

COMMUNIQUE

From participants in the conference “Regional Integration: A new opportunity to face the crisis”, Asunción, Paraguay, July 21-22, 2009

We, representatives of social movements, labour and civil society organisations from Latin America, Africa, Asia and Europe, who are meeting in Asunción to discuss the vital importance of regional responses to the current global crisis, call upon the heads of state meeting in Asunción for the Mercosur Summit to decisively agree and implement new modalities for developmental cooperation that serves the needs of the peoples of the regions.

Such new modalities must, in the first instance, fundamentally revise the unjust terms of the Itaipu energy agreement signed decades ago between the dictatorship governments of Brazil and Paraguay. Energy is Paraguay’s chief resource which can be used to develop a sustainable economy and thereby improve the lives of its people. The social movements and Government of Paraguay have demanded the sovereign right of the country to 50 percent of the energy from the Itaipu and Yacyreta projects, and revision of the debt from the building of the dam. We see these as fair and just demands.

On the basis of this highly significant case and in order to ensure that such projects, based on imbalanced power relations between neighbouring countries, are not in future replicated anywhere in our respective regions, we strongly urge that region-wide frameworks of equity principles regulating such joint projects and programs must be created through collective negotiations involving all the regional governments. These, in turn, must include active engagements and inputs from organised social and labour forces from throughout the respective regions.

It was in this spirit of cooperation that the conference included the participation of parliamentarians from various countries in these regions, and direct dialogue with government spokespersons. Some of the critical issues that were discussed were:

- * The urgent necessity for governments to create regional financial policy instruments such as regional development banks to defend their economies and peoples against the destructive effects of neo-liberal globalized capitalism.

- * The recognition that regional integration must be based on solidarity principles and programs of complementarities based on appropriate accommodation to the different sizes, resources and levels of development of participating countries in order to transform the development models towards balanced and equitable production systems between all the countries, localities and peoples.

* In this context, the strategic importance of taking active stands to reverse the coup-de-etat in Honduras and the displacement of a legally elected government by anti-democratic forces which is aimed not only against the Zelaya government but at reversing the progressive trends in the region in order to maintain the capital accumulation system, favouring the interests of transnational corporations from the US and Europe.

* The imperative urgency of creating modalities and means of effective participation by social and labour movements and communities to evolve strategies of regional cooperation from a holistic and sustainable perspective and with true sovereignty of the peoples.

We see this moment as an historical conjuncture for the world when the crisis has exposed the fundamentally unstable functioning and dangerous effects of the global capitalist system. It is also an opportunity to challenge the currently dominant global economic and political regime, and devise people-centered and ecologically sound alternatives. We are confident that the Latin American people and governments will play a significant role in the formulation and evolution of such alternatives together with all the regions and peoples of the world in the interests of our shared planetary home and common future.

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