



## DECLARATION

### XIII ORDINARY AND EXTRAORDINARY CONGRESS "LUIS IGUINI".

In the framework of the worst pandemic that humanity has gone through in the last century, CLATE holds its XIII Ordinary and Extraordinary Congress "Luis Iguini", as a tribute to one of the founders of this fifty-year old experience of Latin American and Caribbean trade union coordination. This context is not gratuitous for our Confederation and forces us, for the first time, to carry out our maximum organic instance in a virtual framework, through video conference and at a distance.

The pandemic has put the whole world to the test. In all parts of the planet, the capitalist system showed its inefficiency to solve the needs of humanity. At the same time, it exposed the worst face of the world system, bringing to the forefront the inequality of access to vaccines and medical technologies needed to save lives. This was denounced by the United Nations, whose Secretary General declared that a small number of 10 nations monopolized 75% of the vaccines and drugs to combat Covid-19. This is a dramatic conflict, which has as its backdrop the abusive system of medical patents, which favors the interests of laboratories and global pharmaceutical corporations with the excuse of protecting intellectual property.

The COVID 19 pandemic is also the other face of a health crisis linked to the environmental and systemic crisis. The origin of super pathogens is directly related to the destruction of ecosystems historically preserved by peasant and native peoples. Everything indicates that, if this mode of production continues, we will have innumerable new viruses, which will become new pandemics.

Those who insist on this path are either blind to reality or are resolutely denying it, despite the abundant scientific evidence available. And negationism must be fought because it produces devastating effects. Just as denying Climate Change and insisting on practices destructive of nature is putting the planet on the ropes, denying the devastating effects of the Covid 19 pandemic has increased the number of preventable deaths. Suffice it to mention the sad example of Brazil, where President Jair Bolsonaro has subjected his people to a veritable genocide by ignoring scientific evidence on the pandemic, discouraging care measures, minimizing the risks of the disease, and even questioning the effectiveness of vaccines and recommending ineffective treatments.

But the scourge of this disease, which caused more than 4.5 million deaths worldwide, also showed the solidarity and commitment of millions of health workers who fought the pandemic on the front line. It also showed how State intervention is the only tool that can respond to problems of the magnitude and depth posed by Covid-19.



It was from the State that the vaccines that were applied and are applied in our countries were acquired and distributed. It was from the State, with greater luck in countries where the public sector has more resources, that it was possible to meet the massive need for medical care that the private health systems were unable to satisfy. It was from the investment accumulated over the years by the States, through the allocation of public funds for treatment research and vaccine development, that unprecedented progress was made in record time in strategies to confront the pandemic.

However, this State, which was revalued for its health role and for the demand for support to face the economic and social crisis that the pandemic aggravated, is not the State we want. It is a State in debt and structured to favor the interests of concentrated capital. A State that does not abandon the neoliberal model and that feeds the insertion of our countries in the international division of labor in a role of exporters of raw materials. To this end, the failed path of the free trade agreements is deepening, of which little is said but which are adhered to in the shadows, without haste but without pause, ignoring the rejection that our peoples marked when they said no to the FTAA in 2005.

Today there is no margin for a neo-colonial regime such as the one proposed by transnational capital. There is no margin because, in the current context of climate change and environmental destruction caused by extractive activities, nature is telling us enough is enough. From the mountains to the jungle, nature is saying enough is enough. The Andes are saying enough is enough and the Amazon is saying enough. And above all, the people who for hundreds of years have learned to live in harmony and balance with Mother Earth are saying enough is enough.

Therefore, a frontal struggle against the capitalist-neoliberal model is required for the defense of the environment. Similarly, drastic measures are needed to stop global warming now, so that by the end of the 21st century it will be no more than 2°C above the pre-industrial global average temperature. We must be clear: the fight is to change the system and not the climate.

Nor is there room for a minimal State and for an economy whose promises of progress are limited to the supposed well-being that growth based on commodities exports could bring. Our societies need a productive State, one that boosts demand, employment and designs budgets to implement public policies that guarantee rights. "Please, spend. Spend as much as you can and a little more," said IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva at the beginning of this year. It is often said that "by the confession of the parties, the proof is in the pudding". However, this message was for governments and central banks of rich countries. For Latin American and Caribbean countries, the IMF preaches the reduction of fiscal deficits and the obligation to honor debts, regardless of their fraudulent origin.

In rich countries, the recipe is always different. Without going any further, the President of the United States himself, Joe Biden, told his country's businessmen to pay higher salaries to their employees. In these latitudes, there is insistence on greater labor flexibility, reduction



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of benefits and elimination of protection against arbitrary dismissal. While the world debates the reduction of the working day and the universal basic wage, in our region workers need two or three jobs to survive, and collective bargaining is a utopia even in state employment in many countries.

But workers in the region do not only face precarious employment, lack of collective bargaining and low wages. Today, after a lifetime of work, millions of Latin American men and women of retirement age are denied the right to a dignified old age. The existence of pensions below the poverty line, or the lack of access to these benefits, is the result of the privatization of pension systems in the hands of financial speculation. In many countries, far from reversing this failed process, there is insistence on the privatization of regimes that remain under public control. In the face of this, we, the state workers, reaffirm our defense of public, solidarity-based, pay-as-you-go pension systems.

This State and the state of affairs in which we live must change. But in order for the State to change, and the world in which we demand it to intervene, it is necessary to provide it with resources. We need a fiscal reform that reformulates the tax system so that those who have more pay more. The inequity of the tax systems has generated a paradox. The richest campaign against taxes when they pay the least. And the poor, with just cause because they pay more, end up believing that paying taxes is wrong.

Taxes are necessary to sustain public health, public education, public safety, social and care services, as well as to meet so many other state obligations. Therefore, we must direct our criticism towards regressive taxes, tax evasion and capital flight. The "Panama Papers" and "Pandora Papers" scandals have brought to light a systemic problem. Taxes should not be eliminated; we must demand that the businessmen and leaders who hide their wealth in tax "havens" pay them.

Tax havens are true dens of transnational capital. That is where the rich countries should direct their gaze if they are truly interested in correcting the imbalances that put our societies in crisis. In Latin America and the Caribbean, we do not need the U.S., the OAS, the IMF or any European nation to audit our problems or meddle in our internal affairs. As CELAC proclaimed in 2014, Latin America is a "zone of peace". We must defend this status in the face of foreign interference, which promotes coups d'état (as happened recently in Bolivia); which threatens with military interventions (as in Venezuela); or which has maintained for more than 60 years the criminal genocidal blockade against Cuba, which we denounce and repudiate.

It is clear that this world must change and must do so urgently. State trade unionism does not say it alone, the people say it. The Chilean people said it in October 2019 and today they are preparing to vote for a new constitution, to give birth to a new social and pluri-national pact. The Ecuadorian people said it that same year and the Colombian people said it this



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year, in processes that are still open. The Bolivian people said it when they reversed the coup d'état. The Argentine people said it when they rejected the return of the neoliberal model under the tutelage of the IMF. It was also said by the people of Peru, when they democratically elected a project born of the working class and the people, to dismantle the architecture of their neoliberal State. And the Uruguayan people and trade unionism when they gathered 800,000 signatures to overturn the Law of Urgent Consideration, for being anti-popular and repressive. And the people will continue to fight to say enough is enough.

We have to put into real perspective a globalizing vision of the importance of discussing a model of solidarity and sustainable Social Security for our comrades. We must advance in the discussions and actions for the protection of social security throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.

In that cry that says enough is the voice of women, which today gives impetus to the struggle and the conquest of new rights. The movement of women and feminist trade unionists, a source of overwhelming vitality, has managed to establish an agenda of demands that includes the denunciation and rejection of male violence and patriarchal structures in the State and society. This agenda also incorporates the empowerment of millions of women comrades in the demand for gender equality and rights, parity and equity in access to opportunities, and the fight to conquer sovereignty and autonomy over their bodies. We must promote the broadest participation of women and young people in all areas.

Inequalities and multiple violence against women in their diversity is intrinsic to the capitalist economic model. It is based on women's unrecognized and unpaid work, especially care and reproductive activities, which continues to be the main reason why women leave the labor force. During the pandemic, millions of women have increased their work at home, on the street, in the informal sector, and in the neighborhoods and territories. The confinement and/or quarantines in some countries made many women and minors more vulnerable, who were forced to live with their aggressors, which increased the rate of femicides.

Today's struggles also find, as a protagonist subject, our native peoples standing up and going on the offensive. Marginalized and invisibilized for centuries, forced to assimilate into our societies, resigning identity and culture, and condemned to poverty by dispossession of their territories and common goods, today they are also raising their voices. From the Mapuche people in Chile and Argentina, to the Colombian indigenous Minga, from the Ecuadorian CONAIE to the peoples of the Amazon, the native communities (especially women) have become true guardians of the territories in the face of a system that seeks to turn Latin America and the Caribbean into a mere extractivist enclave.

For state unionism, therefore, there are great challenges ahead of us. Undoubtedly, one of them is to persist in our unwavering defense of the labor rights of public sector workers. But we must also take up the dispute for an inclusive, sovereign and guiding State of an economy that guarantees sustainable development and social justice. On this path, also, from CLATE we must continue to develop and deepen the policy of Human Rights as a priority. Because in



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short, the state workers of the region have a historic destiny together with our peoples for the establishment of a new society without exploited and exploiters.

We cannot think about this struggle alone, we must assume it together with the whole labor union movement and the peoples of our region. In this political and social articulation, we must concentrate our efforts for the coming years. Because we are convinced that another world is possible and necessary. It is up to us to make it a reality.

Stopping capitalist barbarism is the central task of our time. We need to banish the domination of capital over life, to build a just, egalitarian, and sovereign world, so that we can all live in dignity and peace.