



ASAMBLEA POPULAR DE LOS PUEBLOS – PARAGUAY “POR UNA JUSTICIA SOCIOAMBIENTAL Y GLOBAL”

The civil society organizations comprising POJOAJU (Association of Non-Governmental Organizations in Paraguay), National NGO Networks, social and labor organizations, students, the academic sector, and the general public, participants in the meetings on Democracy, the Rule of Law, and Sustainable Development in Paraguay held on September 1st and 13th, 2023, as part of the international campaign "For Socio-environmental and Global Justice" promoted by the Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP), have discussed and put forth the following proposals aimed at strengthening democracies with a socio-environmental rights focus and promoting sustainable development in Paraguay:

In recent years, we have observed that the country has been experiencing continuous economic growth, with significant benefits accruing to privileged sectors of the economy, such as agribusiness controlled by multinational corporations, the financial sector, infrastructure construction companies, among others. These benefits are concentrated in the hands of a few and do not reach the majority of the population. This is evidenced by the persistence of poverty levels and the exclusion of a significant portion of the population from essential services. There is also a constant high rate of informal labor, accounting for approximately 65% to 70% of the workforce, for at least the past three decades.

This situation is exacerbated by the high concentration of land access and ownership by privileged sectors, including the so-called "ill-gotten lands" distributed during the military dictatorship (1954 to 1989), which were originally intended for agrarian reform. As a consequence, there is a significant social liability resulting from the displacement of peasants who used to cultivate the land for subsistence, and now they are pushed into the belts of suburban poverty. Additionally, there is a severe environmental liability, leading to deforestation, air pollution due to aerial spraying (soybean crops), soil contamination, water resources, and other factors contributing to the climate crisis experienced by the country.



Structural corruption, the advance of organized crime, authoritarian practices and values, and the weakening of state institutions that have been increasingly observed in recent years, place Paraguay at the risk of becoming an undesirable failed state.

Given this brief description of the country's situation, urgent responses are demanded from the Paraguayan government to democratize land access, promote sustainable production, achieve food sovereignty, address the climate crisis, reduce social inequality, and restore a production model in harmony with the common goods of nature.

The government must facilitate and ensure the full enforcement of human rights, political, social, economic, cultural, and environmental rights. It should learn to value and support the contributions made by civil society organizations in favor of democracy and sustainable development, which do not seek to replace the state but rather complement and collaborate with the government, both through actions and by critiquing missteps and abuses of power to the detriment of the population.

Considering the discrimination against women, income inequalities, and restricted access to rights, as well as the high rates of femicide in Paraguay, the state should promote the development of public policies based on a gender perspective that ensures women's equal access to employment opportunities, equitable compensation, healthcare, education, and more.

It is proposed to initiate a process that generates a New Social Contract based on social dialogue to improve the search for solutions aimed at the common good, reducing inequalities, achieving efficient public spending, and strengthening the fiscal capacity of the state to provide citizens with improved basic services. Promoting reform for greater equity and tax justice for the citizens.

Having the political will and technical capacity to carry out a State Reform with a view to better serving the common good and making progress in essential, quality, and universal public services in health, education, transportation, housing, electricity, water, social security, and socio-environmental services.



On the international stage, Paraguay should support multilateralism, regional integration spaces, United Nations system policies, compliance with international agreements, considering the agreements of global citizenship, and adhering to an internationalist vision based on solidarity and the sovereignty of peoples.

The Escazú Agreement should be ratified by the Paraguayan government because it represents a tool for transparency, access to public information, and justice in socio-environmental matters to combat the effects of the climate crisis.

To follow up on these and other proposals aimed at strengthening democracy with a socio-environmental rights focus and the sustainable development of the Republic of Paraguay, it is proposed to expand and carry out periodic dialogue spaces with civil society organizations interested in consolidating participatory democracy mechanisms.

Asunción, Paraguay, September 2023.

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