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Written contribution of CETIM - UPR of Bolivia (3rd cycle)

The Plurinational State of Bolivia is constituted as a Unitary Social State of Plurinational Right, democratic, intercultural and decentralized. In addition, it adopts for its government a participative, representative and community democratic form, with equal conditions between men and women.

The CETIM welcomes the improvements and progress that Bolivia made in the last decade in terms of human rights. These improvements are undeniable. Generally speaking, there has been a considerable fall in the extreme poverty rate, recognized by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). According to the UNDP, Bolivia is the country in the Latin American region that has recorded the largest poverty reduction. Such an improvement has been made possible by the government's public policies seeking improvements in social security and in the life conditions of its population. The Gini Index, an instrument for statistically calculating the degree of inequality in a country, has undergone a significant evolution, recording a huge reduction in inequalities rates.

Hereafter we would like to present some concrete data about the improvements of the economic, social and cultural rights' situation, but also in terms of civil and political rights, in the country:

Economic, social and cultural rights' situation

Reduction of poverty – rights of the older persons – rights of the child — right to education

We welcome the increase of public investment to promote these rights. The latter contributed to a sharp poverty reduction in the country: at the national level from 38.2 per cent (2005) to 15.2 per cent (2018); in rural areas the reduction was from 62.9 per cent to 33.4 per cent.

These include the “Renta Dignidad” (“Dignity of Income”) program for example, which guarantees an income for people over 60 years of age who do not receive a pension. The

“Bono Juancito” program, which aims at fighting illiteracy and has led to a drastic reduction in the latter, has had very good results. This measure has contributed to reduce extreme poverty including child labor, promoting the right to education of children. The rates of school drop have fallen from 4.5% to 2% thanks to this measure. The “Juana Azurduy” program, which aims to reduce maternal and infant mortality and chronic malnutrition among children under two years of age, was also a very important measure. In 2015 this program was broadened also to include a subsidy of basic products which has benefited more than 200 thousand women and children in 2017. This program has contributed in reducing maternal and children mortality, contributing to guarantee the rights of the child and to reduce extreme poverty.

Moreover, the minimum wage has risen sharply since the government of Evo Morales came to power in 2006. This increase has led to a considerable improvement in the living conditions of the most vulnerable population, in addition to boosting social mobility.

It is also worth noting the capacity of the Bolivian administration to consolidate the country's economy in recent decades, to the benefit of the most vulnerable. The nightmare of hyperinflation in the 1980s has now been eliminated. The government has never deviated from a macroeconomic policy that is attentive to balanced budgets. This was very important in order to ensure economic and political stability, which is key for the implementation of efficient social policies.

Right to food

Regarding the right to food, we welcome the successful implementation of the Agrarian Insurance that has benefited more than 150 thousand peasants and other people working in rural areas, indigenous peoples, and particularly small-scale farmers. The Insurance has increased in coverage and now comprises eleven kinds of crops that are key for nutrition in the country. This measure has improved the right to food, it has helped to reduce extreme poverty assisting to climate change resilience in rural communities, promoting food sovereignty. We highly recommend the government to pursue this measure.

Right to water – right to food–

Regarding the right to water, which is closely connected to the right to food, we would like to point out the noticeable increase of public investment to enable access to water in rural areas through the program Mi Agua Mi riego, which has benefited to more than 1.6 millions of persons since 2014 with access to water and irrigation systems. In 2005 only 11 million of metric tons of production were cultivated under irrigation system, while in 2017 more than 17 million metric tons had access to irrigation systems as a result of the policy. This measure has contributed to guarantee the right to water, and improve health conditions particularly for children and women, reducing child mortality. We recommend that this measure continues and we encourage Bolivia to share this practice with other countries.

Right to land

Also with regard to right to land, we are pleased to see an increase in land titling for women, promoted under the *Law of Communitary Reconductio of the Agrarian Reform*. The measures taken have increased land titling favoring the right to land of more than 2 million people including indigenous peoples and peasants communities. Around 45% are lands owned by women. We recommend that this policy continue.

Right to health

We welcome the determination to implement universal health coverage through the Unified Health System that will provide free care to more than 50% of the population that does not have any type of insurance. This measure, together with the growing investment in infrastructure and human resources, and the *Intercultural Community Family Health Program* contribute to guarantee the human right to health in an inclusive and intercultural manner. We recommend Bolivia to further strengthen these kind of policies which are key for the protection of human rights. We recommend to allocate further public funds to the health sector, in particular in the most marginalized regions of the country.

Civil and political rights' situation

Cooperation with society – freedom of opinion and expression – right to participate in public affairs

We call upon the government to continue to strengthen the openness and cooperation with civil society, the mechanisms to facilitate the participation in public affairs and the guarantees for freedom of opinion and expression. We encourage Bolivia to further strengthen the freedom of opinion and expression, but also the freedom of assembly and association, of all sectors of the Bolivian population, also of those sectors that are critics towards the current government.

International cooperation and commitment

We had the opportunity to observe the key role played by Bolivia at the international level, in particular in the inter-governmental negotiations aiming at elaborating a UN Declaration on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas. In these negotiations, in which Bolivia hold the Presidency of the Working group mandated to elaborate the Declaration, the country led a very inclusive and transparent process. The negotiations lasted from 2012 until 2018 and were indeed very intense and complex in many aspects. Nevertheless, Bolivia managed to handle the process in a very efficient way, by listening to the concerns of all stake-holders and by successfully mediate the most controversial issues. This attitude was fundamental for the success of the process and the adoption of the Declaration.

The comments and proposals of civil society, peasants and indigenous representatives were heard and taken into consideration. Thanks to the openness and inclusiveness of Bolivia, civil society organizations were the primary actors of this historical process. We encourage the UN member countries to take the example from this experience in the framework of other inter-governmental processes of negotiation in the UN system.