

COP 15-United Nations Climate Change Conference



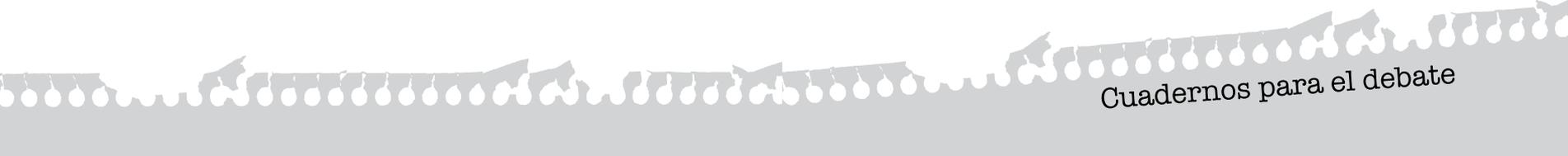
Hugo Chávez Frías

Cuadernos para el debate



COP 15-UNITED NATIONS CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE

Copenhagen, kingdom of Denmark
Wednesday, December 16, 2009



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Colección Cuadernos para el debate

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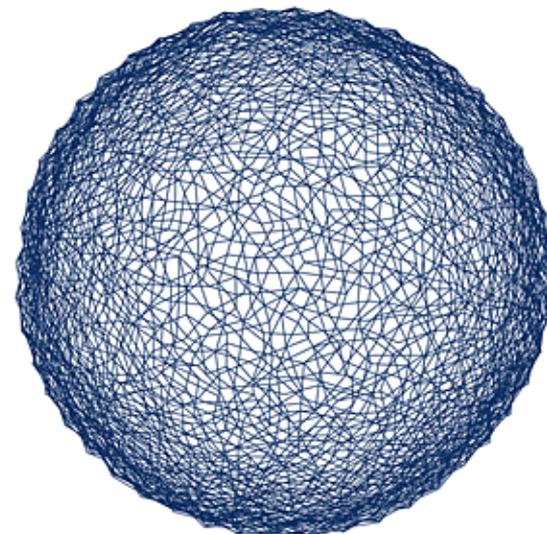
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Impreso en la República Bolivariana de Venezuela.
Diciembre, 2009



**COP15
COPENHAGEN**
UN CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE 2009

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**President of the Bolivarian
Republic of Venezuela
Hugo Chávez**

Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, excellencies, friends, I promise not to talk more than the one who spoke the most this afternoon. I would like to make a comment on the point mentioned by the delegation of Brazil, China, India, and Bolivia. We were asking for the floor but it was impossible. Bolivia's representative, by the way, my regards to comrade President Evo Morales who is over there, the the President of Bolivia.

Attendees [Applause].

President Chávez Among other things, and I wrote it down, she said that: the text presented is not democratic, it is not inclusive.

We were just arriving and having a seat when we listened to the President of the previous session, the Minister, saying that there was a document over here that nobody knows. I have asked for the document, we do not have it yet and I think no one knows about this “top secret” document. Certainly, the Bolivian comrade said so, it is not democratic, it is not inclusive. Ladies and gentlemen, is not this the reality of the world? Are we living in a democratic world? Is the world’s system inclusive? Can we expect something democratic from the current world system? What we live on this planet is an imperial dictatorship and I keep on denouncing it. Down with the imperial dictatorship! Long live the peoples, democracy and equality on this planet!

Attendees [Applause].

President Chávez And this is an example of it. Exclusion. There is a group of countries that think they are superior to us, the South side, to us the third world, to us the underdeveloped. Or as the great friend Eduardo Galeano says: we are the countries that were ran over by a train in history. So, don’t be surprised at it,

don’t be surprised. There is no democracy in the world and we are here one more time in the eye of a powerful evidence of the world imperial dictatorship. Later on, two more young men took the stand, fortunately, the security officers have behaved decently. There was some push over there and they cooperated, didn’t they? Do you know a huge crowd is gathered outside? Of course, there is no room for too much people. I have read some news saying that there are some people arrested, some intense demonstrations in the streets of Copenhagen. I want to say hello to all these people out there, most of them are young people.

Attendees [Applause].

President Chávez Of course, these are young people who are concerned –obviously more concerned than us- about the world’s future. Most of us here are approaching the deadline; they are just beginning the track and are really concerned. We could say Mr. President, quoting Karl Marx, that a ghost tours across the streets of Copenhagen; the great Karl Marx. And I think this ghost tours silently this hall, it’s over there,

among us. It goes through the corridors, lies beneath, goes up and down. This is a frightening ghost that no one wants to mention: the ghost is capitalism and no one wants to mention it.

Attendees [Applause].

President Chávez It's capitalism. People cry out there. I was reading some slogans painted in the streets by youth. I heard many of them and wrote down two of them. Two meaningful slogans, among others, are written in the streets. One: System Change, Not Climate Change!

Attendees [applause].

President Chávez And I take it for us. Let's not change climate, let's change system! And we will save the planet. Capitalism, the destructive development model is destroying life, it wants to definitely destroy the human kind. The other slogan makes us reflect. It's in tune with the

banking crisis that toured the world and still affects us and the way how the northern countries helped bankers and great banks. Well, only in the United States, the help is astronomic to save banks. They say in the streets. If climate were a bank, it would have been already saved.

Attendees [applause].

President Chávez And I think it's true. If climate were one of the biggest capitalist banks, the rich governments would have already saved it. I think Obama has not arrived. He received the Nobel Peace Prize even the same day he sent 30,000 more soldiers to kill innocents in Afghanistan. Now he comes here with the Nobel Peace Prize, the US president. But the US has the machine to fabricate bills, dollars and have saved, well they think they have saved banks and the capitalist system. Well, this is what I wanted to say when seating in there raising our hands to join

Brazil, India, Bolivia and China in their interesting position, which Venezuela firmly shares as well as the member countries of the Bolivarian Alliance. But, we were not allowed to speak. Thus, please don't count this minutes Mr. President.

Attendees [applause].

President Chávez You know I had the pleasure to know the great French writer Hervé Kempf, I do recommend this book you can find in Spanish -Hervé is over there- in French and English also. *How the Rich Are Destroying the Earth*. This is why Jesus Christ said that *It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God*.

Attendees [applause].

President Chávez Rich are destroying the Earth. Do they think they will go to another planet when they destroy this one? Do they have plans to go to another planet? There is no other

planet in the horizon of the galaxy so far. I have just received this book. Ignacio Ramonet gave it to me. He is also over there in these hall. To finish the prologue or preface, Kempf mentions a remarkable phrase which reads as follows: "*We will not be able to reduce the global material consumption if we do not make the powerful people go down stairs and fight inequality. It is necessary to add the principle the situation requires to the useful ecologist principle when people reflect globally and act locally. Less consumption and better sharing*" I this this is a good advise given by this French writer Hervé Kempf.

Audience [applause].

President Chávez Now then Mr. President, climate change is undoubtedly the current most devastating environmental problem of this century: floods, droughts, strong storms, hurricanes, thaws, rise of the average sea level, acidification of oceans and heat waves; all these

phenomena enhance the impact of the global crises striking us. The current human activity goes beyond the threshold of sustainability and jeopardizes the life of the planet; but we are also deeply unequal when doing this. I want to recall it: the richest 500 million people, 500 million, that's to say 7 percent of the entire world population. This 7 percent is responsible; those 500 million richest people are responsible for 50 percent of the polluting emissions, while the poorest 50 percent is responsible for only 7 percent of the polluting emissions. That's the reason why, and this is a little strange, I put the United States and China at the same level. The United States has nearly 300 million inhabitants. China has 5 times the population of the United States. The United States consumes over 20 million oil barrels per day; China only consumes 5.6 million oil barrels per day; we can not demand from the United States the same we demand from China. We have

to discuss these issues. I hope we, the heads of state and government, can sit down and really discuss these issues.

Likewise, Mr. President, 60 percent of the ecosystems of the planet are damaged, the 20 percent of the earth crust is degraded; we have impassively witnessed deforestation, land conversions, desertification, alteration of drinking water systems, excessive exploitation of sea resources, pollution and loss of biological diversity.

The excessive exploitation of the earth outnumbers by 30 percent our capacity to regenerate it. The planet is losing its capacity to self-regulate; more waste than we can process is dumped every day. The survival of our species hammers the conscience of humanity. In spite of the urgency, two years of negotiations have passed by to conclude a second period of commitment under



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the Kyoto Protocol, and we attend this conference without a real and significant agreement.

By the way, regarding the text that comes out of the blue, as some of you have said: the Chinese representative, Venezuela, and the Bolivarian Alliance (ALBA) countries say that we do not accept any other text if it is not the document on which the working groups of the Kyoto Protocol have been working; these are legitimate documents they have thoroughly been discussing in these years.

Audience [applause].

President Chávez In these last hours, I think you have not slept, nor have you had lunch. I do not think it is logic that a document appears out of the blue now.

The scientifically proven goal to reduce the polluting emissions and reach a long-term cooperation agreement has failed so far.

And what's the reason? We have no doubt. The reason is the irresponsible attitude and the lack of political will of the most powerful nations of the planet. I do not want anyone to be offended. I want to quote José Gervasio Artigas when he said: ““With the truth, I don't offend or fear.” But it really is an irresponsible attitude of exclusion; it is elitism but it is a problem concerning everybody and that can only be solved by all of us. The political conservatism and selfishness of the great consumers, the richest countries, denote a high insensitivity and lack of solidarity with the poorest, the hungriest, the most vulnerable to diseases and natural disasters. Mr. President, it is essential that we reach a new and unique agreement that can be applied to absolutely unequal parts because of the extent of their contributions and economic, financial and technological capacity; and it must be based on the utmost respect to the principles contained in the Convention.

The developed countries should take on binding, clear and concrete commitments to substantially reduce their emissions and assume obligations to provide financial and technological assistance to the poorest countries to fight the destructive dangers of climate change. In this sense, the singularity of the insular and less developed countries should be fully recognized. Mr. President, climate change is not the only problem affecting humanity nowadays. Other problems and injustices are haunting us: the gap between rich and poor countries has not stopped growing in spite of the Millennium Goals, the Monterrey Summit, and all the other summits. As the President of Senegal was saying and pointing as a great truth, only promises and unfulfilled promises, and the world continues its destructive march.

The total income of the 500 richest individuals of the world is higher than the income of the 416

million poorest people; the 2.8 billion people living in poverty with less than US \$ 2 per day represent 40 percent of the world's population and they only receive 5 percent of the world's income. Today, around 9.2 million children under five die every day, and 99.9 percent of these deaths takes place in the poorest countries. Children mortality amounts to 47 deaths per 1,000 children born alive, but it only amounts to 5 per 1,000 in rich countries. Life expectancy in the world is 67 years; in the rich countries it is 79, while it is 40 in some poor nations. In addition, there are 1.1 billion people with no access to drinking water, 2.6 billion with no cleaning-up services, over 800 million illiterates and over 1 billion hungry people: That's the world scenario.

Now the cause, what is the cause? Let's talk about the cause. We should not avoid responsibilities, we should not avoid the depth of this problem. And

I'll bring it up again, the cause of this disastrous panorama is the metabolic, destructive system of the capital and its model: capitalism. I want to read loud and brief the teachings of that great Liberation theologian Leonardo Boff, a Brazilian citizen. Leonardo Boff comments the following on this issue: What's the cause? Oh, the cause is the folly of seeking happiness through material wealth and endless progress by using science and technology, with which all the resources of Earth can be exploited with no limits. He also quotes Charles Darwin and its "Natural Selection," the survival of the fittest, but we know that the fittest survive on the ashes of the weakest.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau: we always have to recall him. He used to say: 'Between the strong and the weak, freedom oppresses.' That's the reason why the empire talks about freedom, the freedom to oppress, invade, assassinate, annihilate, and

exploit. That's its freedom. And Rousseau adds the revealing phrase: 'Only the law liberates.'

Some countries are trying and playing here so that no document results from this conference because they precisely do not want a law; they do not want a norm because the nonexistence of that norm allows them to use their exploiting and devastating freedom.

Let's make an effort and put pressure here and in the streets in order to take on a commitment here, and draft a document obliging the most powerful countries of the Earth.

Audience [Applause]

President Chávez: Well, President, Leonardo Boff asks; have you met Boff? I do not know if he came. I met him in Paraguay; I have always read his work.

Can a finite earth stand an infinite project? The capitalist thesis, the infinite developmentism is a destructive model; we must accept it. Then, Boff asks another question: What could we expect from Copenhagen? Just this simple confession: We cannot continue the way we are; and a simple purpose: Let's change our course, let's do it without cynicism, without lies, without double agendas, without arbitrary documents, with a honest and truthful attitude. From Venezuela we ask, Mister President, Ladies, Gentlemen, how much more are we going to stand the injustice and inequality? How much more are we going to stand the current international economic model and the current market mechanism? How much more are we going to permit that epidemics like HIV AIDS demolish entire populations? How much more are we going to permit the existence of starving people and that they cannot feed their children?

How much more are we going to permit that children die from curable diseases? How much more are we going to permit wars massacring millions of innocent people, for power, or to snatch other people's resources?

Stop aggressions and wars, ask the peoples of the world, to the empires, to those who pretend continue dominating the world and exploiting us. No more imperial military bases, nor coup d'état; let's build a fairer and more equitable economic and social order; let's abolish poverty, let's stop immediately the high levels of emissions, let's refrain the environmental damage and avoid the catastrophe of the climate change, let's join in the noble task of being freer and more supportive.

Mister president, almost two centuries ago, a universal Venezuelan, Liberator of nations and precursor of consciousness pronounced an apothegm full of will: "If Nature is opposed,

we will fight her and make her obey us...” It was Simón Bolívar, the Liberator.

From Venezuela, where by the way exactly ten years ago we lived the hardest climate disaster of our history, called the Vargas Tragedy, whose revolution aims at conquering justice for the whole people, we say that there is no possible way out but socialism. Socialism is the other phantom mentioned by Marx, it is also among us, for want of a better word it is a counter phantom. That is the way towards the planet’s salvation, I have no doubt. Capitalism, on the contrary, is the way towards hell, the world’s destruction. And Venezuela faces thus the threats of the North-American Empire.

From the countries of ALBA, Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America, we urge, respectfully, on behalf of many in the world, the governments and peoples of the earth, in the words of Bolívar, the Liberator, If the destructive

capitalist Nature opposes, we will fight her and make her obey us, let’s not twiddle our thumbs before the death of human kind.

History calls us to fight. If Capitalism resists, we are obliged to fight against it and to open new ways towards the salvation of humanity, it is us that, flying the flag of Christ, of Muhammad, of equality, of love, of justice, of humanism, of the truest and deepest humanism. Otherwise, the most marvelous creation of Universe, the Human being, will disappear.

This planet has existed for millions of thousands of years without us, that is, it does not need us to exist. Now, without the Planet we cannot live; we are destroying the Pachamama, as Evo says, as our South American Aborigines say.

Finally, Mister President, let’s hear Fidel Castro when he said: The is an endangered species: the human.

Let's hear Rosa Luxemburg when she said:
Socialism or barbarism.

Let's hear Christ when he said: Blessed are you
who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

Mister President, Ladies, Gentlemen, let's
be able to make of this planet not the grave
of the human, but a heaven of life, peace, and
brotherhood for the whole humanity.

Mister President, Ladies and Gentlemen,
Thank you and have a good meal.

Audience [applause]



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