

OPEN LETTER

INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT

FOR THE RECOGNITION AND INTEGRAL REPARATION OF THE ECOLOGICAL DEBT DUE TO CLIMATE CHANGE

WITHIN THE AGREEMENTS REACHED IN COPENHAGEN

December 2009

The Southern People's Ecological Debt Creditors Alliance supports the demand of Bolivia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Venezuela, Honduras, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Dominican Republic, Panama, Guatemala, Cuba, Belize, Dominica, St. Vincent & The Grenadines, Antigua and Barbados, Sri Lanka and Malaysia, for the **RECOGNITION AND INTEGRAL REPARATION OF THE ECOLOGICAL DEBT DUE TO CLIMATE CHANGE THAT IS OWED TO COUNTRIES IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH BY COUNTRIES IN THE GLOBAL NORTH**, within international agreements of the 15th United Nations Framework Conference on Climate Change in Copenhagen, Denmark (COP15).

THOSE RESPONSIBLE AND THOSE AFFECTED BY CLIMATE CHANGE

One of the most important aspects of the Convention on Climate Change is to clearly state that the main causes of climate change are the **burning of fossil fuels and deforestation**, which are caused by logging, mining, oil extraction activities by oil companies, agribusiness, dams and others. These activities have deteriorated the living conditions of local people by generating violence, for resistance to such activities is repressed and criminalized.

The Convention determines that **industrialized countries are mainly responsible for climate change** due to carbon emissions, which pollute the atmosphere and cause serious social and environmental impacts, both locally and globally.

Moreover, it has been found that **peoples in the Global South are the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change**. A World Bank report in November 2009 estimated that 85% of the impacts of global warming will affect the world's poorest countries, precisely those that least contribute to the phenomenon. Indeed, tropical countries are the most affected due to more frequent floods and droughts that create the agricultural and food crisis; the thawing of snow-capped peaks which threatens water supplies and climatic equilibrium; the deterioration of living conditions caused by water, air and soil pollution that increase migration, among other impacts.

IMPUNITY TOWARDS THE HISTORICAL, SOCIAL AND ECOLOGICAL DEBT

Climate change is the result of a **systematic process of exploitation of nature**. It is a process that expanded during the colonial exploitation in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, which has been generated, to date, an immense historical, social and

ecological debt. This debt has **gone unpunished**.

Peoples of the Global South claim this historical, social and ecological debt that has accumulated and that the industrialized countries, mainly those from the Global North, have with the countries and peoples of the Global South. This debt has been accrued by looting, destroying and polluting nature; through the exploitation of peoples within these territories; through the polluting of the air by carbon emissions due to their forms of production and consumption, and through the impacts of climate change.

These demands have been collected, among others, by the governments of BOLIVIA, ECUADOR, PARAGUAY, VENEZUELA, HONDURAS, COSTA RICA, EL SALVADOR, NICARAGUA, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, PANAMA, GUATEMALA, CUBA, BELIZE, DOMINICA, ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES, ANTIGUA AND BARBADOS, SRI LANKA AND MALAYSIA, who propose the **inclusion of the recognition and integral reparation of the ecological debt caused by climate change from countries in the Global North to countries in the Global South within the agreements that will be made in Copenhagen**.

The debate regarding the accumulated social and ecological debt, historically and presently, should be at the center of the agreements made in Copenhagen, for it points to the major causes and consequences of climate change, identifies those responsible and those affected, and seeks to **halt the destruction of nature and demands reparations** for the people and the environment.

If the root causes of climate change are not addressed and solved, and if **direct responsibilities through legally binding agreements** are not established, Copenhagen will be another farce, for it will only be a space for **new business deals to be made**: environmental services and carbon markets, agrofuels and patented renewable energy, new credits for adaptation, hydroelectric projects, REDD mechanisms - Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation in Developing Countries - seeking control of indigenous lands and forests.

To promote these mechanisms, and those of mitigation and adaptation, **new loans** are expected, which will become another form of new business resulting from the debt and the means of control. This will result in further domination and pillage of nature by the IFIs, the lending countries, and their transnational corporations, and will create new situations of conflict and violence and increasing financial, social and ecological debt.

We demand that governments address the climate crisis seriously and responsibly, for the development model based on extractive industries, agribusiness, harmful technologies and the voracity of capital accumulation, which have generated the historical, social and ecological, as well as **illegitimate debts**, are the main causes of the environmental and climate crisis that is threatening the people of the Global South and the entire planet.

REGARDING ECOLOGICAL DEBT DUE TO CLIMATE CHANGE

WE ENDORSE:

The demands of peoples from the Global South for the recognition and reparation of the ecological debt due to climate change within the Copenhagen agreements.

WE DEMAND:

- Support and expansion of proposals to **maintain crude oil repressed and territories free of hydrocarbons**, such as the Yasuní Initiative in Ecuador and the Amazon without Oil proposal in Bolivia, among others.
- The **reduction of emissions** in countries of the Global North by 40% by 2020, and by 90% by 2050, taking as its starting point the 1990 emissions as stated in the

Bolivian proposal.

- **Rejection of the false solutions of the market:** CDM, emissions trading, REDD, agrofuels, hydroelectric projects, nuclear power, among others.
- **Promotion of appropriate alternative energy** to natural resources: sustainable, clean, renewable, decentralized, diverse, affordable, and environmentally friendly.
- The establishment of a **fund for the integral reparation of the ecological debt due to climate change** in order to accomplish environmental restoration, reparations to those affected and unconditional adaptation to climate change under sovereign management; controlled by and with the participation of the peoples and countries affected.
- Recognition and protection of the **rights of peoples forced to immigrate** due to the causes and impacts of climate change.
- Not allowing **new projects that aggravate the environmental and climate crisis.**
- **Unconditional annulment of external debt** charged to countries in the Global South, for being a factor that exacerbates the environmental crisis. **Rejection of the role of IFIs** in relation to climate change.
- Not allowing industrialized countries to evade their moral and legal obligation to assume the full compensation of damage; not allowing them to charge the South with new debts or financial constraints.
- Guarantee, protect and **defend the territories of indigenous peoples and campesino farmers** who maintain the ecosystems and protect the climate. Encourage campesino farming and agro-ecological production. Respect the lifestyles of people and communities of the Global South and their life alternatives.

It is time to stop the exploitation and oppression of nature, learn from communities and peoples that are ecologically sustainable, decommodify life and ensure full and integral reparations of the social and ecological debt, in accordance with the sovereignty of the people and the rights of the environment.