

Interview with Bolivia's Climate Change Ambassador

Saturday 19 December 2009, by [ESHELMAN Robert S.](#), [SOLÓN Pablo](#) (Date first published: 9 December 2009).

For the capitalist system everything, nature - even other humans - is considered an object that you can use to obtain a profit. What we are seeing is the consequence of this vision.

On day three of COP15, I spoke with Bolivian Climate Change Ambassador Pablo Erick Solón Romero Oroza about his delegation's position at COP15, how negotiations are proceeding, and why Bolivian president Evo Morales has called for a Universal Declaration of Rights for Mother Earth.

What are the demands of the Bolivian delegation at COP15?

Pablo Erick Solón Romero Oroza - We are asking, first, to discuss the main issue, which for us is Mother Earth. We think that is the key issue.

Second, we are asking for a goal that will allow that will save all of humanity. We think the goal that they have put on the table is going to save probably only half of humanity because a two degree Celsius increase and a rise in carbon levels in the atmosphere to 450 parts per million means a 50% chance that there will be severe ecologic failure.

Third, we want that climate debt be paid. It should be paid in terms of reduction of emissions, but real reductions, in terms of a transfer of technology, and in terms of finance - and that brings me to our fourth point. We see the numbers when it comes to finance are really too small. Ten billion dollars when you compare it to what they have spent in terms of military budgets or to save Wall Street they spent trillions of dollars. But to save the future of mankind, they are saying only \$10 billion.

The final demand is that we really want really want to solve this problem. We don't want to make business out of this problem. We are very against the idea of building a carbon market that will really not solve the problem. We say lets save humanity, lets save the planet, and, please, please don't make profit out of this.

And what has been the reaction to these demands within the negotiations?

Our demands are included in the negotiations. But we are at a stage where all of our language that is in the negotiating texts has been bracketed, which means we are very far away from agreement on these issues. And the process is moving very slow. If you go into the drafting groups you will see that advances are being made in only a few areas. Negotiations are difficult but if you really want to delay agreements you will do this sort of thing.

What is the Bolivian delegation's strategy for pushing back against this resistance to your demands?

Our position is that in order to have success, we need to have a very important movement of civil

society groups that puts a lot of pressure on the governments of the United States and Europe. If they don't see this pressure then of course the outcome will be very bad. But if there is pressure, the negotiations could change. So I am sure that a lot of negotiators and authorities can change their positions if the pressure comes from the people and not from the corporations. Because, here, what you see, is huge pressure from transnational companies who are thinking not of how to solve this problem but how to make a business of climate change.

President Morales has called for a Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth. Why do you think there's a need for such a document?

Why, because this problem is about balance - balance between mankind and nature. What we are seeing with climate change is that this balance has been broken. Why, because humans act as if they are the only ones who have rights and treat our Mother Earth like, in the past century, slaves were treated - as persons that don't have rights, as objects, instruments for exploitation. So if you want to have a balanced relation, humans must recognize that we are not the only ones that have rights, but also our Mother Earth. We and nature are part of one system and what happens in one part of the system effects the other part.

This way of thinking has been strengthened because of the capitalist system. For the capitalist system everything, nature - even other humans - is considered an object that you can use to obtain a profit. With this system everything can be made into merchandise. So what we are seeing is the consequence of this vision that you can change everything into merchandise, even nature, even your mother - Mother Earth.

by Robert Eshelman

P.S.

* The Nation, December 9, 2009.