

PLADA DEVELOPMENT
PLATFORM
OF THE AMERICAS



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY





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With this platform, the trade union movement of the Americas is launching a new cycle of social and political initiatives, the goal of which is to advance towards social wellbeing with environmental sustainability and the expansion of participatory democracy, and respond to the unprecedented challenges of the singular times our region is experiencing.

Twenty years ago, workers were facing the highest peak of the neoliberal offensive internationally expressed in the creation of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and, in our hemisphere, the implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the onset of negotiations for the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA). These were times of trade union resistance against the high longstanding rates of unemployment, policies to suppress labor rights, wage reductions, etc. -measures triggered by the indiscriminate trade openings.

Ten years ago the situation changed radically in our region thanks to trade union and popular resistance, and electoral victories in several countries of political expressions pledged to the pursuit of alternatives. So the FTAA was defeated. The rise in the prices of export products of the region redounded in social policies that lifted large numbers out of extreme poverty. Formal employment returned and unemployment rates fell, wage levels improved. Latin American regional integration set new goals: expand Mercosur, build UNASUR, innovate with the ALBA, create CELAC, advance in South-South cooperation and establish new parameters for North-South relations.

The working class of our region is better off today than twenty years ago and that is due to over 15 years of ongoing progressive political cycle. However, from the perspective of the trade union movement and popular social movements we believe that the advances have not been enough and they have not been consolidated, hence we are threatened by reversals, especially since the eruption of the global capitalism crisis in 2008.

We believe that the mechanisms of democracy with social participation have not been sufficiently strengthened. We question the fact

that part of the social benefits achieved has been based on an environmentally predatory production model. We observe that advances in regional integration have not been sufficient to protect our countries from the blackmail of the international financial markets.

The platform we present here embraces our decades-long resistance against neoliberalism and reclaims the arduous process of building progressive political and social alternatives to identify and systematize the challenges we must face so as not to lose such gains and generate a region where development is sustainable, socially inclusive, politically democratic and based on the inalienable right of peoples to decide their own future.

The PLADA is the continuation of the work initiated in 2005 with the launching of the Labor Platform of the Americas and the founding of the Trade Union Confederation of the Americas (TUCA) in 2008 as broad-based unitary space for hemispheric trade unionism. However, the PLADA is more than a mere continuation: it is the result of the dialogue of the trade union movement at the continental level led by the TUCA and based on a broad agenda and construction process in conjunction with environmental, rural and women's organizations of Latin America. The TUCA intends to extend this dialogue to new areas, as part of the agenda of the collective construction of Another Possible America.

POLITICAL DIMENSION

The new political cycle that we stand for must be marked by the broadening and deepening of political democracy. The long period of neoliberal domination was characterized by the imposition of corporate-business decision-making power on the institutions of representative democracy. Overcoming this entails the return of popular sovereignty.

For this we need to establish a new relationship between society, the State and the market. The State must be tool for the active participation of workers in public arenas to regulate the market to meet current social needs and look out for future generations.

We do not call for a paternalistic and authoritarian State, but for a new democratic State that has been deeply reformulated through instruments of popular consultation and direct participation.

Firstly this requires, reforming the political and judicial systems to prevent the interference of corporations in decisions; and secondly, the democratization of the mass media to prevent economic monopolies transforming them into political instruments to advocate for and promote their private interests.

This new political cycle must be based on social and trade union participation in decision-making in each country, as well as in regional integration processes. We emphasize that the greatest challenge is the self-reform of unionism in order to streamline the functioning of trade unions themselves through unity, internal democracy, and by expanding and strengthening representativeness based on freedom of association.

Advancing in democracy involves respect and recognition of our plurinationality and cultural diversity within nation-States.

ECONOMIC DIMENSION

We stand for the strengthening of genuine regional and sub-regional integration processes as tool for the development of our peoples. This requires overcoming the legacy of the neoliberal period of free trade agreements that deepen international asymmetries and deteriorate the social and environmental fabric of each country.

The cycle of sustainable development which we advocate is driven by the fair distribution of income and wealth, permanently burying the neoliberal view that concentration of wealth with economic growth eventually “spillover” and reach the vulnerable population.

A new regional financial architecture at the service of development with social equality is necessary, as is infrastructure based on sustainability and the promotion of complementarity between our economies and fostering regional integration. Foreign investment should be steered by national and regional development plans. A new progressive taxation system should allow States to boost this new cycle of sustainable development.

Special attention must be given to the conquest of food sovereignty and food security threatened by the booming production of agricultural commodities for export under the control of multinational companies. A comprehensive agrarian reform and the gradual elimination of the monopoly of transnational corporations over agriculture are part of the new development model.

Lastly, the common denominator of this new economy must be the building of new capabilities for research and transfer of technology focused on the needs of our nations.

SOCIAL DIMENSION

Regional unionism stands for the right to decent work based on equality between genders, ethnic groups and generations, without discrimination due to disability, sexual orientation or gender identity. However, there will be no decent work without respect for freedom of association and collective bargaining.

The starting point of this new stage should be the repositioning of a universal and solidarity social security system to remove the threat of poverty from the lives of workers, and ensure that production is carried out in safe and healthy workplaces.

This requires protecting the commons from the voracity for profit of private companies. Health, education, housing and urban transport are fundamental rights that are not for sale, therefore the social dimension of the new model must leave behind the legacy of patriarchal oppression systems, and promote the equalization of responsibilities of care and domestic work between genders.

We seek to implement policies to prevent and eradicate all forms of violence and conquer regional citizenship and rights for migrants.

ENVIRONMENTAL DIMENSION

The environmental crisis, and effectively and urgently addressing it, is a top priority of the international political agenda. All nations are

entitled to sustainable development which today requires addressing the asymmetries between North and South, and the asymmetries between social classes within each country. This involves curbing predatory consumption in the North and in the wealthy classes, and lifting the majorities to new levels of consumption and satisfaction of their needs based on a new paradigm.

We argue that the commons of humanity -biodiversity, water, seeds, forests, energy and knowledge- should not be subjected to private profit, but instead should be used responsibly for the common good.

We advocate the strengthening of social and economic relations promoting socio-environmental balance with social involvement and participation, and the development of technologies preventing climate change and desertification.

PLATFORM OF A NEW MODEL

Neoliberalism, large multinational corporations and international financial capital put the world on the brink of economic and environmental catastrophe, and workers on the brink of social hardship. Our peoples have responded with enduring resistance and then, even in that highly adverse economic context, have been electing post-neoliberal proposals.

The PLADA starts here, where the struggle of the working class becomes a tool of continental unionism to advance towards the definitive conquest of a new model of sustainable development. The key to victory lies in broadening and strengthening democracy, overcoming the blackmail of corporations and markets.

Let the peoples decide their future!

Production

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