Water for the African Diaspora

By Pamela Boyce Simms & Beverly G. Ward

THE AFRICAN DIASPORA EARTHCARE COALITION, organized by the QEW United Nations Working Group, is focusing on the theme of “water” this year as part of the inauguration of the United Nations' International Decade for Action: Water for Sustainable Development. The Coalition will host a special “side-event” during the U.N. High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development that will take place in New York, July 9 - 18 2018.

The theme of water builds upon the Coalition’s 2017 efforts to educate, advocate, and create solidarity networks supporting the retention of agricultural land and food sovereignty for people of the African Diaspora. The threats of drought, famine, and other anthropogenic and climatic events are inextricably linked to water.

Members of our Coalition have formed a special Water Circle to collect data and frame the concerns from a global perspective. The Circle has taken into consideration U.N. Sustainable Development Goal 6, Clean Water and Sanitation: “Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.” We seek to expand its inquiries to include understanding the myriad impacts of climate disruption on achieving this goal, particularly as related to people of African descent. This is consistent with the U.N. statement: “There is sufficient fresh water on the planet to achieve [Goal 6]. But water related challenges, including limited access to safe water and sanitation, increasing pressure on water resources and ecosystems, and an exacerbated risk of droughts and floods, remain high on the global agenda.”

The Water Circle will host a webinar on March 21 to introduce ourselves and the work, and provide case examples of water issues and potential solutions from Africa, the Caribbean, and the U.S. and to build energy for World Water Day on March 22.
We have launched an online fundraising campaign through Crowdrise to fund this work. Our goal is to raise enough money to bring together leaders from the African diaspora who are working in their communities on issues of water and food sovereignty to the gathering in July in New York City to learn together, share resources, and strengthen our network. Please visit quakerearthcare.org/crowdrise to make a donation.

To get involved with the Coalition contact Pamela Boyce Simms at pbs9@georgetown.edu and to join the webinar contact Beverly G. Ward at fsearthcare@seymquakers.org.

*Pamela Boyce Simms is an evolutionary culture designer who convenes the Mid-Atlantic Transition Hub. She currently works with international Quaker, Buddhist, and African Diaspora Earthcare networks. Beverly G. Ward is a member of Tampa Meeting and Southeastern Yearly Meeting’s Field Secretary for Earthcare.*

United Nations’ Facts on Water

“Globally, water scarcity already affects four out of every 10 people. A lack of water and poor water quality increases the risk of diarrhoea, which kills approximately 2.2 million people every year, as well as trachoma, an eye infection that can lead to blindness, and many other illnesses.” (WHO)

“With the existing climate change scenario, by 2030, water scarcity in some arid and semi-arid places will displace between 24 million and 700 million people.” (UNCCD)
