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PRESS RELEASE

PRIVATE WATER OPERATORS CALL TO TURN THE RIGHT TO WATER INTO A REALITY FOR ALL PEOPLE

MEXICO - MARCH 19, 2006 - Business has officially endorsed the Right to Water at the UN CSD13 meeting in 2005. At the 4th World Water Forum, further to the statements of Gérard Payen during the opening roundtable, private water operators now urge the international water community to work on the implementation of the Right to Water in order to make it effective for all people in need.

Private and public operators contribute to making the Right to Water a reality every day. Supplying water to people is their “raison d’être”.

The implementation of the Right to Water is a challenge for which water operators, public and private, have significant experience. Their mission, as instruments of public water policies, is to make the Right to Water a reality for people.

Gérard Payen, the President of AquaFed, declared: *“private water operators are used to making the right to access to water effective for individuals. In developing countries, they have helped public authorities to connect more than ten million people to water supply systems in the last decade.”*

The international water community needs to acknowledge that 3 steps are necessary to implement the right to water locally:

1. **Acknowledging the content of the right to water.**

After all the discussions in Mexico at WWF4 and all the preparatory work, including the reference report that has been released by the World Water Council, the international community should close this debate to permit action to take place.

2. **Identifying the public authority in charge of the implementation of the right to water, its related duties and its means of action.**

In many places in the world this has yet to be decided. In particular, tariffs structures have to be appropriate, local authorities must be allocated the appropriate financial means and their obligations should be clarified.

3. **Making the right real to every individual through delivery in the field.** This is where efficient operators are needed to produce the expected results.

Water operators are the instruments of the public policies that aim at increasing access to water and sanitation. If called on, they can deliver.

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AquaFed is the newly formed International Federation of Private Water Operators. Open to companies of all sizes and from all countries, it aims to contribute to solving water challenges by making Private Sector know-how and experience available to the international community. It brings together more than 200 water companies that serve people in 38 countries.

If you would like further information, or additional comments from a senior representative at AquaFed, please contact Thomas Van Waeyenberge: (+52 44) 55 34 40 87 06 (during the WWF4)