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The Climate Change Crisis, a Challenge for the Human Condition and for an Ethics of Nature

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In this article, Elizabeth Peredo explains that the climate change crisis is, at the same time a chance to to develop an integral vision to take on this global crisis of civilization that includes addressing: rules of commerce, financial systems, productive matrixes, forms of dealing with nature and water, means of consumption, culture of daily life and the indigenous concept of "living well".

Elizabeth Peredo is a Bolivian social psychologist, researcher and activist on gender, ethnicity, water, human rights and climate change; she works with the Foundation Solon and is part of the Hemispheric Social Alliance. Bolivia has played a leading role in the struggle for climate change.

THE CLIMATE CRISIS, A CHALLENGE FOR THE HUMAN CONDITION AND FOR AN ETHICS OF NATURE

Elizabeth Peredo Beltrán*

The climate change we are living is not any crisis, it is a global alert about the way toward self destruction that the powerful have chosen, given the lack of equitable possibilities that the world need in order to survive –the indigenous peoples, the social groups living in poverty, women,

the elderly and children are the most affected by it in today's world.

La Paz is a beautiful Andean city surrounded by glaciers of the Eastern Mountain Range of the Andes. Among these, the Illimani stands out as handsome and majestic-- *Apu[1]* is the guardian of its inhabitants and of the smaller mountains that surround it. More than two million inhabitants take shelter in this scene of urban valleys and the altiplano: La Paz and El Alto are two cities with intense histories, a long path that includes the building of a society where justice and cultural diversity seek to live in harmony.

The coat of arms of the La Paz Department has as its center the powerful image of this beautiful snow covered mountain meaning that this glacier is part of the history and identity of our department. Illimani, just as the majority of glaciers of the world, is a most valuable source of information about the history of the planet; just as the trees, ice of glaciers give data through their circles about the climate of the earth during many centuries. According to how old the glaciers are and if they have more snow and ice in their structure, they will have more information to share about the different periods in the world and about the stability of the planet. The glacier scientists often speak about our long history by studying the different levels of ice that have formed over time. Science confirms what the ancient Andean cultures have told us: the snow peaks are our memory and thus

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our protectors.

Even more, the Illimani covered by a white cape above the city of La Paz is the source of inspiration for poets, artists and painters who find his impressive beauty a fountain of identity and a sense for their lives. There are tangos, huayños, boleros and other songs that call on Illimani as a symbol of their inspiration. Hundreds of cultural groups of dancers, musicians and intellectuals take his name as an identity. Walter Solón Romero** painted an Illimani when the windows of his workshop, located in the neighborhood of Sopocachi, were covered by a modern building, one of the many that have slowly been closing windows and raising shadows in the neighborhood. Unhappy because he could not contemplate the gorgeous snowy Illimanti, he put his painting over the covered window, to keep him company in his workshop on the third floor of the Solon Foundation. This glacier is, without a doubt, a source of identity and inspiration.

According to UNESCO[2] the cultural identity is an inalienable peoples' right. However, the Illimani, the Mururata, the Huayna Potosí, the Tuni-Condoriri and all our tropical glaciers in Los Andes, the same as hundreds of other glaciers in the world, symbols of identity and of memory are now melting before our eyes as a metaphor of the short time that we have to react and change the course of events brought about by western capitalist civilization based on the greed and the irrational and irresponsible accumulation of money and richness.

It is not the only glacier we are losing due to global warming. In Bolivia, a smaller and more fragil glacier, the famous Chacaltaya has disappeared. It was the set of Andean Bolivian Club and it had the only ski lift in the whole country. The glacier was the place where many tourist and young people learned to ski and enjoyed ice skating on the highest glacier in the world, at an altitude of more than 4,000 meters (18,000') above sea level.

Only memories of that glacier are left today; that and the feeling of impotence before a phenomenon that we have not provoked. --Bolivia is only responsible of about 0.17% of global emissions, (0.33 of CO2)--, but we are suffering their worst consequences and find ourselves in a very vulnerable situation. The Andean glaciers are the basic source of water and energy for the cities and towns around them; several eco systems, as well as millions of inhabitants, depend on them for their existence. In the case of La Paz and El Alto, we get more than 40% of our water and energy from them. Scientific studies by UNESCO's International Hydrological Program are already warning about the progressive and imminent disappearance of the tropical glaciers of the Andes and about the humanitarian emergency that will result from lack of water in a near future.

Presently more than a million persons in the city of El Alto are having water rationing due to the serious lack of this element for public service. Lake Titicaca is losing its water level in alarming degrees, and the grazing animals of rural communities in the Altiplano and the Chaco regions are dying because of intense droughts, the country has lost 5.000 heads of livestock in a mater of weeks; there are plagues and sickness due to the melting of the ice caps and the high heat in many communities of the rural regions including the Yungas, where the people suffer from high temperatures, lack of water that is affecting their basic means of living.

Scientific studies foresee that these conditions will affect

more the water provision for than 70 million persons in South America in the near future. The loss of glaciers in several parts of the world is threatening the lives of millions of persons. In the case of the Himalayan Glaciers that are the fastest melting glaciers in the world, the loss is measured at about 10 to 15 meters a year, their loss will soon affect the lives of at least 1,500 million persons in China, India and Nepal.

This is not happening because just we have bad luck, or because God is punishing us; it is due to an enormous historical debt that was generated by the more developed countries because they have taken advantage of the atmospheric space, our territories, our people and our riches. And we are talking, not only about Bolivia, but also about the whole Global South. Thus, colonialism and capitalism have left us a debt acquired by centuries of exploitation causing vulnerability and marginalization.

Who will return our snow covered mountains, our sources of water, energy; our identity and our life now that global warming is melting them inevitably? How are we to confront the acute lack of water in our regions? Who is going to respond for the innumerable catastrophes and floods in the world, now that they are made worse by enormous climate changes? Finally, who will return the planet to the harmony it needs to continue sheltering us?

Climate Change is a mirror of the system

The recent UN Conference on Climate Change denounced a life system that is not sustainable in the world, showing that the impact of the excessive production of greenhouse gasses is becoming extreme and irreversible for a long time. Even if the emissions were to decrease to 0, they would not return our lost snow capped mountains, and nothing will avoid the loss of territories in the island nations, or the grave lack of water at a global level, nor will it be able to control the enormous frequency of environmental disasters that are being provoked by this phenomenon in the whole world. Scientific reports about the ecological footprint that humanity is leaving right now affirm that the planet spends 30% more than what the earth can regenerate in a year, dragging with it a suicidal deficit.[3]

The balance is broken. We have never confronted such a great problem that so clearly gives evidence of the most profound problems and contradictions in our civilization. Behind the global warming a system of impunity is hiding, a system of irrational accumulation moved by the savage desire for the profit of local and transnational corporations, and of visions used to a definition of development and welfare that has devastated the planet, digging up the very basis of life and of the future (super-exploitation, excessive extractions, comforts and waste).

It is true that all the countries in the world have contributed to the emission of greenhouse gases (GHG), but the levels of responsibility are relative; not all of them generate the same proportion, and it is clear that the developed and industrialized countries are mainly responsible of global warming. We are speaking of the historical accumulations of Greenhouse gases that were produced since the beginning of the industrial era and have grown exponentially in the last 4 decades, coinciding with the global rule of the Washington Consensus. Presently 80% of global emissions are produced by the uncontrolled use by industry and energy consumption in developed countries, countries that have only 20% of world's population. Latin

America is responsible of only 10.3% of global emissions. This difference between the emissions of developed countries and countries in development have never been controlled, in spite of the fact that it was the goal of the Kyoto Protocol signed more than 15 years ago. Of the 191 countries that signed this Protocol, one of the most powerful ones, the United States, has refused to ratify it; and is the one that contaminates at a rate of 20.2%, [4] During the negotiations in preparation for the COP 15 in Copenhagen, the developed countries have not made any real commitments to reduce their emissions and they are even trying to escape the commitments from the Kyoto Protocol, ignoring it and trying to set up a fragile agreement without much meaning.

The climate change we are living through is not just any kind of crisis; it is a global alert about a way to self-destruction that the powerful have chosen, about the unequal possibility left to the world for its survival –indigenous peoples, social groups living in poverty, women, the elderly and children are the ones most affected by the world today---

But is also a challenge in the midst of the shock and there are apocalyptic voices that pretend to come from the urgency, rather than voices asking us to find true solutions that come from paths of **solidarity, honor, justice and equity.**

That is why climate crisis is also a crisis that above all presents us with the need to create new paradigms for civilization; recovering and building new ethics of relationships with nature and of great love for life in towns and communities all over the world: indigenous peoples, women, agricultural communities, are owners of a local wisdom that daily life teaches us about life and solidarity. It is also an opportunity to look over all the visions and concepts developed by various cultures in the world about the need for harmony with nature and about the care we owe the planet, being a part of it.

There are millions of persons in the world, hundreds of societies and cultures that thanks to their accumulated knowledge confront global changes and succeed in finding partial solutions while they develop more dignified proposals for consideration to teach us that we all have to confront the problem from its origins, with creativity and the necessary will to review and change the paradigms of dominant life that tell us that development is infinite. The truth is:

development =destruction and extraction,

welfare=comforts-- paid for by others,

success=power and discrimination,

power=scorn and humiliation.

Albert Einstein used to say: "We cannot solve problems by thinking in the same old way as when we created them." The principles for development and for survival that have ruled until now have turned out to be calamitous for they are not only concentrated in unilateral benefits but also generate destruction of the environment and gravely hurt human rights. They only benefit the powerful of the world and are the origin of the greatest inequalities and injustices.

The need to change paradigms that will support our civilization is of the greatest importance, and this implies the need for great political will. But above all, the courage to deconstruct and recuperate that which is capable of caring for humanity and nature in such a way that will not only be sustainable, but deeply

balanced and just. In that sense thinking on female and indigenous practices of social and environmental care is a beginning in this search.

The challenge to abandon mercantile and wasting lifestyle

The present world tries to market everything: water, the land, life, knowledge, even the air. This is the dominant paradigm: everything is for sale so as to generate profit for some. As the same time, development and growth are measured with indicators that are leading us to the destruction of the planet and of humanity.

That is why, until the present, solutions used to solve the problem of such magnitude as what scientists describe stay within the limits imposed by the dominant marketplace logic, the power of transnational corporations and the thoughtless consumption of natural resources. For example, one of the mechanisms contemplated by the Kyoto Protocol, and used in the negotiations for Copenhagen, is that of Carbon Exchange Bonds, Carbon Markets. For some, this is the way to confront climate change; for many, this solution will only serve to allow transnational corporations and the northern countries to buy the right to keep on contaminating the environment at the expense of poor countries and the poor people, even though according to history, they were impoverished while they were preserving nature and contributing oxygen to the rest of the world.

Given that it is evident that the Southern countries have the jungles and forests that help preserve the oxygen in the planet, the promoters of carbon bond markets could be very dangerous, for instead of transforming the productive matrix and changing consumption to more sustainable models –what is historically needed--, they keep promoting the root of the problem. Instead of contributing to reduce the emissions, they keep promoting a system that uses the logic of luxury and extraction without anything that will really lead to a controlling the causes.

Another example is the production of agro-fuels that appear to be fuels based on vegetable products instead of fossils, giving the idea that they are less contaminating. The truth is that agro-fuels are in the first place a huge business for huge corporations just as the business of seeds and drugs. They are a round business for the landlords; who use vast quantities of sugar cane or corn, planted in vast territories, becoming a new reason for cutting down the forest to increase their agricultural frontiers and putting food security in danger for the whole world (a situation already denounced by FAO, by several specialized NGOs and by the organizations of the Agricultural Way. The ETC Group states that the price increase of food felt between 2002 and 2008 is due basically to the production of agro-fuels. Its production in several countries uses cheap labor and precarious conditions, even causing grave diseases due to bad working conditions. But besides, there are several sources that state that these "green" fuels also contribute to gas emission because they use fossil fuels to produce them, and because of the terrible pressure to cut down and the burn the tropical forests and jungles so the big corporations can have more productive lands to promote their business with the result of environmental devastation.

So, even though these businesses are based on multilateral environmental accords and are developed within the framework of the United Nations, they have opened the doors to a gamut of postures and proposals whose consequences affect the advancement of human and environmental rights developed until now as can be seen in the case of the carbon markets and the agro-fuels. There are also solutions proposed that promote the development of transgenic technologies to adapt to the changes brought on by floods and droughts. At another level, surprisingly some voices are even pointing to birth control for women as a solution for climate change, affirming that if they could stop unwanted pregnancies in the world –that according to

reports are about 200 million a year—there would be less population to pressure the environment.

As we can see, this debate can easily lose its way and distort the real origin of the crisis because it ends up looking for the wrong answers.

The need to re-establish harmony with Mother Earth

In Bolivia, social struggles for water and for the environment have left us an inheritance consisting in a collective social vision that is tightly linked to life and to recover the respect for Mother Earth, the Pachamama. This vision is reflected in the new Constitution that speaks of Water as a human right, and the Right to Life that incorporates the concept of "*suma qumamaña*" and of "*ñandereko*" = "*good living*" and in "*harmony*" with Nature. In counter position to the dominant idea that "development" is infinite, the concept of "good living" emphasizes the fact that it is not possible to develop and to have good living by taking away what belongs to others, that it is not possible to grow always, that development cannot be measured with indicators of inequality or inequity, and that we must look for sustainability that is based on respect and equity among human beings and on thanksgiving and reciprocity with Nature.

Several anthropological and economical studies have looked deeply into the rural economies in the Andes to bring out some of the characteristics and theories in them. There is an economy based on the "**logic of the gift**" which basically means an economy of the logic of social re-distribution and reciprocity with nature (study by Dominique Temple, Olivia Harris and Xavier Albó).

The global crisis has brought about a better understanding that these visions and the urgent need of looking for a governance/institutionalization with rules that will help bring about a real care for life and for nature. Bolivia is responding to this challenge by incorporating some of their concepts into our Constitution and inviting all the countries of the world to re-think the meaning of development, growth and human as well as environmental rights. In that sense, the UN Declaration of the Day of Mother Earth opens, for the first time this framework, the possibility of thinking in relationship between human beings and nature and promoting a debate for developing a Declaration about the care of Mother Earth.

Debates and negotiations around climate change cannot forget or leave aside the advancement that humanity has made in constructing a system of human rights and of the care of the environment, or much less the struggles the peoples who are fighting to give society some human ways of confronting conflicts. They cannot be satisfied with emission fees only, or with money to mitigate and adapt. The challenge today is much greater and it brings with it the need to rethink the model and the paradigms about all that we have established in our lives, our culture and our development.

It is a challenge for all humanity to build a system that promotes respect for nature and sanctions environmental crimes and makes it clear that Mother Earth has rights. The world has advanced by creating national, regional and multilateral systems that try to assure human rights for all, but little has been done about integral and relationship systems that assure the rights of nature that will secure the survival of the species, and among them the human species. That is the "adaptation" that we are looking for; this crisis demands that the elites of the world "*adapt*" to the idea that we have to change and that we cannot continue building model based on extraction and market profits.

Bolivian President Morales proposed some principles to open the debate about the care of nature and called on all to develop a global declaration for the protection of nature that should have a

multilateral character and advance us toward a binding system.[5]

The challenge of the social agenda consists in building and strengthening these, and other principles, supporting them with the experience of the peoples and the communities that have not lost everything and who in spite of centuries and decades of extra activism and marketing, have kept their systems of caring and promoting harmony among human beings and Mother Earth.

The Climatic Debt and Bolivia's Proposal for COP 15

A few countries and powerful corporations took irrational advantage of the planet's "resources" resulting in a greater accumulation of greenhouse gases. This came in with the industrial revolution and has grown especially in the last 40 years –which coincide with the neo-liberal boom promoted by the Washington Consensus— the atmospheric space of the planet has been used in an immeasurable way by some countries just as the resources of the biosphere are being devoured by corporations belonging to the developed countries. That left an enormous debt they owe the southern countries that cannot be denied; the atmospheric space for the needs of development of the South today are limited due to the grave crisis that they generated.[6]

A 2008 report about accumulated emissions according to countries and regions done by the World Resources Institute says that the US and the EU have accumulated more than 50% of global emissions between them from 1850 to 2000; of these, 30% were generated by the United States and Canada, and 27% by Europe.

The basic needs for survival by the southern countries are at a disadvantage if we compare them with the resources for development that were used and are still used by the developed countries. The countries in development have to secure access to the right to energy, food and transportation for their people in equality and democracy.

The equality that is indispensable to solve the problems brought about by the concept of Climate Justice and that the people demand must allow us to enter into the discussion about global warming and about the commitments that must be made from the perspective of equity. Everyone in the world has a right to enjoy and to benefit from a balanced climate and in relation to the goods of nature that are necessary for human survival such as: access to water, to land, to nourishment, to energy and to the land needed and for relating with the climate.

Climatic Justice includes the democratic right for people to define their own future without having to be affected by environmental and climatic deficits provoked by others. That means that all the people have a right to determine their own future, their goals for development, their models for development and to have the same possibilities that the others enjoy, their right to life. But it also includes the right for other living beings to life in the planet Earth.

Bolivia's negotiation position as a State, puts forth a proposal that presents as its axis of the theme **Climate Debt**, that demands equitable and responsible treatment for all the countries in development. This proposal demands the recognition of the historical debt by the developed countries to the world for their historical emissions and in particular with the countries in development because they consumed excessively from the atmospheric space and having limited the possibilities that other countries have for a development that will allow them to fight poverty and have well being.

In the negotiations leading to COP 15, it is urgent to make effective the commitments and mechanisms that will make the

richest and more developed countries (who got rich by taking advantage of the atmospheric space and contaminating it) honor their debt to support the costs for facing climate change by the countries in development with sufficient financial resources and technological transfers that will no longer lead to more conditionalities, that will have democratic and transparent mechanisms and that will allow them to confront the challenges of mitigation and adaptation with an adequate transference for this emergency. To honor a debt is to understand that the countries in development cannot halt their growth without taking into account that there is a climatic debt and the need to take it on with equity. This agenda is put forth into the debate and the negotiations of the Bali Action Plan that includes the following of the Kyoto Protocol that refers to the control of emissions and the Framework of the UN Convention about Climate Change.

Pero las grandes limitaciones del Protocolo y de la propia Convención se reflejan en que no han conducido a compromisos ni acciones consecuentes con sus objetivos iniciales. Por ello el Presidente Evo Morales ha propuesto durante la Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas en Septiembre de 2009 construir un **Tribunal de Justicia Climática** en el marco de las Naciones Unidas para contar con un mecanismo de sanción y vigilancia al incumplimiento de compromisos.

The Kyoto Protocol as well as the UNFCCC no not have strong binding mechanisms to control the compromises, they have limitations and failures that did not allow to fulfill all the commitments and actions needed to reach their main goals. That is why Evo Morales, as the same time that defends Kyoto Protocol and the goals of the Convention, has proposed in September 2009, setting up a **Tribunal of Climate Justice** within the framework of the United Nations to have a mechanism for punishing and watchfulness about the lack of fulfillment of commitments.

One of the chief weaknesses of multilateral agreements in defense of the environment and human rights is that they don't count with enough binding mechanisms to keep them and controlling like there are in financial and commercial systems. If a country "affects" the profits of a transnational corporation, (like with Argentina during the financial crisis in 2000 that forced the government take some protectionist meassures in order to defend the national economy), it exposes to be sued bay big and powerfull corporations, after a short term to pay millions in indemnity. The ICSID (International Centre for the Settlement of Investments Disputes) of the World Bank is a clear example of this corporative practice that has multiplied in the 90s linked to the international investment protections system. But, if a transnational corporation contaminates and consumes the oxygen for its benefit, or if it has affected the health or human rights somewhere, there are no binding mechanisms to punish drastically that corporation or the country that promotes it in the same proportion of the damage caused.

The historic Debt for emissions and the enormous affectation of human rights and of the different ecosystems has motivated that social movements and activists' networks from several parts of the world should propose a **Tribunal of Climate Justice**[7] from civil society, as a response to the lack of linking mechanisms and those that control the commitments assumed, so that they may listen to the voices of civil society and build on the proposals that promote precepts of climate justice by the social movements.

But climate change cannot be limited to one discussion about fees for gas emissions, just financing or became a discussion that develops into false solutions such as that of carbon markets that do not solve the problem in depth, that they make it worse.

Being a civilization crisis intimately related to the survival of the planet, of human communities and of the different species that inhabit it, requires taking urgent measures and actions that are meant to radically change the basic causes of the crisis, beginning with recuperating and developing more sustainable and

just ways of living in order to pay the historic debt they have with the developing countries in the south and to change the very roots of the present paradigm, its matrix of production and consuming, its financial mechanisms and rules of destructive commerce.

This is a crisis that demands a change in the system to avoid continuing on the path that leads only to destruction.

For example, the financing to mitigation and adaptation cannot end up being used to buy the right of patents for technologies that serve for mitigation or adaptation, due the actual private system of patents of the IPWO and WTO. In the same way, the protection mechanisms for private inversionists that include more than 2.500 bilateral treaties in the world, and mechanisms of legal disputes like ICSID should be modified and some of them definitely cancelled, to avoid that the corporations will continue making demands for any reason from the countries and taking away their public resources that are so necessary to confront the climate changes.

Is it a topic for specialists or everyone's business?

The topic of climate change and global warming is complex and very new for everyone, for social organizations, for progressive institutions and for the population at large. Many terms tend to generate resistance and questions. In Bolivia, at the beginning people tended to reject it and used to say "What is mitigation?" "Adaptation?" "But what do we have to adapt to? How can we talk about "Adapting" to such injustice?"

Some even said that the term adaptation was mistaken, for when one confronts a danger that is threatening live with imminence that we are noticing, we should no longer speak of "adaptation" but rather about "survival" (as was suggested by Ricardo Navarro during the First Pre-hearing of the Climate Justice Tribunal in Cochabamba, October 2009).

But even though it is complex to understand, climate change is the tragic consequence of the neo-liberal system, its financial rules and its market that affect all the people, their way of life, and their access to the elementary elements of needs of housing, nourishment, housing, work, culture and all the most basic human rights to survive. That is why this topic has to do with all of us. It is not a topic for technicians, scientists or specialists only; it's a common topic that arises from daily problems for every person and every community.

Even though there might be different visions about how to deal with climate crisis, there is a coincidence that is extremely generalized that there exists a *climate debt*. The concept of *climate justice* then, is a structure built from below, from social movements, from the grassroots people, who from their experiences and struggles demand payment of the enormous debt that the developed countries have with our people and the enormous need to set up an ideal that is common for a holistic vision of nature and the human being.

An Integral focus to change the world

Finally we should also be aware that climate change is at the same time a chance to confront a global crisis constructively and to develop an integral vision to take on this crisis of civilization that engulfs the following changes: climatic, financial, nutritional, migratory, commercial, racism, capitalism, colonialism, and others. It is a crisis that demands an integral and multifaceted approach. We are facing already global and complex changes. That is why, climate change gathers together many diverse agendas: rules of commerce, financial systems, productive

matrixes, forms of dealing with nature and water, means of consumption, culture of daily life and the concept of good living.

Those of us who have worked for many years with the topics of human rights, economic justice, the right to water, commerce and culture are sure that an integral focus should take on the rules of finance and marketing as well as those of culture that lies within our daily life.

For example, if we don't analyze and change the rules and agreements of intellectual property about knowledge and technology they may be hurting many countries in development that need them to adapt to climate changes and their consequences, or simply to apply them to their needs for development. On their part, the rules for access to the free market that are included in different multilateral or bilateral agreements, often create a whole system in which the simple transportation of merchandize between developed countries and other economies contribute to greater contamination and excessive use of energy, with the additional consequent threat to health and security of the population. [8]

In the same way, the financial structures that are predominant until the present cannot be maintained; we must avoid that it be again the World Bank or the IMF through its regular financial mechanisms that will take hold of the topic of financial resources to mitigate and adapt to climate change; the facts have shown widely that these institutions' way of giving financial resources with conditionalities to the developing countries have been very questionable and has caused them to fall into debt increasing their poverty and social conflicts. And those topics belong to World Trade Organization and the Free Trade Agreements agenda, the Agreements of Association, as well as the multilateral and financial systems.

But above all we have to begin to **de-colonize** our minds and desires, to change the mentalities, to stop wasting and contaminating, to stop consuming what is not necessary.

We hope that by touching on these suicidal limits, there may be a possibility to at least reflect and act about the profound culture of the consumer societies, or about the patterns of success and power, about the subjectivities that are deeply questioned in this times and above all that they may serve to take on the challenge of beginning to act in an integral and coherent manner: articulating the discourse and the practice, the ideals, the thoughts and the actions.

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* **Elizabeth Peredo** was born in La Paz, is social psychologist, researcher and activist on gender, ethnicity, water and human rights, she belongs the Foundation Solon . This article has been translated from its original Spanish version by **Mary Peter Bruce**, from the Loretto Community, Denver, USA.

[1] **APU** in the Andean culture and the Quechua language means "lord, tutelary spirit of the mountain and protector of a region, inhabited by human beings or not"; it is said of the protector spirits who dwell in the summits with our ancestors, that is why the mountains are often considered divine, each a sacred god that inhabits the mountain as TUNUPA, for example. In the Andean Glossary *AYLLU APU* is "the tutelary spirit of a mountain that protects a small village or community." It is said that "the mountains breathe the water from the heavens and exhale it to the earth," bringing out its link with the water cycle.

** **Walter Solón Romero** (1923-1999) was a recognized bolivian painter and muralist, Great National Prize of Culture in 1967, and Doctor Honoris Causa of the Saint Andrew Major University in 1998. Solon was well known for his social and militant commitment in his arts. Among his broad, he painted more than 20 famous murals in national buildings and monuments and is know for his "Quijotes" draws series about the military dictatorships during the 70s and 80s. Solon is one of the most important representatives of the contemporary art in Bolivia and South America. <http://www.funsolon.org/solon.htm>

[2] In the Universal Declaration about Cultural Diversity adopted by UNESCO on November 2, 2001, we are told that a culture is "the entirety of distinctive spiritual and material, intellectual and affective traits that characterize a society or a social group and that take in, besides the arts and letters, the ways of living, the

ways of being together, the value systems, traditions and beliefs.

[3] Reports by WWF state that the ecological footprint left by humanity as it stepped has exceeded the biosphere's ability to recover at a rate of 30% annually. This report states that the first time the footprint of humanity exceeded the capacity of biosphere of the planet was in 1980. The report contains details by countries and regions where the difference between developed and under-developed countries is evident.
<http://www.wwf.org/climate>

[5] The respect of Mother Earth according the Bolivian Government should consider the right to life, the right to the possibility of regenerating its "biocapacity", the right to a clean environment without contamination, the right to harmony and equilibrium among human beings and nature

[6] President Morales' letter on climate change: "Let us save the Planet from Capitalism", from November 2008, develops a series of arguments and proposals that are the base of the Bolivian position in the negotiations. See
<http://www.rebellion.org/noticia.php?id=76883>

[7] This Tribunal in construction tries to make visible the causes of climate change and to judge the principal estates and corporations responsible for global warming due to the effect on human rights, the rights of peoples and the damage of ecosystems and nature. See the conclusions of the Tribunal of Climate Justice set forth in Cochabamba in October 2009es&q=conclusiones+tribunal+justicia+climatica+cochabamba&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8

[8] For example, as the ngo FWW and the north american press reports that, a couple of years ago, the United States approved a trade directive through USDA that allows China to "export" chickens that were grown and killed in USA, transferred to China to be processed and then returned to enter the US market; --a directive that according to W.Post, went through various revision levels quickly ad was approved in April 2007 a short time before the China's President Hu Jintao was to visit Washington; see:
<http://mqh.blogia.com/2007/062205-importaciones-chinas-contaminadas.php>

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