of Participatory Approaches', organised by Coca Cola and TERI University, being held at New Delhi today.

Coca Cola is internationally known to be a polluter of water bodies, for depleting water resources, for human rights violations, for violations of workers' rights, for targeting children and schools with their aggressive marketing campaigns and for bribery of the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry to soften their stand against children consuming sugary drinks which contribute to increase in Non-Communicable Diseases like hypertension, diabetes and cancers, which require lifelong costly treatment.

In 2010, a High Power Committee appointed by the Kerala State Government recommended to the state to impose fine of Rs. 216.26 crore to Coca-Cola plant at Palakkad district, noting that the company had violated the Water (Prevention and Control

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of Pollution) Act, the Environment (Protection) Act, the Factories Act, Hazardous Waste (Management and Handling) Rules, the SC and ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, Indian Penal Code, Land Utilisation Order, the Kerala Ground Water (Control and Regulation) Act and Indian Easement Act. The Committee observed that "the fact that Coca-Cola factory at Plachimada has caused immense damage to the environment and people and their livelihood and health is supported by impeccable evidence."

In AACI's opinion, the Hon'ble Minister's giving the keynote address at a Dialogue will only help at providing legitimacy to the anti-people acts of the company and providing it with a platform for getting free advertising and branding as a credible company, **while it continues to pollute water sources, violate human rights and carry on its business as usual.**


AACI also strongly denounces TERI University, an academic body, for entering into a partnership with Coca Cola to establish the Coca Cola Department of Regional Water Studies to address key water issues which are common to South Asia.

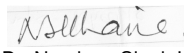
It is ironical that TERI University is partnering with the same company whose bottling plant in Kaladera, a drought stricken region of Rajasthan, was recommended for closure by TERI – The Energy Resource Institute – for over-extraction of water and causing water shortages. The assessment identified the company as "one of the contributors to a worsening water situation and a source of stress to the communities around."

As lately as in August 2014, Coca Cola has also been forced to close its bottling water operations in Mehdiganj in Varanasi, for creating major water shortages through excessive extraction of water and of polluting groundwater and soil. The company had earlier been fined for constructing the same plant on illegally acquired land.


AACI urges both the Ministry of Water Resources and TERI University to disassociate themselves from Coca Cola, and uphold the fundamental human rights of the people of India to safe water resources, health and life with dignity, rather than use their resources to greenwash corporations like Coca Cola.

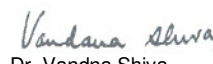
With kind regards,


  
Dr. Arun Gupta,  
Regional Coordinator International  
Baby Food  
Action Network (IBFAN Asia)

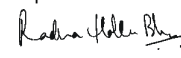
  
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Director, Nephrology Division,  
Fortis Hospital, Ludhiana Punjab

  
Dr. J.P. Dadhich,  
National Coordinator, BPNI


  
Dr. Mira Shiva  
Initiative for Health, Equity and  
Society (IHES)

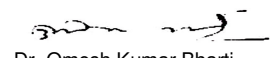
  
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