

## **ALBA governments support outcome of Peoples' Conference**

Written by

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- (Meena Raman)

The ALBA (Peoples' Trade Treaty) countries comprising the governments of Venezuela, Cuba, Ecuador, Nicaragua and Bolivia echoed the calls by social movements and civil society organizations expressed in the Peoples' Agreement that was adopted in Cochabamba, Bolivia on 22 April. Referring to the "World Peoples' Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth" held in Cochabamba, Bolivia, from 19-22 April, in a submission to the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the ALBA governments said that they "make these (peoples') voices our own". On the Cancun Climate talks at the end of this year, the ALBA governments expressed their expectations in producing "a fair, balanced and legally binding agreement, which complements and strengthens the agreements in force composed of the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol."

"The future of all humankind is endangered and we cannot accept that a small number of developed countries intend to define an international regime without the participation of the rest of the world, as they unsuccessfully tried to do at the 15th Session of the Conference of the Parties in Copenhagen," said the ALBA submission.

"In the advent of this new stage of the negotiations on climate change, the governments of the ALBA reject any attempt at violation of the Charter of the United Nations and we call into question the practice of 'selective diplomacy' implemented by the Presidency of COP15. These practices seriously endanger the basic rules of multilateral system," said the submission further.

"We uphold our constructive commitment to a negotiation process based on transparency, inclusiveness, legitimacy and democracy, to recover confidence among any and all the Parties to the Convention, and reach in Cancun an agreement that will enable to urgently and effectively address climate change and its devastating effects," it said.

(The submission by the ALBA governments was in response to an invitation to Parties to submit additional views to the Chair of the Ad-hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action, Ms. Margaret Mukahanana-Sangarwe of Zimbabwe, to prepare under her own responsibility, a text to facilitate negotiations for its next session in June.)

On the shared vision for long-term cooperative action, the submission states that "should global warming increase by more than 2 degrees Celsius, there is a 50% chance the damage caused to our Mother Earth will be totally irreversible. Therefore, a future commitment based on an increase of 2 degrees Celsius is unacceptable."

"Our future vision, based on the principle of historical and common but differentiated responsibilities, requires developed countries to commit themselves to concrete quantified reduction targets of their emissions to get greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere back to 300 ppm, thus limiting the increase of the global mean temperature to well below 1.5 degrees Celsius, ideally stabilizing it at 1 degree Celsius," it added.

"The shared vision should not be limited to defining limits to the increase of temperature and

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greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere. Rather, it should include, in a comprehensive and balanced manner, a set of financial and technological measures, adaptation, capacity building, production and consumption patterns, and other essential subjects, such as the acknowledgement of the rights of Mother Earth, to restore harmony with nature," said the submission.

Referring to the COP meeting at the end of the year, the submission said that in Mexico, Parties "should approve the amendment to the Kyoto Protocol, for the second commitment period beginning in 2013, whereby developed countries should embark upon significant domestic reductions of at least 50% against the baseline year of 1990."

"Therefore, there is the need to set first, a global target for all developed countries, and then apportion an individual quota for each of them, ensuring comparability of efforts between them, thus, keeping the Kyoto Protocol system for emissions reduction. The prior definition of such commitments under the Kyoto Protocol is essential, as a starting point, to establish a long-term shared vision," it said.

On adaptation, the submission proposes "the inclusion of a definition of environmental vulnerability as the ability of an environmental, social and economic system to cope with an impact or risk, taking into consideration environmental integrity and how it is affected by anthropogenic and natural threats."

"The impacts and their cost on developing countries, as well as the specific needs of any impacts, should be assessed and valued. Also, the technological and financial support of developed countries should be recorded and monitored," it added further.

The submission said that "the Adaptation Fund should be enhanced as an exclusive fund to face climate change and as an integral part of a financial mechanism managed and led by our States in a sovereign, transparent and equitable manner."

"The Adaptation Fund should also manage a facility to remedy the damages caused by any impacts, including lost profit, compensation for extreme and gradual climate events, and any additional costs which may arise if our planet exceeds the ecological thresholds. Likewise, those impacts that are curbing the right to 'living well', in the context of our legitimate right to sustainable development, should be considered," it said.

On the issue of forests, the submission states that "the definition of forests including plantations, as proposed by some countries during the negotiations, is unacceptable. Monocultures are not forests. Therefore, we require for the purposes of negotiations, a definition where native forests, the jungle and the diversity of the ecosystems on Earth are recognized."

"The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples should be fully acknowledged, implemented and added to the negotiating texts on climate change. A good strategy and action to prevent deforestation and degradation and protect native forests and the jungle is to recognize the individual rights, enshrined in several national laws and regulations, of indigenous peoples and nations, where most natural forests and jungles are located," said the submission.

"Polluting countries must directly transfer financial and technological resources to pay for restoration and conservation of forests and jungles, in favour of indigenous peoples and ancestral original social structures. This shall be a direct compensation, additional to the funding

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sources committed by developed countries in this regard, outside of the carbon market," it added.

The submission, as regards the issue of climate migrants, proposes that "developed countries assume their responsibility towards climate migrants, admitting them to their territories and acknowledging their fundamental rights through international agreements stating the definition of climate migrant so that all States should abide by their provisions and protect this population."

On financing, the ALBA governments called on developed countries to "provide a new, public sourced annual financing, additional to the official development assistance. The financial support to fight climate change in developing countries should be as significant as the amounts that developed countries devote to war and defence budgets."

"A new financial mechanism, operating under the authority of the COP should be established. The mechanism should be accountable to said Conference, with a substantial representation of developing countries to enforce the financing commitments of the Annex 1 countries," it said.

"Financing should be direct, from public funds, and it should not be conditioned on additional benefits for developed countries. Neither States sovereignty nor self-determination of communities and most affected groups should be disturbed by means of other mechanisms. Such mechanisms, if any, should be voluntary and regulated in accordance with the principles of the Convention and international law," it said further.

On technology development and transfer, the submission said that "setting clear guidelines and creating a multilateral, multi-task mechanism for the participatory control, management and continued evaluation of the technological exchange by developed countries, and also of the support for development of in-house technologies in developing countries, are essential."

"These technologies should be useful, clean and socially suitable. The establishment of a fund for funding and inventory of appropriate technologies, free from intellectual property rights, particularly patents, is also essential. Rather than private monopolies, they should come in the public domain, of ready access and low cost," it said. +