

WORLD PEOPLES' CONFERENCE FOR A WORLD WITHOUT WALLS: TOWARDS UNIVERSAL CITIZENSHIP

Executive Summary

Date: June 20 and 21, 2017

Location: Tiquipaya - Cochabamba, Bolivia

BACKGROUND

In the recent years unprecedented levels of forced displacement and refugees have been brought about on a global scale. The annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in 2015 estimated that the number of displaced persons and refugees in that year was 65 million, due to armed conflict, widespread violence, human rights violations, economic crisis or the effects of climate change. A figure never before recorded. 51% of these are children, who have been displaced from their countries, separated from their parents or relatives.

There are criminal organizations that take advantage of this reality by profiting from the transfer of people seeking shelter. According to data from the European Union External Border Control Agency (FRONTEX), this international crime raised approximately 4 billion euros in 2015.

According to estimates by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), in the year 2015, 3,771 people died in their attempt to cross the Mediterranean Sea to escape the war, revealing one of the biggest migratory crises after World War II. Those who manage to cross the sea are again victims, as their human rights are not respected, while they encounter legal and physical walls.

Added to this is a new condition of migrants, "climate migrants" who are forced to leave their countries because of the effects of climate change, environmental degradation, droughts and floods that affect mainly poor countries, as they destroy their Environment and their means of survival.

In this context, the migration policies of some developed countries have hardened, with increasing restrictions being placed on the national security agenda. On the other hand some governments implement a policy of criminalization of the migrants that materializes in measures against the free mobility of the people. These migration policies encourage xenophobia, discrimination and the separation of peoples.

It is necessary to recognize that the international community has made progress and commitments for the rights of migrants and their families. Likewise, the conclusions of world meetings of Popular Movements have contributed to the analysis and elaboration of proposals.

Concerned with this context, the Government and the Social Movements of the Plurinational State of Bolivia called for the World Peoples' Conference "For a world without walls, towards universal citizenship" to organizations, social movements, human rights defenders. Migrants, academics, jurists and governments who want to work together with their peoples.

This World Conference aims to be an inclusive space for reflection, seeking to dismantle physical walls, invisible legal walls and mental walls, such as discrimination and racism, recovering paradigms and visions of the people, promoting alternatives and proposals that contribute to overcome borders, to build bridges of integration and to work on a plan of action of the peoples, to achieve "universal citizenship".

Methodology

The World Conference of Peoples will develop its work in five simultaneous work groups that will analyze and generate proposals of action, based on the following thematic areas:

1. Structural and systemic causes of human mobility from one State to another.
2. Impact of climate change, economic crisis, wars and interventionist policies on migration flows.
3. Contribution of migrants to the integral and inclusive development of peoples.
4. Joint strategies for the observance, protection and extension of the rights of migrants, refugees and their families.
5. Proposals for the construction of a universal citizenship articulating the plural identities of the Peoples and the sovereignty of the States.

With the aim of achieving greater participation, a virtual discussion forum with thematic areas is enabled; its systematization will be an input for the discussion during the days of the Conference. For this purpose, the following questions are proposed to start the debate:

What are the structural causes of the migratory crisis that the world is going through today?

What impact do wars and interventionist policies have on migration flows?

Do the receiving countries benefit from the migratory flows that are received in their territories? What are the effects of international migration in the countries of origin?

From the collective action of peoples, what strategies could be adopted to protect and expand the rights of migrants, refugees and their families?

How do local identities and state sovereignty articulate with the paradigm of universal citizenship?

What actions must we take to dismantle physical, legal and mental walls to achieve universal citizenship?