

Cochabamba, 10 and 11 November 2016

We, collectives and individuals of civil society and indigenous peoples independent of the State, have self-convened in the city of Cochabamba on the 10th and 11th of November 2016, to analyze, dialogue and share the diverse problems that we are suffering – problems that are consequences of the expansion and consolidation of the extractivist and capitalist model in Bolivia.

This model prioritizes the expansion of fossil fuel activities; the construction of huge infrastructure projects; the pushing of unsustainable mining projects; and deforestation to make way for the expansion of big agribusiness - all to the detriment of the interests and well-being of the Bolivian people, and making us more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

All of these initiatives, rather than benefiting Bolivian citizens, are directly of benefit to the economic elites of the country, foreign elites, and the State bureaucracy.

We are living crucial moments for the country. The climatic crisis, and the development model pushed by the government, are making Bolivian livelihoods more precarious, causing more conflict, social exclusion, violence against women, and a total lack of serious measures to protect nature.

The Bolivian government has forgotten the political agenda that the Bolivian people created which called for the end of capitalism, instead the State is reinstating the power of transnational corporations and consolidating legal protection for investment. Today, the Bolivian government has taken on the role of defending corporate interests and has forgotten its role as guarantor of the rights of the people, criminalizing social protest with reasoning that promotes racism and division.

It's in this context that we believe there are urgent struggles to undertake. In that light, we will not permit: the construction of the mega-dams Bala-Chapete, Rositas and Tariquía amongst others; the nuclear project which also opens up the possibility of extremely dangerous and polluting mining of uranium; the fossil fuel exploration and exploitation which threatens the life of the uncontacted indigenous peoples in the North of the Bolivian Amazon, protected areas and indigenous territories; the violation of the right to previous, free and informed consultation of communities threatened by extractive activities and mega infrastructure; the commercialization and pollution of water resources; the big agribusiness and deforestation that puts food sovereignty at risk; the norms and policies that encroach on and ignore the importance of protected areas and indigenous territories; and the deepening of the patriarchal and misogynist culture that is only strengthened by this development model.

We demand: information, respect for rights, the fulfillment of laws, transparency, access to information, accountability and openness to social debate around where these projects are leading us.

We propose: an energetic transition towards renewable, clean, decentralized and autonomously managed energy; management of water resources as a vital element that ensures access for the people and protects water from pollution; the development of sustainable agricultural policies that ensure food security and sovereignty with quality products that avoid and make redundant big agribusiness, large consolidated landholdings, and genetically modified crops.

Faced with this development model that puts at risk the very material base of LIFE, the self-convened Alternative Social Space is an alliance in defense of life, of resistance against the current government policies which maintain and strengthen a neoliberal approach. This movement consists of diverse actors and movements from civil society, indigenous peoples, farmers and rural people, women, youth, artists, academics, activist collectives, rights defenders, and environmentalists, amongst others. We commit to working towards building a society that is in harmony with nature.

We commit to growing this struggle and building solidarity between the different resistance actions of threatened and affected collectives, on our national territory and in the world. We refuse to remain indifferent to these policies of dispossession and plunder, of destruction of life, and in response we are generating this independent autonomous space of debate, analysis, struggle, and building of alternatives in the different regions of the country.

We declare ourselves to be in permanent mobilization in defense of life and dignity!