

NEWS LETTER

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JOSÉ LUIS SOBERANES FERNÁNDEZ, PRESIDENT OF THE MEXICAN NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS ATTENDED THE "SUMMIT ON SOCIAL DEBT AND LATIN AMERICAN INTEGRATION"

The Summit of Social Debt and Latin American Integration took place from the 10th to the 13th of July 2001 in the city of Caracas, Venezuela.

This event, under the patronage of the Presidency of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the Latin American Parliament/Venezuelan Parliamentary Group and the Defender of the People of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, had as its main purpose to create a strategy to evaluate international agreements in the social area and to restate legislative policies in said area.

José Luis Soberanes Fernández, talked about the impact of integration and social debt upon the validness of Human Rights. He reflected that poverty is an offense towards human dignity. It prevents the full joy of Human Rights and the possibility to assume its own responsibilities.

The head of the CNDH added that there is a great discussion going on today about the early beginnings of the globalization process, as some identify it in 1492, others link it to

the first industrial revolution, but the majority agrees that it is a characteristic process of the second half of the twentieth century.

Globalization, said Dr. Soberanes, is perceived basically as an economic phenomenon, even though certain authors consider it a more complex process. Globalization of the world economy and the increasing importance of international financial institutions, are creating global norms or regulations, which governments have to follow if they wish to attract foreign investment and reach development.

The National Ombudsman pointed out that a country who wants to isolate itself from these trends cannot be viable in today's world, but that a State, to which norms and principles are being imposed upon, and who does not participate in their design, is a State that does not exert its sovereignty. Thus, in its internal dimension, added Mr. Soberanes, the sovereignty of the Latin American nations should reside in the achievement of social justice as well as in, among other things, the inclusion of all marginalized persons to the development process.

During his speech, José Luis Soberanes expressed that although México geographically is a North American country and belongs to Western civilization, its indigenous roots are equally important, as is too, its distinct identity as Latin American, and not only Mexican, and is thus set forth in relation to the indigenous roots of the sub-continent. The fact that Mexico is a multicultural and multiethnic nation, added the President of the CNDH, allows us to be seen as promoters of intercultural dialogue, respectful of differences, one of the essential characteristics of the new world system.

In this sense, Dr. José Luis Soberanes informed that the Heads of State and Government that met in Copenhagen stated that in order to allow all of the people to reach social development, we must guarantee the application of all the rights consecrated in the corresponding international instruments and declarations, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Agreement on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the Declaration on Development, so as to help all those who live in poverty.

In so far as the role of the National Commission, added the Head of the National Commission, in a strict sense, the poorest communities are not represented in the structure of the CNDH. Nevertheless, all persons, independent of their social or economic status, have the right to receive legal aid and to present their complaints about alleged violations to their Human Rights by federal authorities or public servants.

The promotion and protection of the economic, social and cultural rights is the execution of preventive programmes in the areas of Human Rights, as well as to strengthen their observance within the country besides promoting the study, teaching and spreading in the national and international spheres. The CNDH has, as part of its commitment, carried out field research in order to study the living conditions in the poorest indigenous communities, because the indigenous peoples are considered as people who live in extreme poverty. One of the reasons the Program for the Highlands and the Forest of Chiapas was created, added the national ombudsman, was to ensure a permanent contact with the indigenous communities so as to be able to receive all complaints about alleged violations of Human Rights and initiate the corresponding investigations.

Finally, José Luis Soberanes affirmed that poverty offends human dignity, impedes the full enjoyment of Human Rights and the possibility of assuming one's own responsibilities. Latin America today faces the challenge of paying the social debt, product of the crisis, and for this we need new strategies in accordance with our times.

The hunger of our people is not a product of nature but a consequence of poor economic planning and a

lack of political will to attack the real roots of poverty, concluded the President of the CNDH.

RECOMMENDATIONS Recommendation 15/2001

July 9, 2001

Case: In relation to the transfer of women imprisoned in the Federal Centers of Social Readaptation No 1, "La Palma" in the State of Mexico, and No. 2, "Puente Grande" in the State of Jalisco.

Authority addressed: Secretary of Public Safety

Recommendation 16/2001

July 11, 2001

Case: Rape and sexual abuse, unlawful exercise of office against the 12 year old minor "Y"

Authority addressed: Ministry of Public Education and Ministry of the Comptroller and Administrative Development

Recommendation 17/2001

July 31, 2001

Case: Mrs. Sergio Reyes and others, Aida Silva y López and others, Pedro Guzmán Velázquez and others, respectively, for the unlawful exercise of their positions as elements of the Ministry of National Defense.

Authority addressed: General Attorney of Military Justice.

DOMESTIC RELATIONS

Contest: Portraits of Life, Human Rights of People who live with HIV-AIDS

With the purpose of promoting a culture of Human Rights and with the object of making society aware about the rights of people who live with HIV/AIDS, the National Commission for Human Rights of Mexico, the Ministry of Health, the National Center for the Prevention and Control of HIV/AIDS and Merk Sharp & Dome Laboratories of Mexico, made an invitation, on July 30th, to all those persons interested in participating in a contest about the Human Rights of people who live with HIV/AIDS.

Upon making the official announcement of the contest, Dr. José Luis Soberanes Fernández stated that in order to be able to eliminate cases of discrimination against people infected with the HIV virus and those sick with AIDS, and to facilitate access to medicines and attention in institutions of the Health Sector, both the Mexican State and society as a whole must formally agree to foster a Human Rights vision, in which this problem is no longer seen as merely a public health condition, when other factors such as solidarity and the equality of the rights of people are at stake.

The President of the CNDH also remarked that the institution he heads, has in effect a policy of close relationship with academic organizations, non governmental organizations and the private sector, among others, as well as has initiated projects, such as training courses and workshops, whose work is in favor of the fundamental guarantees of infected persons.

The contest rules are the following:

First: All interested persons can participate in one of the following categories: photography, poetry, narrative from experience and drawing.

The winning pieces will be integrated to the 2002 calendar that the National Commission for Human Rights of Mexico will edit as part of the celebrations of the Decade of the United Nations for Education, in the sphere of Human Rights, 1995-2004.

Second: All participating pieces must be sent to the offices of the Executive Secretary of the National Commission for Human Rights, at Periférico Sur 4118, Torre Zafiro 1, Segundo piso, Col. Jardines del Pedregal, C.P 01900, Delegación Alvaro Obregón, México DF, CNDH' reception desk, Periférico Sur 3469, Col. San Jerónimo Lídice, Delegación Magdalena Contreras, C. P. 10200, México, D. F., including the name of the author, complete address, phone number and/or email address.

Third: All participating pieces are being received, starting from the publication of this notice on July 30, 2001, until October 15, 2001. In the case of pieces sent by regular mail, the date of the post office seal will serve as proof.

Fourth: The three best pieces in each category will be awarded with:

An award of \$2,000 (two thousand Mexican pesos)

Publication in the 2002 Calendar

Ten (10) calendars to each winner

A set of books edited by the participating institutions

A diploma of participation to the winners

Fifth: The decision of the Jury will be final. Members of the organizing committee, as well as specialists in the field will integrate the Jury.

Sixth: All winning works will become property of the organizers.

Seventh: The organizers will pay Hotel and transportation costs of the winners.

Eighth: The list of winners will be made public on the 1st of December 2001, World Day in the Fight against Aids.

Annual Cycle of Conferences and Round Tables: Democratic Transition and the Protection of Human Rights

The Mexican National Commission for Human Rights, together with the Law Faculty of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), organized three round tables during the month of July.

The first round table took place on July 5th and was devoted to the subject of "Human Rights and the Donation of Organs," and the participants were Victor M. Martínez Bullé Goyri, First General Visitor of the Mexican National Commission for Human Rights, Luis Angel Terán Ortiz, General Director of the National Center for Transplants of the Ministry of Health, and Javier Castellanos Coutiño, Medical Director of the medical center Clínica Londres.

The second round table "Mexico in the Conventional Framework of Human Rights" took place on July 12th, and the participating specialists were: Loretta Ortiz Half, Director of the Law School at the Universidad Iberoamericana, Gloria Abello, General Director at the Instituto Matías Romero of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Francisco Olguin Uribe, Executive Secretary of the Mexican National Commission for Human Rights. Finally, the third round table "Reservations in International Treaties on Human Rights", took place on July 19th, and the participants were: Juan José Gómez Camacho, General Director for Human Rights at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the lawyer Federico Anaya Gallardo.

The annual cycle of conferences and round tables are held in the auditorium Dr Eduardo García Maynez of the Antonio Caso Library, of the Law Faculty of the National Autonomous University of México on Thursdays at 18:00.

Training courses

The Mexican National Commission for Human Rights, in accordance with the spirit promoted by the institution of the Ombudsman for the advancement of the study, education and diffusion of Human Rights, organized during the month of July, 75 activities related to the above mentioned subject.

Personnel belonging to the Training Area gave 23 workshops, 17 class-workshops, seven conferences and four courses; attended diverse events with different organizations, such as: a work session for the presentation of the First Draft for the modification of the Official Mexican Norm NOM-001-SSA2-1993, which gives the architectural requirements necessary to grant access, transit and permanence to disabled persons in the medical centers of the National Health System, and the participation in the Second Inter-Institutional Encounter in favor of Family and Minors.

Several other meetings took place with representatives of the National Network against Violence towards Women and Young Men, in order to deal with issues of the Campaign against Violence towards Women; participated in other meetings with several Non Governmental Organizations to present the program to strengthen the relationship between this National Commission and the NGO's; a meeting was held to see about the progress in the organization of the Days in favor of the Elderly Adult, and there was a participation in a reunion with officials from the National Institute of Social Development as a follow-up in the preparatory process for the World Conference against Racism.

In the same manner, meetings were organized with members of the Friedrich Nauman Foundation; with representatives of several religious organizations; with members of Non Governmental Organizations of the State of Tlaxcala and in a meeting to analyze the possibility of sponsoring the exhibition of posters "The Legacy of 20 centuries". Members of the CNDH attended the ceremony of installation of the Youth Committee for Human Rights in the Mexican Youth Institute; a meeting was held with officers of the Distance Education National University, to promote the doctorate 2001-2003 and the co-publication of the book "Pasado, Presente y Futuro de los Derechos Humanos" (Past, Present and Future of Human Rights). The CNDH was also present at several meetings with Non Governmental Organizations in which a work plan was established to strengthen the National Campaign against Racism and, finally, was also present at the first session of the workshop on Administrative Planning and Organization in the CNDH, planned by the Internal Comptroller with the participation of the SECODAM (Ministry of Commerce).

The training courses touched upon such themes as: "Education in Human Rights", "Rights of Children and Values", "Basic Aspects of Human Rights", "Rights of Disabled Persons", "Non Governmental Organizations and Human Rights", "Armed Forces and Human Rights", "The Respect for Human Rights in Centers for the Treatment of Minor Transgressors", "Human Rights, the Use of Force and Weapons and Exclusions of Crime", "United Nations' Norms for the Protection of Incarcerated Minors", "International Law of Human Rights", "The Human Rights of Mentally Ill and Non Imputable Persons in Confinement", "Legal Framework, Structure, Jurisdiction and Procedures at the Commission for Human Rights of the Federal District", "Family Mediation", and "Rights of Vulnerable Groups".

PUBLICATIONS

Gaceta, the National Commission for Human Rights', official monthly publication, No 130, corresponding to the month of May, 2001.

Decreto constitucional, Ley y Reglamento Interno de la CNDH (3ª edición) Constitutional Decree, Law and Internal By-Law of the CNDH (3rd Edition). National Commission for Human Rights, México, July 2001.

Los Derechos Humanos de los Reclusos Human Rights and Inmates. National Commission for Human Rights. México, July 2001. Triptych.

Tenemos Derechos. We have Rights. National Commission for Human Rights. México, July 2001. Quadriptych.

Los Derechos Humanos de las Mujeres The Human Rights of Women. National Commission for Human Rights. México, July 2001. Diptych.

Los Derechos Humanos de las Niñas y los Niños. The Human Rights of Girls and Boys. Mexico, National Commission for Human Rights, México, July 2001. Memorama.

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