



# The Right Livelihood Award

*for outstanding vision and work on behalf of our planet and its people*

Maude Barlow (Canada)

Joint Award with Tony Clarke (2005)



" for their exemplary and longstanding worldwide work for trade justice and the recognition of the fundamental human right to water."

Photo: Wolfgang Schmidt

**Both Maude Barlow and Tony Clarke are long-term activists on trade and justice issues, now with a special focus on water, whose campaigning lives have intertwined for many years.**

Maude Barlow, born in 1947, was a high-profile leader in the women's movement in Canada, serving as the Director of Equal Opportunity for the City of Ottawa and leading a national coalition against violence against women. She later became Pierre Trudeau's advisor on women's issues when he was Prime Minister in 1983-84.

In 1985, she founded the Council of Canadians, Canada's largest citizens' advocacy organization, which works to safeguard Canada's universal social security system and its water and energy heritage, where she has served as the elected chairperson since 1988. The Council of Canadians has also been a leading voice in the international search for a more just and sustainable trade system and, through its Blue Planet Project, fights for the universal right to water.

Barlow is the author or co-author of 16 books on all aspects of globalisation and the theft of the global commons, the latest being *Blue Covenant: The Global Water Crisis and the Coming Battle for the Right to Water*.

Maude Barlow also chairs the board of Washington-based Food and Water Watch; is on the executive of the San-Francisco-based International Forum on Globalization; and is a Councillor with the Hamburg-based World Future Council. She is the recipient of eight honorary doctorates and many awards, including the 2005 Lannon Cultural Freedom Fellowship, the 2008 Canadian Environmental Award and the 2009 Earth Day Canada Outstanding Environmental Achievement

Award. From October 2008-2009 Maude Barlow served as Senior Advisor on Water to the 63rd President of the United Nations General Assembly.

Together, Maude Barlow and Tony Clarke played a key role in building opposition to, and defeating, the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI), and in campaigning against the World Trade Organisation (WTO) s free-trade agenda, especially at Seattle (1999) and Cancun (2003). With their working lives closely connected for many years, Barlow and Clarke are now recognized as two of the most respected citizen leaders in Canada and in the global justice movement generally.

Both have been featured speakers at the World Social Forums in Porto Alegre and Mumbai. They have also been important innovators in cross-border organising, shown in their work against the MAI and WTO; in creating democratic models of organising, shown by the Council of Canadians, and in bringing new issues to the forefront of the movement, as with NAFTA, the MAI and water; and in developing credible alternatives, which are discussed in their joint book *Global Showdown: How the New Activists are Fighting Global Corporate Rule* (2001).

They have also worked closely together through the International Forum on Globalisation (IFG) which was set up in 1998. A major common focus of their work in recent years has been the world s water resources. In 2002 they published *Blue Gold: the Battle Against Corporate Theft of the World s Water*, which has been published in 47 countries. A recent book by Clarke, *Inside the Bottle: Exposing the Bottled Water Industry* (2007) highlights concerns about the bottled water industry and its impact on the water resources of the poor. They have built a considerable network of activists in the South, and an important part of their work has been visiting and assisting communities struggling for water rights, e.g. the village of Plachimada in Kerala fighting against a Coca-Cola plant.

One particular victory for the international water movement was the inclusion by referendum into the constitution of Uruguay a new article ensuring not only that access to piped water and sanitation is a fundamental human right available to everyone, but also that in the creation of water policies social and ecological considerations take precedence over economic considerations.

Barlow was also deeply involved with an international campaign for a United Nations Convention on the Right to Water. On July 28, 2010, the United Nations General Assembly voted in favour of recognizing water and sanitation as human rights. The resolution put forward by Bolivia and co-sponsored by 35 states passed with 122 states voting in favour and 41 abstaining.

## Quotation

*"Under the current model of globalization, everything is for sale. Areas once considered our common heritage are being commodified, commercialized and privatized at an alarming rate. Today, more than ever before, the targets of this assault comprise the building blocs of life as we know it on this planet, including freshwater, the human genome, seeds and plant varieties, the air and atmosphere, the oceans and outer space. The assault on, and defence of, the commons is one of the great ideological and social struggles of our times."*

Maude Barlow and Tony Clarke

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