

*Beyond Protest*

119. *La Nación*, Panama, 27 November 1992, pp. 1, 2A.

120. 'El comercio del plátano envenena las relaciones entre la CE y Latinoamérica', *El País*, 10 February 1993, p. 34.

121. Council Regulation (CEE) 404/93 of 13 February 1993, establishing the common organisation of markets in the banana sector (OJ L47 of 25/2/1993, p. 1).

122. Valdivieso (1992).

123. Ordonnance de la Cour, 29 juin 1993, *Bananes; Organisation commune des marchés; Échanges avec les pays tiers; Recours en annulation; Mesures provisoires*.

124. These companies included Dole, Chiquita, Bananic, Comaco, Simba, Spers NV, August Lehmann, Comafrio and Bruignom & Visser. See Ordonnance de la Cour, 6 juillet 1993.

125. Valdivieso (1992); Santos (1992) pp. 71ff.

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**SAN JOSE X: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL OF US**

*Concertación, Asocode and CIFCA (\*)*

**To the Foreign Ministers of the Governments of Central America and the European Union (EU):**

Enclosed you will find a proposal for the San José X meeting to be held in Greece in March 1994. This proposal reflects the accumulated experiences of Central American and European NGOs. We welcome the Xth Anniversary of the San José forum, the importance of which extends beyond maintaining Central America on the agenda of the European countries. Likewise, the decision of the governments to maintain this forum at a ministerial level, giving emphasis to the importance of the new treaty of cooperation that came into effect in January 1994, deserves mention.

*Esteemed Ministers:*

This document sets out the position taken by sectors of Central American civil society, and of CIFCA, the network of European NGOs, with regard to development priorities in Central America. We propose to initiate a more continuous dialogue within the framework of the San José process in order that our concerns, criteria, and proposals may be recognised and taken up. With regard to the San José X meeting, we address the following themes:

- Trade and small-scale production
- Environment and development
- Structural adjustment and poverty
- Democratisation and Human Rights
- Towards a Consultative Forum

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(\*) Joint proposal from *Concertación* (a network of Central American NGOs), *Asocode* and *CIFCA* (an umbrella of European NGOs) to the Foreign Ministers of Central America and the European Union (EU) at the 10th San José Conference in Greece (March 1994).

## 1. Trade and small-scale production

The liberalisation of trade affects small-scale peasant producers in Central America; these sectors, which have much weight in regional terms, need support to improve the competitiveness and trade potential of their products. We also call for peasant participation in the institutions that regulate and define regional production and commercial policies. It is extremely important to reinforce the institutional capacities of this sector.

### *A Fair Trade stamp*

We ought to adopt and extend the concept of a fair trade stamp, for the produce of Central American peasants destined for the European Union market. We propose the establishment of a Technical Commission integrated by the EU, groups promoting alternative trade in Europe, the Central American peasant movement and NGOs. This Commission would agree on the criteria for the application of the stamp. In this connection, we should not forget experiences in the coffee and banana sectors.

### *A new concept regarding bananas*

The EU should reconsider its system of banana quotas, and replace current quantitative restrictions by a system of promotion based on criteria which take the mode of production into account, giving preference to production which is socially and ecologically sustainable. Through the system of import management, incentives should be given to peasant and cooperative production, while conditions should be imposed on multinational banana companies and large-scale producers. We insist that bananas should only be imported from plantations which:

- do not employ a labour force devoid of legal protection due to its migratory status in order to reduce the costs of production and debilitate trade union organisations;
- do not promote the sterilisation of women workers and environmental destruction, arising from the expansion of banana cultivation and the use of toxic fertilisers;
- respect human rights principles, pay attention to allegations of trade union persecution, violations of legal standards, of labour laws and of International Labour Organisation (ILO) Conventions.

The EU should promote the constitution of a Social-Labour Committee with participants from both regions, including trade unions,

peasant organisations, and other guilds in this sector. This committee would elaborate a list of criteria for the conditions of the production and processing of bananas. In coordination with the ILO, the Committee should define solutions that comply with the elaborated criteria.

As such, San José X should support the demand for the devolution of capital accumulated as banana royalties in the EU, through the diversification of small-scale production and an increase in social investment.

### *Peasant participation in the Central American agricultural market*

With regard to current cooperation we request a guarantee that:

- in the new regional funds and the funds already established by the EU, emphasis be given to the support for the commercial capacity of the most poverty-stricken layers of Central American societies; and that support be included for the exports of small-scale and medium producers, as well as for the micro-enterprises, small-scale and medium-sized industries;
- resources be assigned to the regional fund for Modernisation and Agricultural Reconversion with emphasis on small-scale producers;
- EU experiences in support of exports towards Central America be thoroughly evaluated, since the FEPEX programme has had little success;
- based on this evaluation and taking into account the objective of supporting small-scale production, the content of the present FOEXCA be adjusted;
- programmes of education, as well as administrative and technical training, required for enterprise management and commercial, be strengthened.

In addition, it is necessary to define systems of diversified production planning to minimise the impact of price fluctuations in the international market due to surplus production.

### *Measures to be adopted by the governments*

- Strengthen Central American initiatives that may improve information services for agricultural and agro-industrial marketing.
- Reinforce the public infrastructure in order to improve the import and export of factors of production and agricultural products.
- In Central America, establish compensatory mechanisms aimed at the small-scale and medium farmers in times of price depres-

sion, in harmony with the taxes imposed on exports in times of high prices.

- Establish (on the part of the EU and the Central American government) credit facilities for initiatives carried out by Central American peasant organisations. Pay special attention to technical assistance, research and training, which the sector needs to develop for its commercial projects.

## 2. Environment and development

Official policies should give priority to the elaboration and implementation of strategies for a sustained development, the elaboration of environmental inventories for the territory, and plans for environmental action, based on the effective participation of the various social, institutional, and civilian sectors of Central America. Institutional support for sustained development initiatives in the region should be increased.

Central America has a pressing need for legal measures to protect the environment; we support initiatives which prohibit the traffic of toxic and dangerous waste materials in the region, as well as efforts for the replenishment and sustainable exploitation of natural resources (water, forests, soil, marine resources, etc.).

Programmes for the protection of shared areas and resources, such as the International System of Protected Areas for Peace (SIAPAZ) between Costa Rica and Nicaragua, also merit support.

### *Creation of a regional programme for alternative agriculture*

This programme should take into account the creation and transfer of appropriate technologies, experiences and knowledge based on scientific research and on the practices of peasants, in:

- the management of forests and agro-forestry systems;
- sustainable agriculture on mountain slopes;
- biological and integrated control of plagues;
- soil conservation;
- appropriate technologies (such as "*Campesino a Campesino*");
- clean agriculture, without pesticides or fertilisers harmful to the environment and to human health;
- commercialisation of organic agricultural products.

There are risks involved in the current promotion of non-traditional products, which until now have been associated with the intensive

use of fertilisers. We should modify the promotion of non-traditional products supported by Europe.

### *Support the promulgation of environmental legislation*

New legislation should take into account aspects such as biotechnology, toxic waste materials, and biodiversity, among others. It should take up the contributions and interests of the citizens of Central American countries. European programmes should support the development of administrative mechanisms for the application of environmental laws.

## 3. Structural adjustment and poverty

San José IX confirmed the European commitment to Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs), although it accepted compensation for the most vulnerable groups.

As peasant organisations and NGOs we understand the need for a certain balance in the economy; but unfortunately Central American and European governments have not supported more far-reaching reforms to resolve the problems of poverty and social conflict. Neither economic adjustments nor cooperation will show any success without agrarian reforms, as well as a reduction of the influence and expenditures of the military.

Poverty and unemployment are factors which greatly concern us. These factors have increased levels of delinquency to heights never seen before. We recommend that governments and international organisations search for less traumatic means of effecting adjustment, which take into account the social dimension as an aspect of adjustment planning. We recognise the need for adjustment, but in its current version it provokes more poverty and instability, especially in countries such as Honduras and Nicaragua with the weakest production infrastructures.

Cooperation efforts such as programmes for Integrated Rural Development (IRD), are adversely affected by adjustment, and do not fully take into account the interests of the local people. We recommend that these programmes be critically evaluated and that alternatives be elaborated. We suggest to the governments that:

- Structural adjustments have not given sufficient impetus to the development of production and the generation of jobs, as evidenced by reliable reports and research. European governments are partly responsible for current international financial policies.

As such, they should exert pressure on the IMF and the World Bank to promote alternative financial policies. Currently, international policies give preference to trade and investment, without adequately promoting production and the generation of jobs; as a result, these policies have brought about a more unequal distribution of incomes. Governments should also consider extending credits for investments which are productive and environmentally benign.

- Poorer sectors such as small landholders, peasants and rural workers require broader access to productive resources, especially credits, technology, education, and land. The EU should support the development of fiduciary funds and adequate credit systems aimed at these groups.
- Social projects should be an integral part of development policies; they should strengthen areas such as education and health to make possible a more equitable social integration of poorer sectors; they should also carry out effective productive investment in human resources. Current support for the so-called Social Emergency Investment Funds is inadequate in this respect.
- Programmes that support the integration of women, young people, and children into society are required. In Central America the inequitable distribution of wealth persists, and continues to fuel political and social conflicts.
- Promote the development and consolidation of taxation systems which favour more just and equal forms of access to welfare. In this respect the cooperation between the EU and Central America should consider the transfer of experiences regarding taxation systems, which in Europe function as key adjuncts to social policy.

#### 4. Democratisation and human rights

We insist on activating the Democratic Clause, contained in the Convention of Cooperation, as an instrument for maintaining European attention on the still precarious situation of human rights and democratisation in Central America.

Since San José IX, regrettably, governmental violations of civil and political, economic, and social rights have continued. In this

context there are four subjects that require the Ministers' immediate attention:

#### *Truth Commission*

The report by this UN Commission recommends actions favouring justice and the consolidation of democracy in El Salvador. But as highlighted in the 14 October 1993 report by the UN Secretary General, the government of El Salvador has shown insufficient willingness to: promote the necessary judicial reforms; investigate and dismantle death squads; dismantle the National Police and develop an effective National Civil Police which is truly independent of the Armed Forces; and remove those civilian and military officials which have been identified by the Truth Commission as responsible for the gravest human rights violations.

Inadequate compliance with these and other recommendations must be denounced; in the event of continued non-compliance with these recommendations, pressures on the government of El Salvador should be considered. In this respect, the collaboration of those European countries which (in the context of San José IX and in the unilateral declaration) supported the fulfilment of the recommendations made by the Truth Commission, should be noted.

#### *Guatemala*

Although we shared widespread expectations when Mr. de León Carpio became the President of Guatemala, we are very concerned by the continuation of grave human rights violations in Guatemala.

Based on the Democratic Clause, the European Union should press for the subordination of the military to civilian authorities, the complete dissolution of the Civil Defence Patrols (PACs), an end to forced military conscription, the recognition of the Communities of Populations in Resistance (CPRs) as civilian populations, compliance with the 8 October 1992 accords regarding the return of refugees, as well as the continuation of peace negotiations on the basis of the 10 January 1994 accords and previous agreements. The European Union should also support the continued close monitoring of human rights in Guatemala by the Special Independent Expert of the UN Commission on Human Rights.

#### *Human rights Ombudsmen*

The establishment of these offices in various Central American countries is an important advance in the permanent monitoring of human rights, but they have little impact if their recommendations are not implemented. The EU must therefore demand rigorous follow

up to the recommendations made by the Ombudsmen's offices in Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador, as well as contributing to the strengthening and supervision of their work.

Within this framework, it is especially important to follow up on the Preliminary Report, by the Commissioner for the Protection of Human Rights in Honduras, on forced disappearances. That report, tabled on 29 December 1993, must be the first step towards justice and the prevention of such grave human rights abuses in Honduras.

#### *Indigenous peoples' rights*

We support the recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples to self-determination, to their lands and to their natural resources; full respect for, and constitutional recognition of, indigenous religions, as well as of the right of indigenous peoples to protect their sanctuaries.

With regards to Guatemala, we request the official recognition and implementation of bilingual education, as well as the use of indigenous languages by local and regional governments; we also urge full respect for Maya organisational structures and support full participation of indigenous representatives in the peace dialogue.

#### 5. Consultative forum with civil society

*Concertación*, Asocode, and CIFCA maintain close coordination in order to follow through on the San José Process.

Based on our experience, we think that the San José Process would benefit from the establishment of a consultative mechanism with the participation of, among others, our networks. Such a representative mechanism would make it possible for:

- the EU and the Central American governments to have a mechanism for consulting civil society with the purpose of making their own actions more effective;
- there to be an organised channel for the exchange of information.

In concrete terms we propose that the EU initiate a consultation on the strategies of cooperation which are being elaborated for Central America. Such a consultation would be timely in view of the tendency for the EU to increasingly channel financing through the organisations of Central American civil society.

## "WE DON'T NEED ALL THOSE NGOs"

*Interview with Wilson Campos (\*)*

Wilson Campos represents a new generation of Central American peasant leaders; he is a pragmatic, undogmatic man, and averse to political paternalism. His organisation Asocode with its 1,5 million members is a factor not to be ignored in the current power relations in the region. Campos has little sympathy for organisations that claim to serve their interests. *"We farmers can speak up for ourselves. Already too many people have been taking advantage of us, without us getting any the wiser for it."*

A delegation of peasant leaders from Central America is visiting Wageningen and many other places in Western Europe. For the sake of international solidarity; in search for contacts with Dutch and other European farmers. *"To learn from each other, to find universal solutions for the worldwide exploitation of farmers."*

It sounds a bit obsolete. Solidarity with the popular movements of Latin America, isn't that a thing of the past? After all, once the revolutionary zeal of the Left in Europe began to fade, it soon also lost interest in that distant continent, and by now Europe's Left finds itself in an unprecedented crisis, at political party level as well as within the solidarity movement.

And what about mutual solidarity among farmers? Doesn't that conflict with the reality of today, with farmers becoming each others rivals throughout the world? European beef (supported by huge EC subsidies) offers cut-throat competition to Sahel cattle-farmers. Banana-growers in southern Europe strengthen their market position at the expense of farmers in Ecuador and Central America, due to protective measures.

So, what exactly are they looking for, this large delegation of Central American peasant leaders who have been touring the EC-countries for the past few weeks? And what made them join *The*

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(\*) Interview by Hans van der Veen with Wilson Campos, General Coordinator of Asocode; *Onze Wereld* (Dutch magazine on development issues) June 1993.