During the 6th and 7th of August, Buenos Aires hosted the meeting of the Civil 20, one of the 8 affinity groups that the G20 has. The C20 had its first two-day meeting during the middle of April where the different working groups that make up the Civil 20 met face to face and which resulted in the document of recommendations or "policy pack" that was formally delivered to the president of the Nation the day of the opening of the summit.

The objective of this pack of recommendations is to be taken to the G20 summit, which will take place between November 30 and December 1, to be taken into consideration as the expression and demands of civil society.

The recommendations are the product of months of articulated work carried out jointly by civil society and coordinated by the representatives of each working group. Working groups address issues such as: Anticorruption, Architecture of the International Financial System; Education, Employment and Inclusion; Environment, Climate and Energy; Gender; Investments and Infrastructure; Local to the Global; and Global Health.
Among the different side events, which addressed issues such as the future of work and new technologies, gender gaps, climate change and the Paris Agreement, Agenda2030, among others, FOCO/INPADE co-organized with ICAR, RACI, Nauman Foundation, BHRRC and University of St Gallen the workshop "Civic space restrictions and the protection of human rights defenders; Overview, new threats and civil society responses".

This workshop provided an overview of civic space restrictions in G20 countries, identified novel threats to public participation and provided examples from the region. The panelists gave examples and discussed the roles of governments and businesses in both restricting and fostering civic space, and presented available civil society tools to monitor civic space, report abuses, and advocate for increased protections.

In a general overview, the contributions of civil society were well addressed and concrete, reflecting better what the affinity groups expressed in the policy paper delivered to the G20 presidency.

To highlight was the questioning of the poor opening of the G20's discussion spaces, especially the finance track, where even the Chairs or Co chairs of the Civil 20 or the other affinity groups did not obtain information on how it will develop.

In this instance, it was strongly requested that a representative participation space be opened for civil society.
ARGENTINA

Conflict in Unilever

At the end of July 2018, the Unilever plant in Gualeguaychú dismissed 21 employees. The plant was paralyzed for 24 hours and the workers installed a tent in the front. Omar Casco, delegate of the Petrochemicals Union of Zárate, said the measure is in solidarity with five workers who were not reinstated. "There are five workers who have not agreed and the measures continue because there have been no negotiations in the hearing on Thursday was held in the Labor delegation, in which the company again ratified the dismissals and the parties were released so the administrative instruction already finished ". Of the 21 dismissed there are five who want to continue maintaining their jobs and do not accept to be on the street. The rest reached individual agreements with the company to disassociate themselves, according to the trade unionist who also stated that "the staff is in a permanent Assembly state and it has also been decided to install a tent in the entrance to the factory where there will be permanently Unilever colleagues in charge to make a collection to be able to sustain economically the five colleagues who were fired".

Dismissals and persecution in Coca-Cola
The directors of the Alcorta plant of Coca Cola FEMSA dismissed, without cause, 8 workers at the end of July 2018. Among those dismissed are several activists on the Brown list, who denounce persecution and discrimination for their union activity. Through a press release, they assured that this situation "began in 2014 and continues today to make jobs more flexible, maintain and increase production levels with fewer personnel and thus sustain and increase their profit levels over our sacrifice and our increasingly deteriorating salaries". Workers affirm that they were imposed work hours of 12 hours a day, in rotating shifts, and that, with the present reduction of personnel, the production rhythms would be accelerated. They also maintain that, because of the terrible working conditions, they are exposed to all kinds of accidents; as when a worker died due to negligence of the company a few years ago. The delegates claim not to be able to do anything and asked that a state of permanent assembly be initiated, to discuss with all the workers the steps to follow.

Mobilization against mining

Representatives of the Environmental and Social Forum of Patagonia (FASP) and of the Mapuche community, Fol Folil, were mobilized on Tuesday, July 23, in Comodoro Rivadavia, in repudiation of the attitude that the Private Petroleum Guild adopted in favor of mining. The column mobilized to Constituyentes and Callao, where the oil guild headquarters are located. After being heard in the street the organizations delivered two notes at the entrance table, where they question the position taken by the union in favor of an activity "that is prohibited by law and that will not leave anything but more pollution", according to words of the representative of the FASP, Zulma Usqueda. In the notes not only the validity of the law was remembered, but also the history of the anti-mining struggle, recalling the 2003 milestone when Esquel spoke against mining. The protection of the watersheds was also requested since "it is an activity that requires fresh water. It is a contradiction to allocate as much resource, which is scarce, to something that will only leave more pollution and distress", said
Usqueda. The organizations requested an urgent meeting with the Executive Committee of Private Oil Operators to express their point of view.

**Order to analyze San Juan populations**

On Friday, July 6 federal judge Sebastian Casanello ordered a study of urine and blood on residents of the San Juan towns of Iglesias and Jáchal, near the Barrick Gold mine, to determine if they have in their bodies remains of contamination resulting from the mining activity in the area. According to the judge "it should be recorded what was the impact on health that had suffered and/or is being suffered" and "to do this, blood and urine samples should be taken from the inhabitants of the place who are willing to perform the exams, interview with people who live in said places in order to know if they have symptoms of conditions related to the consumption of mercury or heavy metals related to the mining activity, know if they made medical consultations, where appropriate, where and the diagnoses made”.

The studies will be carried out by the University of Cuyo and the Federal Police. At the time, the University of Cuyo had already determined in an analysis of the waters of the Jáchal river basin that pollution levels far exceeded the permitted parameters, in the same way the values that emerged when analyzing said rivers after the spill in Veladero in September 2015, which was followed by two similar ones in the last two years. Casanello also ordered a study on the water network and the wells used by residents in different locations in the departments of Iglesias and Jáchal to detect if there is mercury, aluminum, manganese and other heavy metals that could be related to mining activity; as well as detect, if possible, the presence of sodium hypochlorite. Finally, it is required to take different samples of plant and animal species in those same villages to detect the presence of metals whose levels "could compromise animal and plant life, as well as the health of people who consume these species".
Indigenous peoples of Ecuador win Chevron trial

In mid-July 2018, the Constitutional Court of Ecuador ordered Chevron to pay US $ 9.5 billion in compensation for the pollution caused by its lots. Although the sentence had been imposed a few years ago, the US company imposed an appeal against its execution that led to the last instance of the Ecuadorian judicial system. According to Pablo Fajardo, lawyer for the indigenous communities: "This is the most important case for indigenous peoples and peasants. For 25 years, we have fought and now we are defeating the system of global corporate impunity. Those transnational corporations that commit crimes anywhere in the world and never want to respond for those crimes". In a nutshell, the case corresponds to a lawsuit established by 30,000 citizens belonging to indigenous peoples of Ecuador against Chevron demanding to repair the contamination produced by Texaco (a company bought by Chevron in 2001). The contaminating activity of Texaco happened between 1964 and 1992, during which they burned gas in the open air and poured toxic waters into the Amazon. Chevron described as "unpayable" the compensation established by the Constitutional Court and accused the state oil company Petroecuador, which would have operated in conjunction with Texaco during the years that imply the demand. So far, one of the plaintiffs' biggest concerns is to be able to collect the compensation, because Chevron does not have any assets in Ecuador, so it tries to validate the ruling of the Constitutional Court at the international level in order to be able to collect it. However, to complete this step, the indigenous peoples must pay the Canadian judicial system, in which they won one of the several instances that constitute this trial.
Pollution studies in Mexico

Ecologists and researchers from Sinaloa ask that serious studies be carried out to rule out any contamination of the waters of the Fuerte River. Suspicions arise after a spill at the La Cieneguita mine, owned by the company Minera Río Tinto, in Chihuahua. It is believed that the spill traversed the course of the Cañitas stream to the confluence of the Fuerte River, a tributary of the Luis Donaldo Colosio dam «Huites».
According to Federico Páez Osuna, professor of the postgraduate in Marine Sciences and Limnology and specialist in aquatic pollution and biogeochemistry, if you do not do analyzes and studies you will never know what is happening. Other water studies will be carried out in his laboratory.
In mid-July 2018 a group of environmentalists took samples at several points (Minera Río Tinto, Huites dam and Miguel Hidalgo and on the Fuerte river). Some results will appear in a couple of weeks.
Joel Retamoza, general coordinator of the Alianza Ambientalista Sinaloense, stressed that the collapse of mining debris is a sign that the mining company does not have the measures to contain hazardous waste despite the fact that the same regulation establishes that these mounds must be retained. "It is observed that they did not follow the procedures indicated by the regulation because we have already seen the consequences, not only in this mine, but in others that are in the Sierra Madre Occidental," he said.
The Brazilian Justice banned the use of glyphosate

On Friday, August 3, a federal judge in Brasilia suspended the use of products containing the agrochemical glyphosate, a herbicide widely used for soybeans and other crops in Brazil. It ruled that new products containing the chemical could not be registered in the country and that existing records would be suspended within the next 30 days, until the government re-evaluates its toxicity. The decision also applies to the insecticide abamectin and the fungicide tiram. The measure particularly affects Monsanto, which issued a statement affirming that Brazilian farmers have depended on glyphosate for more than 40 years and that reviews worldwide have concluded that the herbicide can be used safely.

In July 2018, a federal judge in the United States ruled that hundreds of lawsuits against Monsanto by cancer survivors or relatives of the deceased could proceed to trial. He also found sufficient evidence for a jury to hear cases that blame the herbicide for the disease.
REST OF THE WORLD

Shell and the negationism in Nigeria

In 2017 Esther Kiobel presented, together with Victoria Bera, Blessing Eawo and Charity Levula, a lawsuit against Shell, with hundreds of pages of data to demonstrate her alleged involvement in the human rights violations committed against the Ogoni people in Nigeria. They were endorsed by Amnesty International, who conducted an independent assessment and believes that Shell encouraged the authorities in their campaign to end the protests, even after learning that they were committing human rights violations. The plaintiffs seek compensation and an apology from Shell. Given the impossibility of getting justice in Nigeria, Esther initially filed a lawsuit against Shell in the United States in 2002, but was dismissed in 2015 for reasons of jurisdiction. The new lawsuit was filed in the Netherlands, Shell's own jurisdiction, but new obstacles emerged. In September 2017, the US law firm refused to deliver more than 100,000 internal documents that are decisive for Esther's lawsuit, and, given the seriousness of the allegations, it is essential that Shell deliver them.

Esther accuses Shell of having participated in the execution of her husband, Barinem Kiobel, a former state official, hanged by the Nigerian military government in the context of widespread protests against oil pollution in the Niger Delta, in 1995. By then, Ogoniland, the oil region of the Niger Delta where the Kiobel are from, had enormous economic importance for Shell and the Nigerian government. At that time, the leadership of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) led the protests against the environmental destruction caused by the company's operations. Shell asked for help from the Nigerian military government who launched a brutal campaign of repression against the Ogoni communities, which led to the arrest of nine men, including Barinem Kiobel. After months of terrible mistreatment they were hanged. Two decades later, Shell continues to pollute Ogoniland. In 2018, Amnesty International has determined that the oil company still does not respond quickly enough to oil spill notifications, sometimes leaving the spill unchecked for months at a time. The organization has also found indications that Shell attributes some spills to acts of sabotage so as not to have to pay compensation to the affected communities. Instead of carrying out proper cleaning operations, the company wage legal battles denying any responsibility.
Monsanto sold banned carcinogenic chemicals knowing its dangerousness

The transnational company continued to sell the toxic polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) product until 1977, 8 years after learning that it represented a danger to public health and the environment, according to the legal analysis of documents published and available in line, the Guardian newspaper reported in 2017. The information comes after the legal discovery and requests for access to documents digitized by The Poison Papers, launched by the Bioscience Resource Project and the Center for Media and Democracy. The deputy attorney general of the US state of Washington, Bill Sherman, who is suing Monsanto for PCB cleaning costs that could amount to billions of dollars, said the file contained irrefutable evidence that the state did not know about. Sherman said: "At the same time that Monsanto was telling the public that PCBs were safe, they were literally calculating their potential legal liability against loss of profits and increasing the public image that could accompany being responsible and honest."

The plan that the company designed, after knowing the malignancy of the product offered three lines of action; a) "do nothing", b) "suspend the manufacture of all PCBs", c) "take responsibility properly", admitting environmental contaminations and taking corrective measures. In the internal communications of the executives, in 1969, it says:

"We can prove that some things are good at low concentration. Let's give Monsanto some defense. We can not defend ourselves from everything. Some animals, fish or insects will be damaged. " Two months later, a presentation by the PCB to the corporate development committee of Monsanto confirmed the warning: "From the point of view of reproduction, PCBs are highly toxic to birds." In 1975, when the US Environmental Protection Agency labeled the substance as "highly toxic" and "a significant hazard to human health and the environment," Monsanto admitted that it can have permanent effects on the human body. The negative health effects linked to the PCB had been notified to the company's agenda as early as 1937, when the autopsies revealed that three Monsanto workers had died from serious liver damage after handling the substance. In addition to the Washington case, Monsanto faces lawsuits for PCB contamination from the municipal authorities of Seattle, Spokane, Long Beach, Portland, San Diego, San Jose, Oakland and Berkeley.
SOURCES