

DECLARATION OF COCHABAMBA

XXXV ANNUAL MEETING INTERCIENCIA ASSOCIATION - BOLIVIAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE (ABAC)

The supreme duty of the men and women who dedicate their life to study and to science is that of sharing their knowledge, discoveries and inquiries with the whole of mankind, because human beings share the desire of a good life, rather than just that of a mere survival as a species on earth.

In fulfillment of such supreme duty, the delegations of member countries of the Interciencia Association present in Cochabamba, and the Vice-Ministry of Science and Technology of Bolivia, have ascertained that the perceptions of indigenous nations have been ratified through the analysis of the measurements of our planet's temperature, the melting of its glaciers, the increase in atmospheric, water and soil pollution, the alarming reduction of the forest-covered surface and the consequent desertification process. They also ascertained that, in this manner, the most somber predictions are on the way to becoming a reality. We concur with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that the figures confirm this change, and furthermore, that the existence of other substantial damages caused by human actions should be mentioned.

It has been confirmed that the agreement reached by the rich countries and embodied in the Kyoto Protocol, of reducing the greenhouse effect producing gas emissions, has not complied with the agreed objectives. The effects of such lack of fulfillment are felt all along our Continent. As examples of this impact we can mention the expansion of malaria in the Andean highlands, the shortage and cost increase of water resources and the increase in poverty.

Therefore, the scientists participating in the XXXV Annual Meeting of the Interciencia Association wish to exhort our governments to take very seriously into account the deteriorated health of the planet and not to be only concerned rhetorically in good will declarations, but to deal effectively in the implementation of the following deep changes proposed:

1. To recognize that the current model of development cannot be maintained for the planet to subsist. It is essential to (re)build a new economic vision framed within social equity and spiritual integration.
2. To reconstitute the spiritual and ethical dimension so as to reformulate our relation with nature. Science requires to consider them as an essential part of development. We, the scientists, recognize that beyond the quantitative aspects lays the spirit of the human being and, with it, life. Therefore, it is necessary to redefine the concept of development, to be sustained on spiritual values, excluding the conviction that the only source of happiness is the possession of material goods.
3. To change the ways of life of societies, particularly those that waste the most, such is their responsibility to mankind. It is undeniable that squandering by some societies is leading to a high price to be paid by the whole of humanity and by life on the planet.
4. To require from all world leaders to promote the philosophy of well-being, researching, foreseeing and preventing misuse, through the practice of Reduction, Recycling, Reutilization, Restoration, etc.
5. To require governments to lead a change of policies in the areas of education, of planning and conservation of the natural patrimony, with a holistic approach.
6. To incorporate Civil Society to contribute in every country, together with the Government, the Academy and the Industry, to the global effort to save the planet. Education and research, its massive dissemination and application, should motivate the consciousness about the critical state of the Earth and should be the social instrument to foster the change of attitude that life preservation needs. We ought to remember that, as always, hope resides in the participation of youth for an active consciousness-raising about the future of the world.
7. To reduce drastically the exploitation of natural forests and to stimulate the use of wood from reforested or artificial forests. To

promote agro-ecology, agro-forestry and sustainable practices. To support the incorporation of new materials, or of some traditional but unused ones, so as to replace those whose exploitation damages nature.

8. To reevaluate the wisdom of the native indigenous and peasant peoples, and begin a dialogue process in search of complementarities between modern scientific knowledge and ancestral erudition, in conditions of equity.
9. To reaffirm the need for a change in mentality:
 - That promotes the reduction of unnecessary consumption, the immediate use of clean or renewable energies and the prompt substitution of fossil energy avoiding the forms of energy procurement that attempt against life.
 - That recognizes that the scarcity of water will be catastrophic and that, being a universal right, it will not respect frontiers. Thus, the access of all the people to water must be considered as a fundamental right, respected by any international treaty.
 - That promotes a sustainable use of natural resources and its equitable access and distribution to all the population.
 - That insures nutrition, health and food sovereignty.
 - That recognizes that the scientific community has established that the extinction of numerous species of plants and animals is unavoidable due to environmental contamination, and assumes a decisive compromise to avoid it.
10. To remind once and again that, as the responsibility for global warming and contamination of the environment is not uniform, the suffering inflicted by their consequences is not and will not be uniform, as it will punish in a larger measure the marginal communities, the impoverished peoples, and the nations that do not count with the necessary resources to defend themselves. Therefore, the responsibility should not be evaluated only in millions of dollars but also in terms of the true will to change attitudes and life style. The resources needed for this remediation shall come mainly from the countries that have a larger responsibility in the climate change and environmental deterioration. If the highly contaminant countries assume a truly responsible attitude, we, on our side, are ready to contribute to the mitigation and combat of the harmful effects of climate change, and to assist in solving the environmental and cultural deterioration of the planet, enforcing the compliance with international agreements, under a commitment for a just compensation and an equilibrated and fraternal exchange of knowledge and technology.
11. To reaffirm that all these aspirations and actions will not be possible without a coactive international cooperation, in particular a regional, energetic and effective one, to develop local, appropriate and participative research. We should never forget that we, men and women of science, with the acquired instrument of the wisdom of knowledge, have the obligation to be the voice of minor species, as we are responsible for perpetuating the future through communication and education, being, to this end, severe and persistent if needed.
12. Considering the annual meetings of the Interciencia Association, an occasion when important personalities of the scientific community of the American Continent and other continents participate, allowing highly valuable contributions to the solution of problems of the member countries; it is recommended that the governments of the member countries facilitate and financially support their representatives or delegations from the Associations for the Advancement of Science, assuring in this manner the participation of their scientists in the analysis, reflection and proposal of solutions to the problems of common interest to the countries.

Leaders and members of governments, this time the announcement of a serious and quasi-imminent social pain is not the result of a doctrinal political stance, but the summons of a fact based on science.

Cochabamba, Bolivia, November 6th, 2009