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ORGANISATION: //////////
THEME: Commons (or Democracy)

ABSTRACT (594 words)

YASUNI-ITT: AN INITIATIVE TOWARDS *BUEN VIVIR*

The Yasuní National Park, located in the Ecuadorian Amazon basin, has been qualified as the most biodiverse zone in the world, and declared a world biosphere reserve by UNESCO.

Moreover, the park is home to several indigenous Huaorani and Kichwa communities, some of which are living in voluntary isolation or are still uncontacted.

(Unfortunately), it sits atop a crude oil reserve.

Ecuadorian civil society and indigenous movements launched the proposal not to exploit this oil in order to preserve this unique place which is one of the world's most important commons, reduce carbon dioxide emissions, and respect indigenous peoples' rights.

In 2007, President Correa has (partially) accepted this proposition for the Ishpingo-Tiputini-Tambococha (ITT) oil block located in the park, and launched the Yasuní-ITT Initiative internationally.

This initiative is revolutionary for at least three reasons:

Firstly, it defies the prevailing extractivist and developmentalist model and it opens new scenarios based on the search for *buen vivir* and on the respect of the rights of all human beings and of Nature.

Secondly, it comes from a poor country, out of which arose the concept of climate debt calling on industrialized countries to pay to the others, as compensation for the consequences of the climate crisis they have caused.

Thirdly, the proposal comes from civil society and its path of social struggle and democratic participation which is at the origin of the new Constitution of 2008, one of the world's most advanced in terms of rights of Nature, recognition of the value of interculturality, respect of the collective rights of indigenous peoples and minorities, and citizens' direct participation in politics.

The Government called on international community to contribute 50% of the revenues it would obtain by extracting the oil, in return for leaving the oil *in situ* indefinitely and for investing this money in environmental and social projects. The amount would be administered by a fiduciary fund under the UNDP.

Although a certain sum has already been paid by some industrialized countries, it is still insufficient; moreover, opposite economic and political forces are pressing the government, which is now considering the "Plan B", which is to start exploiting some of those oil fields.

In order to prevent it, a campaign called *Amazonía por la vida* is mobilizing public opinion to relaunch the proposal at the international level.

In the meantime, the national oil company, Petroecuador, has already started some exploration activities, without local communities' consent which is constitutionally compulsory, and has launched a campaign of negotiations with them in order to obtain their signatures to continue these activities and eventually begin exploitation. The modalities are the same most governments use when natural resources exploitation and foreign investments are at stake, and include the offering of money to communities and community leaders in return for their consent.

This underhand strategy has already convinced all the Huaorani communities and the majority of the Kichwa's. Only two of them are still resisting: Llanchama and Puerto Miranda.

They do not want to sign, but government pressure is starting to cause internal division among communities.

They considered that the best way to resist was to find a stable source of income for the entire village, and they identified community-based tourism. Seven groups of tourists already visited them and their experience has been so great that some of them are now engaged in promoting the community-based tourism project in several European countries, in order to let them maintain their traditional role as guardians of the forest, which they perceive both as a living entity and a common good fundamental for the whole humanity.