

AN ECO-LOGICAL CALL FOR CONSERVATION, THE CLIMATE AND RIGHTS

Proposal for the Yasuní Biosphere Reserve

The international eco-logical call, proposes to link the issues of conservation of biodiversity, climate change and the rights of indigenous peoples in a common strategy to save the areas of greatest diversity, leaving the captured carbon underground, based on the Climate Change Agreement and other international agreements via which the worlds governments committed to conserve the worlds biodiversity, reduce poverty, respect human rights in general and those of indigenous peoples in particular.

The Yasuní Biosphere reserve, which includes the Yasuní National Park and the Huaorani Ethnic Reserve, has an immeasurable economic value. It is one of the Pleistocene refuges that allowed for the repopulation of the Amazon basin. There exists many gaps in our scientific knowledge about the ecological relationships between species; we do not know how many are becoming extinct due to oil operations, road construction, and logging, in other words everything that causes fragmentation of those ecosystems.

Ecuador in an attempt to secure the conservation of biodiversity and to contribute to the reduction of green house gases, proposes to abstain from extracting oil from the Yasuní Biosphere Reserve, in exchange for an internationally guarantee of income for the State.

The hydrocarbon reserve of the Yasuní Biosphere Reserve, can be calculated in terms of tons of equivalent Carbon and therefore also in economic terms.

Without a doubt this initiative will generate multiple benefits.

Firstly because it would prevent new emissions of Carbon dioxide reaching the atmosphere, both due to the carbon contained in the hydrocarbon reserves underground as well as the carbon contained in the forest itself, which would not be logged for oil operations, which implies

a good for all humanity; secondly because it would guarantee the conservation of cultures and biodiversity which is humanities inheritance; thirdly because it would reduce Ecuador's foreign debt capital, free money from the national budget to pay social services, and additionally the government would have at its disposal new resources for its national accounts.

There exists an initiative at an international level from various foundations and political sectors to destine funds to support these types of initiatives. On the other hand, countries which have ratified the Kyoto Protocol and form part of Annex 1, have the obligation of assigning funds to reduce green house gasses especially CO₂.

Incomes can come from shares from industrialized countries for debt relief as a form of compensation for not exploiting a resource, which would result in emissions of green house gases and the loss of biological and cultural diversity. That is to say it does not imply merchandizing of life or a payment for environmental services and would not lead to any form of property rights or use over the area of the project.

This proposal will generate enormous prestige and economic resources for Ecuador and will provide a comparative advantage for the consolidation and growth of sustainable activities. It articulates coherently global objectives for conservation, protection of economic, social, cultural, environmental and collective rights; relief of foreign debt and solutions to climate change.

It is internationally recognized that Ecuador loses natural resources without compensation. The World Bank itself noted (in its calculations of "real savings") that Ecuador is decapitalizing by exporting products that generate enormous environmental impacts.

Opportunities

1. Though oil is a source of financial resources, it is a non-renewable resource, whose extraction and exportation has caused huge distortions of the national economy, disincentivating diversification and sustainable production activities.
2. The crude oil in the Yasuní National Park is heavy crude oil, which implies a lower value in the market and greater contamination problems.
3. The exploitation of oil would cause contamination of the air, soil and water and the impoverishment of biodiversity, which in many cases would be irreversible. These and other

impacts constitute environmental impacts, which are not recognized by companies and in which as final resource are paid by the State, reducing the financial resources that could be invested on social costs. This activity contaminates and with it they use strategic resources such as water and biodiversity.

4. The extraction of hydrocarbons has been justified by a source of dividends for payment of foreign debt, even though promoting impoverishment and environmental destruction. The situation has reached such absurd levels, that the Ecuadorian State is indebting itself to be able to invest in monitoring and reparation of environmental damages. This vicious circle of indebtedment and impoverishment could end with this proposal, which would achieve the cancellation of debts and the handing over of resources for social investment in exchange for abstaining from exploiting natural resources, situation which provides clear benefits at a local and global level.

5. Ecuador is a megadiverse country. It has a huge tourism potential, activity, which is in competition with the intensive extraction of natural resources, especially oil activities. The country is proposing to diversify its economy giving preference to sustainable activities.

6. At an international level the Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change, forces countries in Annex 1 to reduce their consumption of fossil fuels. To fulfill this obligation there is a search for alternative sources of energy. Therefore a justification does not exist to expand the exploration of hydrocarbon reserves or exploit the already discovered reserves to avoid the risk of causing the collapse of the planets climate.

7. Strengthen the government leadership, not only internationally but also at a national level because it constitutes concrete terms for a new change, in which economic proposal converge with ecological proposals, cementing many of Ecuadorian's society aspirations.

8. It also implies a leadership at an international level since it sets a path for achieving global conservation, indigenous rights, foreign debt relief and climate change objectives.

Proposal

Ecuador will declare the Yasuní National Park as an area of environmental state intervention of maximum priority, with the reason of a national and international effort for the conservation of biodiversity, climate change and the survival of the indigenous peoples that inhabit that area.

Actions to implement

1. Proceed to declare Yasuní National Park in state of environmental emergency
2. Abstain from carry out new explorations for oil in the Biosphere Reserve
3. Review all contracts, their irregularities and comply with the time set for the contracts (attached is background information).

4. An international commission will be created to evaluate the existing reserves which will be translated to captured Carbon

5. An interministerial commission will be formed with the Ministries for Foreign Relations, Economy, Environment and Social Welfare (or CODENPE?) to start working at an international level with the aim that this effort be recognized at an international level as a global benefit, and be translated in economic compensations so that the State can face its obligations.

6. An evaluation of socio-environmental externalities left by companies that have operated in the Yasuní Biosphere Reserve, will be analyzed technically and legally so as for the companies initiate the processes for environmental restoration, and corresponding indemnification.

Civil Society Proposals

1. Contribute with arguments for economic and environmental judicial viability

2. Commit to a national and international campaign so as that the efforts made by the national government in the face of national and international needs for conservation of biodiversity, respect of indigenous rights and climate change be recognized.

3. Back international work to obtain compensation resources and debt cancellations, recognition of the ecological debt and backing of sustainable programs based on the principle of solidarity and the common good that this proposal implies for the planet as a whole.

4. Contribute to the construction of coordination channels between different social and political players.

Lets make eco of this logical call for conservation, our climate and rights!