

Indira Samarasekera
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Dear President Samarasekera,

We the undersigned are extremely concerned to hear that the University of Alberta has chosen to grant an honorary degree to Peter Brabeck-Letmathe, former executive director and current chairman of Nestlé. We are even more dismayed to learn that the University is considering including Mr. Brabeck-Letmathe on the external advisory board for the University of Alberta's planned water initiative.

Mr. Brabeck-Letmathe has been a lead voice in promoting water markets and pricing and has stated publicly that the idea that water is a human right is "extreme." During his tenure as executive director and chair Nestlé has become one of the most boycotted companies on the planet for aggressively marketing baby milks in violation of international standards, as well as over accusations of widespread labour violations.

Appointing Mr. Brabeck-Letmathe to a position on the advisory board of the University's water initiative would give undue credibility and an important platform for his views, and we believe this would be harmful to the hundreds of millions of people around the world who do not have access to clean water.

On July 28, 2010, the United Nations General Assembly recognized water as a human right, and we are calling on the University of Alberta to respect this historic resolution by not giving Mr. Brabeck-Letmathe a public and respected platform for views which impede the implementation of this fundamental human right. If you choose to appoint Mr. Brabeck-Letmathe, the advisory board of this potentially important initiative will have lost its legitimacy, and the reputation of all on the board will be harmed before the initiative is launched.

We ask that Brabeck-Letmathe not be considered for a position on the advisory board and that other voices be added which better reflect the importance of water as a commons, human right and public trust.

Signed,

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Red Vida
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