

Report on the Climate Change Conference (COP 20), Lima, Peru

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La Convention des Nations Unies sur les changements climatiques tenue entre le 30 novembre et le 12 décembre 2014 à Lima au Pérou, a attiré des milliers de délégués autant que les indignés. Cet article est un rapport sur la conférence du COP20 ainsi que sur les deux forums parallèles, à savoir le Deuxième tribunal sur les droits internationaux de la nature et le Sommet des peuples. Pendant plusieurs jours, témoins après témoins ont donné des témoignages personnels accusant le pétrole, le minerais, l'hydroélectricité et la destruction des crédits au carbone, le tout appuyé par l'évidence des experts scientifiques.

We begin this report with a historical account of the host country, Peru, where the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) conference took place, in Lima, from 30 November to 12 December 2014, and which attracted thousands of delegates, as well as protesters.

The Host-Organizing Country: Peru

For journalists attending the UNFCCC conference and interested in Peru's ancient history, a visit to Caral's Ar-

cheological Zone was organized. Peru is home to the oldest civilization in the Americas, as old as the Egyptian civilization, developed some 5000 years ago. Caral is located in the Supe Valley, about 200 kilometers north of Lima, in a space extending 400 by 300 km. It was a highly organized "City of Peace" because no weapon fragments, no remnants of fortifications, and no evidence of conflicts were ever found in archeological digs. The Sacred City of Caral is made up of 32 monumental architectural structures, including seven buildings, three sunken circular plazas, a large central plaza, and two small plazas (Shady Solís). Today, Caral is slowly becoming a popular tourist destination.

Peru has been a cradle of the agricultural revolution. It has been a genetic reservoir for potato germplasms, which the International Agriculture Resource Centre of the World Bank has used to breed resistant crops for commercial use. For instance, the Lima based International Potato Center, used for agricultural experimentation, also serves as a germplasm bank for numerous varieties of domesticated and wild potatoes from the Andes.

Quinoa, is another crop characterized as "The Gold of the Incas" for its high quality proteins, it is native to the Andean Regions of Peru and Bolivia, where it grows between 2000 and 4000 meters above sea level. Quinoa comes in various colours—white, red, black, pink, orange, yellow—with a range of different flavours from bitter to sweet. Several other native agricultural varieties, such as corn, beans, chili peppers, and tubers, were also displayed at the People's Summit.

The UNFCCC Conference

The location of the UNFCCC conference, COP 20, is important to acknowledge, because it was packed with business consultants, corporate CEOs, and NGOs endorsing the go-ahead of carbon markets and carbon pricing such as Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD) in developing countries (REDD+). It was located beside *El Cuartel General del Ejército del Perú*, aka *El Pentagonito*, which owes its name to its namesake, the Pentagon in Washington. This is the Lima that Ricardo Uceda, a Peruvian journalist, described in his book, *Muerte en el*

Pentagonito: Los Cementerios Secretos del Ejército Peruano (Death in the little Pentagon: The Secret Cemeteries of the Peruvian Army). In his book, Uceda documented the assassinations and incinerations that took place during the administrations of Alan Garcia (1985-1990) and Alberto Fujimori (1990-2001), many of which took place inside the Pentagonito, the Peruvian military headquarters. Since 1985, under the pretext of national security, the Peruvian army and police force have killed thousands of peasants, Indigenous people, students, and professors accused of being Shining Path or *Movimiento Revolucionario Tupac Amaru* (MRTA) collaborators. According to Uceda, “Basically, the modus operandi was the same: the arrest of people close to their home by agents of the army’s intelligence service, detention in the Army Headquarters’ basement (Pentagonito) and subsequent execution and incineration in the furnace that existed for that purpose in that military unit” (cited in Godoy). It was no accident that the conference took place close to the Pentagonito as this location represents a place of security for the bourgeoisie.

The conference was a total victory for a market-based approach to climate change. However, it was also a clear demonstration of a radical climate movement in which the presence of peasants and Indigenous people was central.

The Rights of Nature Tribunal

The Second International Rights of Nature Tribunal, parallel to the UNFCCC COP 20, convened in Lima, Peru, on December 5-6, 2014. The Tribunal is a permanent International People’s Tribunal for the Rights of Nature. The Judiciary Committee heard evidence from experts and witnesses who are impacted by gross violations to the rights of Mother



Quinoa, corn, and beans exhibited at the Peoples’ Forum, COP 21, Dec. 2014. Photo: Xochitl Rubio.



Climate Justice organizations at the World March in Defense of Mother Earth, COP 21, Dec. 2014. Photo: Xochitl Rubio.



El Pentagonito (The Little Pentagon), COP 21, Dec. 2014. Photo: Xochitl Rubio.



Canadians marching against the Alberta Tar Sands at the World March in Defense of Mother Earth, December 10, 2014. Photo: Xochitl Rubio.



Anti-oil activists at the World March in Defense of Mother Earth, December 10, 2014. Photo: Xochitl Rubio.



Anti-mining activists at the World March in Defense of Mother Earth, December 10, 2014. Photo: Xochitl Rubio.

Earth, nature, human rights, and rights of Indigenous communities. During two days, witness after witness gave intimate testimony on the impacts of oil, mining, hydroelectric, carbon credits destruction, reinforced by the scientific evidence of experts, on nature and the communities that depend on nature's biodiversity to survive. The Conga-Cajamarca initiative, a Peruvian anti-mining movement defending land, water, and freedom, was one of the projects presented to participants. This initiative has successfully put on hold the biggest mining project in Cajamarca for the last four years.

Several earlier cases of REDD+ from Costa Rica, Kenya, and Brazil were also presented. REDD in developing countries (REDD+), as carbon credit, was introduced at Bali UNFCCC in 2007 and has been implemented since 2009. It opened an international carbon market to be injected into forestry conservation. It is highly problematic for the so-called developing countries, in particular for Indigenous peoples everywhere. When Indigenous lands become part of REDD projects, their populations are typically prohibited from hunting, fishing, and/or using biodiversity, all of which are the sources of their livelihoods. This exclusion exacerbates inequality, while producing huge profits for corporations and NGOs.

A case that particularly impacted the audience was the presentation of the ETC group on geo-engineering, which is known as "Plan B" to address climate change if governments fail to legislate and enforce measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It is a set of proposed techniques to intervene in and alter earth's ecosystems on a large scale. These interventions constitute manipulations of climate systems; among them are Solar Radiation Management (blocking sunlight) and Carbon Dioxide Removal. Geo-engineering covers other

earth system interventions such as in the oceans and the atmosphere, disrupting rain and wind patterns (ETC Group).

“The Tribunal collected the proposals of plaintiffs acting on behalf of Mother Earth who proposed a boycott of companies that cause the destruction of Earth systems. The Tribunal asserts that companies

capitalist system; to respect various forms of life; and to stop the exploitation and plunder of nature. They seek the recognition of the people to decide on a model of life in harmony with Mother Earth, such as the Indigenous *El Buen Vivir* (Balch), this is achieving another relationship with our fellow human-animals and non-human Animals.

lar, transnational corporations must take responsibility for their practices globally. It also believes that a just world and a moral economy that is communal, cooperative, and feminist must recognize the human rights to food and the great contribution of family farming, which contributes more than 70 per cent of the globe’s food (Declaración de Lima).

The Peoples’ Summit organizers demanded world governments respect their territories, rights and livelihoods, cultures, customs, and worldviews about life and the world they inhabit. They condemned the exploitation of their natural resources by extractive industries that affect their livelihoods and their harmonious relationship with Mother Earth.

who are responsible for destroying earth ecosystems be banned from the United Nations negotiation process” (Global Alliance). Among some of the other cases presented were the Chevron-Texaco pollution case (Ecuador); BP Deep Horizon oil spill (USA); Yasuni-ITT oil project (Ecuador); the endangerment of the Great Barrier Reef due to coal mining (Australia); hydraulic fracturing (USA), and the impacts of Climate Change (global).

The Peoples’ Summit and the March

The Peoples’ Summit on Climate Change also paralleled the official UNFCCC. It was held, from December 8-11, 2014, as an expression of the processes of mobilization and resistance undertaken by a variety of organizations, movements, platforms, networks, and social groups, unions, women, peasants, Indigenous peoples, youth, environmentalists, religious, and others. They met for four days to further discuss and share multiple forms of struggle and resistance. Their aim was to promote social justice; to work against the patriarchal, racist, and homophobic

The Peoples’ Summit organizers wrote a declaration where they demanded from world governments to respect their territories, rights and livelihoods, cultures, customs, and worldviews about life and the world they inhabit. They condemned the exploitation of their natural resources and territories by extractive industries that affect their livelihoods, their source of identity and their harmonious relationship with Mother Earth. They commanded the recognition of land ownership of the Indigenous communities that have traditionally lived on their land. They do not accept colonial control of their territories or the negotiation processes and implementation of false solutions to climate change. Further, they claimed that governments must have at its core the respect of their ancestral ways of life and the recognition of their self-determination as nations and peoples (Declaración de Lima).

The Peoples’ Summit insisted that the industrial North must consider the historical responsibilities of its development and recognize and repair the historical and ecological debt to the global South. In particu-

On December 10, 2014, a World March in Defense of Mother Earth took place in Lima. Thousands of people from different countries marched in Lima’s streets against the lack of agreements on climate change. The slogan “Change the System not the Climate” was central among the banners. Numerous groups marched, among them were Women in Defense of Our Bodies and Territories, and Against the Commodification of Life. Women understand their body as a disputed territory, similar to the earth, nature and the commons. They revealed that extractivism in their territories increased violence against women, prostitution, domestic work and daily life to reproduce. Their slogan was “Change Women’s life to Change the World.” They proposed the recognition of the interdependence between production and reproduction in order to construct alternative relations based on equality.

An important statement in the March was made with the depiction of Indigenous face crossed out by the word “REDD.” This image speaks to how UNFCCC is attacking Indigenous peoples’ territories as a convenient



From left to right: Groups denouncing the selling out of Mother Nature at the World March in Defense of Mother Earth, December 10, 2014; Indigenous face crossed out by the word REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) at the World March in Defense of Mother Earth, December 10, 2014. Photo: Xochitl Rubio.



Participants of the Rights of Nature Tribunal. Photo: Xochitl Rubio.



Peruvian police following the participants of the World March in Defense of Mother Earth, December 10, 2014. Photo: Xochitl Rubio.



Protesters disapproving the privatization of the forest. The banner states "We all live from the forest." Photo: Xochitl Rubio.



Protestors denouncing the selling of Amazonia forest. Photo: Xochitl Rubio.

means to confront the increase of CO₂ while increasing economic growth and profits through REDD+.

Conclusion

The UNFCCC conference, COP 20, has clarified that the actions to cut and curb emissions that poison the atmosphere favour the financial market. Meaning, that the delegates have removed from their vision the planetary crises by making the ecological problem a question of management and markets. Meanwhile, the second International Rights of Nature and the Peoples' Summit proposed to transcend capitalism in order to cut off ecological and social cataclysm.

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