

G77 + CHINA'S DECLARATION OF SANTA CRUZ AND THE EMERGENCE OF THE SOUTH

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In June of this year a summit of the G77 + China was held in the city of Santa Cruz (Bolivia) convened by President Evo Morales as presidency of the group, celebrating the 50 years of anniversary of the largest group of United Nations.

More than 100 countries participated in the summit. Delegations of ministers, ambassadors, many countries represented by Heads of State, Presidents and Vice-Presidents as well as Chancellors were present there.

The long and complex document adopted at the summit, entitled "Declaration of Santa Cruz" inspires reflections about their implications in the political debate of the group and its future impact on global scenarios.

The Post 2015 Agenda

Two agendas are debated and have certainly been part of the construction of the Declaration of Santa Cruz:

1 -. The Agenda of the Millennium Development Goals and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The first is finishing its term and its results are expressing that the eradication of poverty and hunger are still pending of work, and that the achievements made in relation to them are vulnerable to different global crisis like the climate and the financial ones. The second is still in process of preparation in the context of United Nations and it is expected that will reflect the contributions of developing countries in particular the G77 + China. The Declaration of Santa Cruz is definitely one of the most valuable contributions to future text of SDGs.

2 - Agenda for Structural Change. This agenda goes beyond the time horizon of 2015 and is part of a political agenda that includes the main goals that the G77 + China defined when born, pointing to a series of objectives which include: the construction of a new international financial architecture including the regulation and transformation of the governance structure of the financial system (the Declaration proposes to create a UN agency for this purpose), respect for the sovereignty of States to define their own models and visions for development as well as conducting the implementation of them and control of their natural resources, the consolidation of a system of fair trade, the elimination of trade barriers and agricultural subsidies of developed countries, the construction of a system of regulation of food prices, development and technology transfer, among others.

This agenda also highlights the need of building financial institutions in the South, free from the domination of the official Breton Woods institutions (World Bank and IMF); here lies another remarkable vein where there are several regional initiatives; an example of them is the decision to have a Bank of the South as part of the Union of Nations of South America (UNASUR).

Mother Earth and Living Well in the discussion of the G77 + China

The Declaration also highlights the opening of a reflection on harmony with nature, mother earth and live well, issues that are entering in the discussion of the group, with difficulties no doubt, due to the political agenda of the G77 + China marked more by issues related to the right to development (about which the group achieved a UN Declaration in 1983).

It is important to recall that in the first principle of the Declaration of the Conference on Sustainable Development Rio 1992 there is a call to live in harmony with nature; precisely, several paragraphs contained in the Declaration of Santa Cruz on this issue are part of a line of thought and design of international instruments that guide the application of this principle, which is tentatively beginning to take shape in the new United Nations documents. Here it is important that the G77 + China take the leadership.

It was the G77 + China, who called to introduce several paragraphs on holistic, integral development in harmony with nature as well as the concept of Mother Earth (which was proposed by several parties members of the group) in the declaration of the Conference on Sustainable Development 2012 (Rio +20) called "The Future We Want" and the mandate that development should be made in the framework of the restoration and regeneration of ecosystems (paragraph 4 of the Rio+20 Declaration is in accordance of this vision). Here lies another vein of work that needs to be encouraged in the coming years and is part of the global debate on the guidelines, theories and concepts of development.

The challenge is that the agenda of the South is not only about development, technology, industrialization, growth and eradication of poverty measured by income, but to make a remarkable advance, including goals to be achieved within developing countries aimed to resolve internal inequality, overcome models based on overexploitation of natural resources, pollutant industrialization, and rather follow the path of construction of low-carbon economies and productive processes that strengthen ecosystems instead of destroying them.

Growth and Sustainable Integrated Management of Ecosystem

How to achieve economic growth, poverty eradication and substantial reduction of inequalities and inequities while strengthening the environmental functions of ecosystems and respecting the regeneration of them?

It is noteworthy that the concept of ecosystem regeneration appears in the document, in particular by establishing the limit on the definition of visions and various models of development is the conservation, regeneration, restoration and ecosystems resilience under sustainable management of them.

Health and Medicine Production in the South

The Declaration of Santa Cruz proposes the need to establish systems of universal health coverage, to eliminate barriers to access to medicines and the production of generic medicines in our countries. It is important to underscore the intention of developing medical technologies as well as medical treatment in the South and share our progress in these areas.

It is also noteworthy that the need to work in the South regarding the growing antimicrobial resistance to existing medicines, including those against tuberculosis and malaria, both associated with poverty. This will be a global social problem soon and it is important to make a call to take action at the World Health Organization (WHO) on the subject; at this point is relevant to call for efforts in South integration processes. The Union of Nations of South America (UNASUR), for example, is building a strategy about public health that could result in the construction of institutional networks that include innovation in medical technologies.

Development of technology in the context of South-South cooperation

On the other side it is remarkable that the declaration establishes as a priority the construction of mechanisms of technology development and innovation processes including the dialogue of sciences and knowledge of local, social and modern sources, recovering and strengthening indigenous and ancestral wisdom. This call for developing and sharing technology implies high technology goods linked to information and communication and also those that are linked to food production, medicines, etc.

The proposal of the President Evo Morales to establish an Institute of Decolonization and South-South Cooperation contributes undoubtedly to thinking about operational instruments that promote the implementation of a strategy in this regard.

Decolonization and sovereignty of peoples and States

The concern transmitted by the Declaration of Santa Cruz about the interventionism and aggression against the sovereignty of nations and states of developing countries by international powers tells us that colonialism and its new modern expressions remain central factors in the political scene.

The current renewed colonialism is expressed through free trade agreements, subordination to financial systems oriented to profit and exaction (one of its expressions is the "vulture funds" denounced by the president of Argentina), the creation of institutional and regulatory frameworks favorable to the control of transnational corporations on our natural and energy resources. Just as in the 60s and 70s, today the complaint about military interventionism and espionage from northern powers continues being part of the agenda of developing countries. These violent methods are still part of the relations of domination that are part of neocolonial practices.

For decades, the domination of powers is a matter of global agenda as well as the sovereignty and liberation of peoples. The latter never ceased to be a demand of the nations of the south. This colonial power has multiple components of control and subordination (power of control over the economy and finance, control of property and access to natural resources, control of media, control of messages and guidelines about development paths, control of process of design of models and tools of development among others), and part of the strategies coming from the south is precisely to change this relations of power reinforcing sovereignty and the right to development as it is stated in the Declaration.

The emerging South in economic and technological power

The emergence of the South as industrial, political, technology and financial power has reshaped relations and geopolitical strategies in different continents.

The means for the political and economic control monopolized by some developed countries are being progressively weakened and the south begins to significantly advance controlling technology, property and access to strategic natural resources, financial systems and media.

Strong states and political will of national control, with projections of regional alliances and strategies shape a south that is building projects of regional integration. The question then is how can the Declaration of Santa Cruz strengthen these trends. The Declaration is no doubt an instrument of ideas and thoughts, guidelines and policy directives.

Overcoming internal inequalities and unsustainable development models

The Declaration of Santa Cruz builds an agenda that certainly recover the founding principles of the G77 + China in the 60s and 70s, and projects them, expressing the will of sovereignty, but at the same time contributes to the challenge of changing the political, economic and social structures as well as models of development of developing countries demanding them to overcome the inequalities and injustices as well as the production models that could destroy or put in risk mother earth.

The Declaration is a document rich in thoughts and ideas that helps to read the reality of today's world and the expectations and plans of the South.

Ideas are transformative to the extent that they have the power to generate processes to rebuild and redesign the power relations between countries and within them, moreover the ideas are powerful tools to create and recreate projects of societies.

The Declaration of Santa Cruz is a tool for reflection and debate, but also a valuable source for the construction of specific proposals of the G77 + China in various fields of influence as well as in the international official negotiations in which the group is involved.