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The Other Side of Mexico

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EDITORIAL

THE V GOVERNMENT REPORT ON THE ERA OF POLITICAL MONOLOGUE

PEDRO JAVIER GONZÁLEZ*

Before the weakening of ancient ritual of paying homage, the addressing of Government's V report was a suitable occasion for President Vicente Fox to give a message whose main contents were to historically justify his administration, by means of praising democracy virtues, and a recall for an accord. However —as was to expect— the message hasn't had a favorable reception, since it's been produced on a confrontation basis where the multiplying of monologues replace the dialogue.

The ancient authoritarian presidential model is exhausted. The Executive chief is no longer the political system's gravity cen-

ter or the nation's sense-generator. Consequently, the president's power celebration ritual tends to miss its aura. It's no longer the oracle's ciphered expression but, more modestly, a political-administrative account act. From a democracy point of view, such an account report is a crucial event, though from a media perspective its just an anticlimatic event.

But besides it to be a healthy anti-sacrament of political life, it's true that, as the US case illustrates, on a presidential regime framework the constitutional precept of administrative account (Article Num. 69) practically becomes an occasion for the

country's main chief addresses a message to the nation. That is the trend already announced in previous reports, and taken upon by president Fox on last 1 September.

Briefly explained, two basic contents can be identified in President's message: on one hand, the insistence on democracy virtues; on the other, the dialogue recall and accords construction.

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WOMEN HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS WON'T STOP

LAURA BECERRA POZOS*

Violence against women is a challenge for whole society, and even though the problem has been taken into consideration by public opinion, it has been done sporadic and too slowly for solving it or at least reverting the world growing figures of discrimination, aggression and death of women, like in Mexico.

Denounces, demands, social mobilizations and even civic policies and legislation proposals that feminists and women organizations have promoted for years in order to change such culture of control, violence and human rights violations, seem not to be enough.

One of the most dramatic cases in our country is that of the nearly 500 women brutally murdered in Ciudad Juarez, and recently in Chihuahua's capital. Regrettably, that's something that happens in a great number of Mexican states.

Such violence addressed towards women has multiplied mobilizations and reflection as well, in order to intend to find out the inner causes, and so to stop crimes and promote assertive and preventive policies. So the first thing is to identify the diverse items —cultural, social, political and judiciary— that are implied in violence. The matter is to understand and accept that violence against women is strictly *against women*, and thus follows specific behavior patterns.

Retaking the Juarez case, it's been recognized that several officials and local and federal governmental employees in charge for the investigation and searching the crimes committed grave mistakes of negligence and omission acts that have prevented the accomplishment of law and justice, and of course they haven't helped to prevent what already is a social problem, defined by authorities as "homicides of women with characteristics and/or similar behavior patterns."

María López Urbina, first Special Attorney for the Chihuahua cases, found out on last year's October that 130 state officials presumably committed omission, negligence and authority abuse. In many of a denounce it's been remarked that the crimes' scenes were not kept, the witnesses were not interrogated, the forensic exams lacked of quality control, and several of the victims haven't been identified yet, among many other irregularities.

And even though the existence of those presumably criminal officials is recognized, none of them has been put into justice hands or even prosecuted.

Special Attorney's first report states that: "Although it's true that some responsible for those crimes have been put under arrest and condemned, the public opinion's perception is that most of the homicides are still unpunished; that the

criminals haven't been imprisoned; that some of the supposedly guilty are not for real, and that the aggressions against women continue to happen in the middle of the most impunity."¹

From the series of recommendations that autonomous national and international organisms have made on the problem, the quoted report concludes that the homicides are "...just the most evident symptom of a social tissue decomposition process. (That) the state institution in charge for procuring justice has acted negligently... and the Federal Government hasn't been at the highness of circumstances."²

Besides, authorities had tried to convince the public opinion and the victims' relatives as well that the most of murders are specific consequence of family violence to be attended by common law, or incidental homicides, in order to deny or refuse the serial murders' hypothesis or that of *feminicide*.

Beyond our border, the case already merited a series of recommendations from International Amnesty addressed to our

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¹ Special Attorney for the Attention of Crimes Related to the Juarez Chihuahua Homicides' First Report: Human Rights Office, Attention to Victims and Services to Community, 5.

² Ibid, 8.



Denounces, demands, social mobilizations and even civic policies and legislation proposals that feminists and women organizations have promoted for years in order to change such culture of control, violence and human rights violations, seem not to be enough.

to clarify the last 10 years events; to prevent the repetition of the Juarez women's experience, and that all those efforts be useful to construct a free-of-violence society, able to protecting women human rights.

Besides, the Special Attorney promised to include the gender perspective to the investigations, in order to eliminate discrimination, giving equal opportunities to men and women, respecting life and gender differences as the tolerance basis of all democratic society.

But the solution to violence against women in Juarez and the rest of the country goes beyond. It must be accepted its diverse manifestations, some of which are being fatal. It must be assumed that what we face is not only the so called family violence, but there are other places where violence is also present as in labor or in social communities. It's necessary to design, promote and demand public policies, including legislations with a clear gender focus, which also implies to change and modify the views, values and culture of men and women that do not understand such vision.

Gender violence, we insist, is an expression of the lack of human rights for women, even in societies as ours, where man-women equity is constitutionally stipulated. Just a glimpse on reports and statistics reveals that in terms of rights women are below men conditions.

It's important to accept that there are gender interests from the establishing of power hierarchies, and therefore to comprehend and distinguish such interests it's necessary to link the roll differences assigned and action spaces with the different necessities, interests and opportunities between men and women in a linked way.

country's federal, state and local authorities. Among others, the recognition and public condemnation of missing and murdered women; to conduct soon, exhaustive, impartial and effective investigations; to urgently resolve the society's claim of precise jurisdiction; to proportionate the necessary resources, training and legal frame; and the inclusion of a gender view in all searching procedures and case evaluations.

The variables that could influence the non application of justice and the non approval of laws and governmental policies to resolve the problem are probably linked to: bureaucracy-corruption and negligence from the part of officials and local and federal personnel implied; other crimes linked with *feminicide* such as the so called organized crime, traffic of persons and

other no less important; lack of legislation and policies clearly focused on gender and human rights, that recognize violence against women.

That's the reason why to focus the problem from the human rights perspective is fundamental in order to solve it in its whole dimension. Violence against women is a violation problem of human rights recognized and promoted by the international instruments and the national precepts as well. However, Amnesty International's basic recommendations and those from the Human Rights National Commission haven't been fulfilled.

And that's the reason why we expect the Special Attorney for the Attention of Crimes related to Women Homicides fulfills the compromises of its creation, such as:

ELECTIONS FOR WORLD BANK AND INTER-AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK DIRECTORS: A HOPELESS PANORAMA FOR THE AMERICAS' PEOPLES

Domitille Delaplace*

In March 31, 2005, World Bank's Board of Governors unanimously elected Paul Wolfowitz, American, as its new Director for a five year period. On July 27, in a non ordinary meeting, the Inter-American Development Bank Governors Assembly chose Colombian Ambassador in the US Luis Alberto Moreno to replace President Enrique Iglesias (in charge for 18 years). This new panorama is worrying for both the remarkably antidemocratic and unclear electoral process and the two directors' features as well.

US Administration's favorite Paul Wolfowitz election –then Bush's Government under Defense Minister and main artifice of US invasion and occupation to Irak–occurred after an antidemocratic "electoral process", since once more it was the triumph of imposition and implicit agreement that it is the US President who chooses unilaterally the World Bank Group, while Europeans have the privilege of naming the International Monetary Fund's director.

This naming was received with alarm by worldwide social movements and civil organizations. Nearly 300 organizations from more than 50 countries subscribed a letter promoted by the "50 Years is enough: US Network for Global Economic Justice" network, that was delivered to Director Wolfowitz on his first day in charge, June 1. It expressed the worries about the election process and remarked the huge defies before this new administration.

The Bank's credibility is at a very low level since its policies and actions keep being synonyms of interference into the borrower countries' policies, of greater poverty, violation of the people's fundamental rights, environmental destruction, violence and injustice. Throughout the world, civil society will be alert on this new administration's carry out, and will keep demanding deep changes in order to reverting those tendencies that attempt against national sovereignty and deepen poverty into developing countries.

The naming of a new IDB administration was also labeled with the triumph of neo-conservatism, since Colombian Luis Alberto Moreno, former Ambassador in the US, is a devote defendant of polemic Colombia Plan, and from his first conference before the Governors Assembly clearly reaffirmed his priorities: fighting against drug trafficking and free commerce will be his main battle slogans.

Besides Moreno, other four candidates had the official support of other member countries to the IDB: Brazilian Joao Sayad; Peruvian Pedro Pablo Kuczynski; Venezuelan José Rojas and Nicaraguan Mario Alonso.

Latin American networks and organizations joined Brazilian initiative "Rede Brasil sobre Instituições Financeiras Multilaterais" and sent a letter to IDB's Governors Assembly demanding the candidates to present their action programs before the election, and that that process to be done in an open, clear and democratic way. However, the selection process ended with Bush administration's finger pointing, and the IDB sent us its response the same election day!

Such "Development Bank" introduces itself as an institution open to civil society's participation, but reality tells about its antidemocratic concealed practices and its contempt towards civil society's demands. On last 1 October, Luis Alberto Moreno started on his charge. In this hopeless context, as civil society we will keep pressing for the promotion of governing begins "at home". Without a radical revision of the election process and of this institution's authoritarian practices, very few will be done to fulfill the so expected Millennium Goals, and less to address our societies into a virtuous development based on democracy, labor justice and all of America's peoples human rights fulfillment.

* Responsible for Multilateral Bank and Human Rights issues of the Citizen Diplomacy program, DECA, Equipo Pueblo.

MEXICO IN THE MILLENNIUM SUMMIT + 5: THE INEQUALITY CHALLENGE



Areli Sandoval Terán*

The Millennium Summit + 5 took place on 14-16 September, 2005 for revising –among other important United Nations (UN) reform issues– the advancement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) agreed by State and Government Chiefs on the 2000 Summit, including poverty eradication goals and gender equity to be fulfilled before 2015.

During his participation in the summit, Mexico's President Vicente Fox urged the leaders gathered "to launch concrete measures to combat poverty", and asked for the establishment of dates for the fulfillment of compromises agreed four years ago in the Monterrey Development Summit. He added "the necessity of passing from the political will expressed in speeches, to precise and quantifiable actions" (...) He (also) reiterated "the compromise with global development", and proposed that "the countries with a development similar to that of Mexico should outline new relevant goals for poverty reduction."¹

Besides, Fox stated that "poverty translates into instability and insecurity," and considered it "encouraging that the developed countries are reaching or establishing periods to pursue the goal of addressing 0.7% of their Gross National Product (GNP) to development." He added that "the success of this objective doesn't mean in itself poverty eradication." Thus, he considered that "the list of countries with the right to cancel their debt should increase, and asked to carry out actions

The Government's report on MDG recognizes that the results obtained aren't equal for the whole population, depending on geographic area, sex or ethnic group. However, federal authorities don't focus poverty combat from a human rights' perspective.

that, besides debt reduction, promote infrastructure development, jobs generation, and the opening of international markets." He asked to consider that "the developing countries should have full participation in the decision making processes in the international economic agencies."²

In this context, Social Watch³ released on 14 September, in New York, its Annual Report 2005 "Roars and Whispers. Gender and Poverty: more promises than actions", whose conclusions are that the goals outlined by the MDG for 2005 won't be fulfilled. The chapter on Mexico is titled "The Challenge of Inequity", and offers a synthesis of the research and conclusions

of Mexico's civil organizations and networks⁴. We assigned ourselves the job of making a balance alternative to that of the governmental one, in order to contribute to the debate of social development in subjects as: poverty reduction, reduction of maternal mortality; fight against HIV/AIDS; drinking water and basic sanitation; improvement of the lives of people living in poor housing conditions, as well as the needs of less developed countries. Some of the most important considerations published in the chapter on Mexico will be transcribed in the following sections.⁵

Mexico, a middle income country in the world's most unequal region, disputes with other Latin American countries the first place in terms of social, economical and gender inequity. Twenty four years after ratifying the UN International Cov-

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¹ www.cinu.mx/cumbre2005/carpeta_prensa.htm

² Ibid.

³ Social Watch is an international network with more than 400 NGOs in more than 50 countries, which monitors independently the fulfillment of national, regional and international commitments on social development.

⁴ The chapter on Mexico was prepared by DECA Equipo Pueblo A.C. (Social Watch's focal point in Mexico); FUNDAR, Analysis and Research Center and the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean the International Coalition Habitat; and was subscribed by the National Feminist Millennium Network, and the Coalition of Civil Organizations on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Espacio DESC), Social Watch's reference group in Mexico.

⁵ The complete chapter can be consulted in: <http://www.socialwatch.org>

enant on Economic, Social and Cultural International Covenant (ICESCR), and the Convention on the Elimination of forms of Discrimination against Women; ten years after adopting important international commitments on social development and gender equity issues, and five years after signing and committing itself to the Millennium Declaration's objectives, Mexico faces inequity as its main challenge regarding development.

The Government's report on MDG (from now on *official report*)⁶ recognizes that the results obtained aren't equal for the whole population, depending on geographic area, sex or ethnic group. However, federal authorities don't focus poverty combat from a human rights' perspective, and haven't taken into account substantial contributions of civil organizations.

For example, in reference to *Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; and its target 1: Reduce poverty by the half*, we stated that in order to design public policies and programs addressed to promote social development and combat poverty, we consider that it is crucial to use a multi-dimensional focus that understands poverty as a negation of human rights, characterized by "sustained and chronic privation of resources, capa-

bilities, options, security and power necessary to enjoy a suitable life standard and other civil, cultural, economical, political and social rights."⁷

Unfortunately, this isn't the focus of the Strategy of Human and Social Development "*Contigo*" (with you) of the Fox' administration. None of the programs of this Strategy have been designed with a human rights perspective, and that's precisely part of their limitations. For instance, the "*Oportunidades*" (opportunities) program emphasizes the strengthening of human capital (capacity building) in some aspects related to health, education and food. Such a focus—which comes from the multilateral bank—has proved to be deficient in solving the vicious circle of poverty.⁸

If the Federal Government would promote a social policy based on human rights, budget and expense would be congruent with Article 2 of the ICESCR, which regulates the adoption of measures up to the maximum of resources available for the progressive achievement of the rights recognized in the Covenant. Although it's true that the official report recognizes that the social expenditure is the main instrument to combat poverty, and that the resources for social programs have increased, it's necessary to underline two key aspects. First, the analysis of Federal Public Treasury Account reveals a tendency towards a decrease of social expenditure, by means of spending less than the assigned funds. In contrast, it is noticed that more funds than originally budgeted are used in programs or secretaries irrelevant to social expenditure, such as the Ministries of Finance, Defense, Foreign Affairs or Interior.⁹

As for *Goal 5: To improve maternal health* and *Goal 6: Reducing maternal mortality*, the official report doesn't take into account in depth matters as deficiencies in public health services, which results in inequities between sectors of the

population and between different Mexican states as well.

In respect to *Goal 6: To combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other Illnesses*, and *target 7: To fight against HIV/AIDS*, the official report states that it is a national priority to combat this illness and its strategy is to give priority to prevention. However, the disparity of public funds assigned to the treatment and prevention makes the strategy rather inconsistent with the discourse.

Concerning *Goal 7: To guarantee environmental sustainability*, and *target 10: Drinking Water and basic sanitation*, the report omits the serious problem of disposal, accessibility and quality of water in different parts of the country. For instance,

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⁶ Government of the Republic. Human and Social Development Office. The Millennium Development Objectives in Mexico: Progress Report, 2005. (Elaborated in coordination with the UNO System in Mexico).

⁷ UN Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Committee. Crucial matters outlined into the Economic, Social and Cultural International Rights Pact: Poverty and the Economic Social and Cultural International Pact. Declaration E/C. 12/2001/10 approved by the Economic, Social and Cultural Committee on May 4, 2001, www.unhchr.ch

⁸ Sandoval Terán, Arelí. Study on Poverty-Reduction Strategies in Mexico. DECA Equipo Pueblo, A.C.; Social Watch Regional Network. Poverty and Civil Society. Analysis and Challenges from the Perspective of Civil Society in Central America and Mexico. El Salvador: *Asociación Intersectorial para el Desarrollo Económico y el Progreso*, 200, 108-129.

⁹ The analysis on budget and social expenditure used in this report was elaborated by FUNDAR researchers. www.fundar.org.mx

in the same Federal District (DF) —with the highest Human Development Index of the Mexican Republic— inequality in water access is alarming: in Delegación Iztapalapa, with 20% of Mexico City's population, more than 600,000 inhabitants lack current water every day, and they have to obtain it by a distribution system by turns three days a week.¹⁰ On the other hand, as for *target 11* of the same *Goal 7: To improve the lives of the people in poor housing conditions*, the official report omits the lack of policies and public programs which offer options of cheap, legal, accessible and payable land for people in a situation of poverty and extreme poverty; on the contrary, when referring to property and housing irregularities, it seems to blame the poor for it, keeping vague the problem's causes and showing the lack of a human rights perspective in housing policy.

Finally, concerning *Goal 8: To foment a world association for development*, and *target 13: Necessities of less advanced countries*, the official report describes some measures to be taken in reference to trade, international cooperation and human development, and underlines the Puebla Panama Plan (PPP) —which includes nine south-southeastern Mexican states and seven Central-American countries. Since the Human Development Meso-American Initiative of 2003, the Govern-

ment proposed itself the re-orientation and strengthening of this initiative in order to obtain the MDG, but it could not count on enough funds nor with the appropriation of the project on part of the communities in order to guarantee its viability. Between 2001 and 2004, the major part of the PPP funds had been invested in initiatives such as Vial Integration, Energetic Inter-Connection, Tourism Promotion, Facilitation of Trade Exchange, and Tele-Communication Integration, while aspects like human development and sustainable development counted on a very reduced budget assignation.¹¹

On the other hand, the Mexican government shouldn't minimize the strong criticism and expressions of resistance that structure an opposition front against PPP, integrated by hundreds of civil organizations from Mexico and other countries in the region, and by peasant and indigenous communities that haven't been well informed nor consulted, for example in the case of infrastructure mega-projects, and who in the end have been dispossessed of their lands by cheating and threatening.¹²

The conclusions of Social Watch 2005 Report on Mexico are in synthesis the following:

- The structural problem of Mexico's inequality requires the combination of

appropriate legal measures, public policies (social, economic, labor, environmental, agrarian, etc.); income re-distribution and the assignation of resources, among others, which clearly include a human rights perspective, and those of gender and sustainability as well.

- If public policies and social programs are not revised and re-oriented on ground of these perspectives, the potential of the mentioned measures to contribute really to the development of the country, would be reduced.
- This proposition is indispensable for going beyond the MDG, and reinforces the necessity of establishing additional commitments, more adequate to the reality of the country than recognized by the government in its report.
- Besides, the definition of these measures mustn't remain on the sidelines of an intense, integral and participative discussion on the development model, the priorities and the alternatives.

¹⁰ For more information, see the web site of the "Procuraduría Ambiental y del Ordenamiento Territorial" of Mexico City: www.paot.org.mx

¹¹ Alianza Mexicana por la Autodeterminación de los Pueblos "Violación a los Derechos Económicos, Sociales, Culturales y Ambientales del Plan Puebla Panamá", unpublished, Mexico, 2004.

¹² Internacional Peace Brigades, "Paquete de información quincenal sobre México". Num. 85, Nov- 10-23, 2003, www.peacebrigades.org/mexico

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THE "OTHER CAMPAIGN CHALLENGES"

Eugenia Mata*

With regard to the VI Declaration
of the Selva Lacandona

In June 2005, the Zapatista National Liberation (EZLN), through its Indigenous General Command Revolutionary Clandestine Committee, divulged the Selva Lacandona VI Declaration in order to report the results of the survey applied among its members about the future of the indigenous struggle launched in 1994.

The report makes a wide overhaul on what since then they have promoted all over the country and its main results; besides, the EZLN shared their reflections about the way of organizing themselves, recognizing the necessary separation between the political-military structure, and that of the autonomous and democratic organisms of the Zapatista communities. The report also recognizes that capitalism continues to worsen the situation, which widens even more the gap between rich and poor, between corporative interests, affecting the majorities, adding to it a strategy of control and repression that made it possible for the right-wing positions to move forward, even ideologically.

In the same way it recognizes the neo-liberal globalization and also accepts the need of a globalization of the rebellion, meaning the revolt of all sectors, organizations and persons in resistance against

this political and economic system so that it won't move forward. It also analyzes the present situation, both worldwide as well as in Mexico, and it cannot be said that the panorama is flattering one at all.

Starting from this point of view, the EZLN recalls for a National Campaign in order to dialogue in the whole territory, beginning on January 1, 2006, right in San Cristóbal de las Casas, the same place where they declared war against the Government in 1994; (a dialogue) with all persons and organized social sectors and committed to fight for a real change towards a fair and equitable society for all and everyone. To fulfill this, the EZLN proposes to travel through the whole country, in order to construct what it calls "another way of doing politics; a leftist program of national struggle, and for a new Constitution."¹

The beginning of what they would call later on "The Other Campaign" in order to clearly differentiate it from that of the political parties towards the 2006 election process, began with six local meetings and one general encounter to help integrating a National Struggle Program, and to promote the adhesion of all those who agree with the exposition of strategies it contains, and whose tactical prin-

ciple it is to achieve change without using the armed way.

After the first general meeting, 162 social organizations had adhered, as well as 55 political organizations, 453 Non Governmental Organizations (NGO), groups and communities; 95 indigenous associations, 1168 persons of Mexican origin and 306 of international origin.

Without any doubt, the reaction of Mexican society, that of the Government and the international opinion has been very diverse due to the tone and position expressed by the Sub-commander Marcos, especially about the electoral process and the political class, and very particularly about the Democratic Revolution Party (PRD) and its presidential candidate, Andrés Manuel López Obrador.

It's necessary to accept that this caused confusion in many left-wing sectors, especially those who have sympathized with the Zapatista cause, by openly favoring it and supporting the EZLN actions during

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¹ VI Selva Lacandona Declaration, Indigenous-General Command Revolutionary Clandestine Committee, Zapatista National Liberation Army, on the sixth month, June 2005.

these years, but that also see the vote for Andrés Manuel as a possibility of slowing down the advance of rightist positions among political parties, without forgetting that there are still a lot of things to do in order to fulfill the crucial changes needed in Mexico's regime.

These reactions vary from an absolute acceptance of the position of EZLN, to a critic one, purposing support to its proposals, and refusal disenchantment as well. And the Sub-commander Marcos' reply to these critics rose even more polemic, due to his full of judgment and discrediting remarks.

No matter there are justifiable reasons why Marcos reacted like that, we believe it's important to transcend these differences, and because of the Zapatistas proposal's relevance let's find out and support those challenges we think the EZLN could keep, especially the proposal of a new Constitution and thus a brand new way of organizing the Government and the Mexican society as well.

Every day the society faces, in the field of reality, governmental and other sectors' attacks, including those from the political parties, for whom power becomes an objective in itself and not a way of pursuing democracy with the whole Mexican people's engagement. On this goal of doing a real change, it's necessary to take into account it's not so easy to ending political impositions and control on the citizenry, mainly in the Mexican states, from the part of the so called *caciques* and drug traffickers, so the citizenry's participation means a possibility of taking them off from government.

(We need) to recognize the diversity of expressions and purposes into Mexican society that nonetheless coincide in

some of the Zapatistas' layouts. It's necessary to remember no one owns truth and knowledge. So let's join strength together and accept the variety of strategies that coincide on the common objective, and besides enrich the VI Release layouts.

The challenge is to eliminate what unfortunately has been the left-wing practice of egotism, ambition and exclusion of others, that lessens strength and benefits precisely the opposites. Such challenge implies the creation of wide alliances and coalitions that at present are co-opted and/or controlled by political power groups alien to the majority's interests.

The extrapolation of differences might be very dangerous, not just because it could exacerbate radical positions but also because the country's present circumstance requires a grater unified effort.

Transcending 2006. Beyond the EZLN, big social sectors are going to involucrate in the electoral process in many different ways, even to just to fulfilling their voting duty. But that way population's needs and demands will surely keep without resolving. It would be very important the EZLN to send a message in order to motivate social majorities to keep fighting for their problems' solution in an organized way.

That way it won't be necessary to close the door to those party members who agree with the VI Release layouts and thus

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to make evident those party positions opposite to society and indigenous peoples' interests.

(It's necessary) that the mobilization arisen from the VI Release recovers those points of the agenda capable of articulate a wider left-wing nucleus on crucial themes such as State Reform, Sovereignty, Equity and Democracy.

The demands of such a nucleus will have more weight if they succeed to integrate different views as the Indian Peoples' rights—that so strategically embraces the EZLN—, and those of gender's human rights, sustainable development, and diversity.

These are just some of the challenges we believe should be considered by the "other campaign" because, as they say, "you're not alone; there are men and women who believe in the possibility of another world."

THE COALITION OF MEXICAN ORGANIZATIONS FOR THE RIGHT TO WATER (COALICIÓN DE ORGANIZACIONES MEXICANAS POR EL DERECHO AL AGUA-COMDA) IS FORMED TO DEFEND THE RIGHT TO WATER IN MEXICO

PRESS RELEASE

The below signing organizations have decided to work on a shared basis in the context imposed by the IV World Water Forum to be held on March 2006, an event that articulates the interests of huge multinational enterprises and multilateral banks.

On such occasion, we want to put on the water policy debate a social, cultural and spiritual perspective, in order to take into account the human right to water and its democratic, sustainable and fair management as a vital element, a view that inspires the following statement:

Troubled by the unsustainable management of water

The immoderate logging and climate change have modified the hydrologic cycle and negatively affected water reserves. Contamination of water due to fertilizers, insecticides and detergents, and those of heavy metals and organic and toxic substances as well, is alarming. The way of extracting and distributing water, and the logic of satisfying demand through mega projects like dam building have proven to have disastrous social and environmental consequences.

Troubled by the inequitable supplying and access to the vital element

While the cities' drinking water supply level is of 94 percent, and almost 90 percent for sewage, rural populations still suffer appalling conditions. While some enjoy an adequate water service, others, mainly low income and indigenous people, have to fetch water from distant sources, pay water trucks or suffer the consequences of receiving unsafe water. In these cases, women and children suffer this situation the most.

Furthermore, water access among the agro producers is also inequitable. Despite that 80 percent of Mexico's water is used for this activity, only the 30 percent of the country's territory concentrated in the northeastern and central regions benefits from it. Besides, water use in agriculture is highly inefficient.

Troubled by the privatisation trend

We believe that water is a public resource. This means it is not merchandise as multilateral banks and private business intend to maintain. Thus, the object of its management is not profiting but to suit criteria in order to give an efficient and equitable access to drinking water.

In our country, the privatization levels of water and sewage services are worrying. There are examples that constitute an attempt against citizens, such as those of Aguascalientes and Saltillo, where "Suez" and "Agua de Barcelona" enterprises arbitrarily raise their water tariffs. Besides, a growing number of cities are experiencing water and sewage services privatisation processes whose evaluation hasn't been done yet. Evidently, such processes benefit transnational business and joint ventures.

Troubled by the lack of democratic ways of participation

Due to the National Water Law reforms, the decision-making process is done through the so called *Organismos de Cuenca* (Basin Organisms). Both the users and civil and social organizations are allowed only to take part in the Basin Councils whose power is very limited. However, the most affected by these organisms' decisions are the basin communities.

It's necessary to remark that the judiciary frame does not take into account the peasants and indigenous communities' view on the water management. This is a view that considers water as something essential for life, and thus as an irreplaceable, priceless divine element.

Thus, we declare that:

Respecting, protecting and guaranteeing the right to water is a Mexican State obligation, contracted by ratifying the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). According to General Comment number 15, issued on 2003 by the United Nations Economic, Social Cultural Rights Committee, the human right to water is the right for every person to have enough, clean, accessible water; a sustainable human right to be enjoyed by both, present and future generations. Besides, the right to water is essential for the fulfilment of other human rights.

The access, distribution and decision-making on water must be equitable for both, the peoples and regions.

It is urgent to issue a new water policy in order to guarantee the human right to water and a its sustainable use, by means of the promotion of democratic and public management, new technologies and a new culture of water.

And we demand:

- ✓ Justice and equity for everybody's access and distribution of quality water and sanitation services, guaranteeing sustainable management.
- ✓ Strict attachment of the Mexican State to commitments acquired within the signing of the PIDESC, especially that of respecting, protecting and guaranteeing the water human right.
- ✓ To constitutionally guarantee the human right to water, so to strengthen our country's permanent exercise of such right.
- ✓ To stop and revert the water services privatisation processes, by means of reforming law and policies that promote it, and thus creating brand new legislations and policies to favour plural engagement on the water management decisions making.

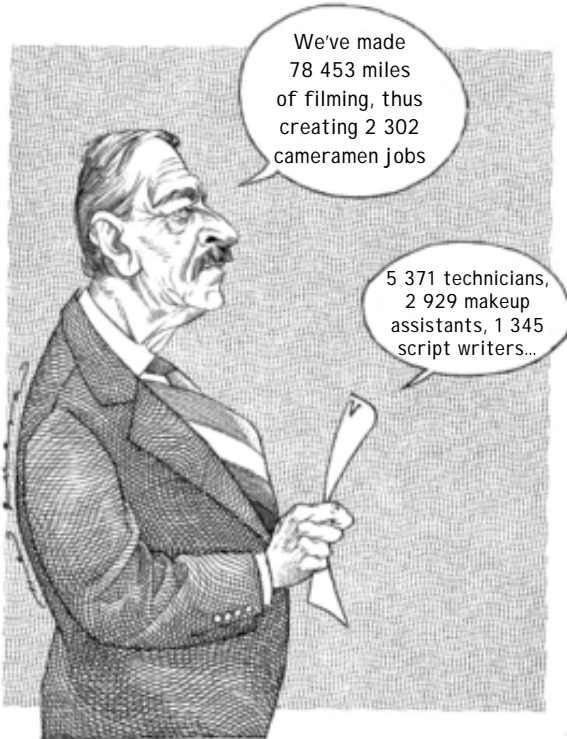
ALIANZA MEXICANA POR LA AUTODETERMINACIÓN DE LOS PUEBLOS (AMAP)
CENTRO MEXICANO DE DERECHO AMBIENTAL, A.C.
CENTRO DERECHOS HUMANOS "FRAY FRANCISCO DE VITORIA, O.P.", A.C.
CENTRO DE SERVICIOS MUNICIPALES "HERIBERTO JARA, A.C."
CONSEJO DE EJIDOS Y COMUNIDADES OPOSITORES A LA PRESA LA PAROTA (CECOP)
EQUIPO PUEBLO
ESPACIO DESC
FIANT-MÉXICO
INSTITUTO MEXICANO PARA EL DESARROLLO COMUNITARIO, A.C. (IMDEC)
MOVIMIENTO URBANO POPULAR
CENTRO DE DERECHOS HUMANOS "MIGUEL AGUSTÍN PRO JUÁREZ, A.C."
RED CIUDADANA DEL AGUA
RED DE GÉNERO Y ECONOMÍA
RED DE GÉNERO Y MEDIO AMBIENTE
RED MEXICANA DE ACCIÓN FRENTE AL LIBRE COMERCIO (RMALC)
COORDINADORA DE TRABAJADORES EN DEFENSA DEL CARÁCTER PÚBLICO DEL AGUA

THE MISSING FIGURES ■ Magú

According to what President had announced on different media spots, the central idea about democracy was that this is a long-term conquest that has meant important fulfillments for the nation. Thus, the President doesn't doubt in affirming that today Mexico is better than a few years ago. Democracy has meant more freedom of speech, transparency, decentralization and reduction of power, and important social and economic steps forward ("the time of recurring economical crises has ended"; "Mexico is now in its way towards a better future of higher prosperity and social justice"). Nonetheless, without doubting the virtues of democracy, the President's undeniable devotion to democracy has an evident urge of justifying. Since the absence of tangible results in several fields of governmental labor (mainly the economic growth and jobs creation), President doesn't hesitate in giving the (parties) alternation led by him the historical roll of "breaking point" between an authoritarian past and a democratic present. According to this interpretation, if "democracy has been worthy", his government obtains historical justification.

On the other hand, the so called accord is based on the statement of the necessity of reaching out the agreements, and taking the necessary decisions in order to construct the future. Clearly alluding to structural reforms, it points out specifically that "the present omissions will be the obstacles of the future". This isn't new at all. The recall to agreement has been an essential ingredient of almost all messages president Fox has addressed to the political class on the occasion of his delivering of the presidential release.

Thus, it comes out a question about the sense of this new recall to agreement, when this couldn't concretize along in five years



of government, and when the fire of electoral fight undoubtedly will strike on the possibilities of really gather deep consensus on most crucial matters.

How to reach out agreements when the whole political class' speech is a heterogenic panoply of monologues unable to converge on a true dialogue? Never is late to look for an accord. The problem is that in the middle of general confrontation climate there aren't shared referents (or political will) to allow — to begin with— the most elementary understanding of the other's speech sense.

Thus, in an advanced response to Congress present president, Heliodoro Ruiz, who exhorted President Fox to work as a State man and not to waste time in quarreling with congressmen, Fox announces and compromises that "State elections won't be back". The clue consists on what the two characters understand by "working as a State man", and "State elections". And that isn't a semantic matter, but something of practical implications.

The bridges capable of allowing dialogue are broken. The nature of interests' confrontation is variable on the framework of an institutional architecture that inhibits cooperation and favors conflict; besides, it has permitted a recurrent collision between Executive and Legislature's outlines and objectives. The restoring of dialogue transcends speeches politically polite; demands a long term perspective reconstruction of the very political system's rules, and an immediate consciousness of implications of an eventual confrontation aggravation

in terms of political and social stability. The problem is that, for the moment, both parties feel offended and the political environment conspires against the offenses overcoming.

By the light of monologue's empire, it's not strange the proliferation of writings about the President's message. Each political and media actor, depending on his/her convenience and prejudging has done his/her own lecture. There are who underline the administration's fulfillments and its clue roll on the transition into democracy. There are others who stubbornly refuse to recognize any step forward democracy or any government' fulfillment. In such a climate, it's necessary to let pass the last period of an administration that, no matter its successes on some areas (poverty abating, macro-economic stability and transparency, among the most remarkable), has lacked of the necessary political wisdom to consolidate the democratic change and to open up viable options into development.