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For the New Constitution in Chile

"Apruebo" Internacional, due to its global significance

Chile has been a global reference for political processes, social movements, intellectual debates and major transformations at different historical junctures.

For processes of democratization Chile has had a strong impact on Latin America since its independence. The Chilean public health and education model has been an example for many countries in the region since the beginning of the 20th century.

The election of Salvador Allende in 1970 marked the beginning of what is known as the "Chilean road to socialism". In the context of the culmination of the social struggles of the 1960s, this project showed the possibility of profound social change. This process was not only of interest to Latin America and the Caribbean, but also to various peoples of the global South and North.

Augusto Pinochet's coup d'état on September 11, 1973 marked a rupture with this project of democratic socialism, not only in Chile but — with few exceptions — in Latin America and the world. The authoritarian restoration of the civil-military dictatorship was accompanied by the installation of a neoliberal project that

profoundly changed society. Chile became the laboratory and international reference point for the deployment of neoliberalism as an economic model and as an anti-social project.

Since 1990, the Chilean transition, driven by popular struggles and the plebiscite against continuance of Pinochet in power, initiated a slow change of the authoritarian political culture without transforming the fundamental features of the neoliberal model. Thirty years later, the proposal for a New Constitution in Chile, emerging from a popular outcry in October 2019, represents the hope of not only overcoming authoritarian neoliberalism, but also of offering creative and genuinely democratic responses to the multiple contemporary crises.

In comparative terms, the proposed Constitution in Chile is one of the most democratic and advanced in the world. Thus, it is not only part of a process of reparation and payment of a historical debt with the Chilean people, but also a bet on a democratic, ecological and solidarity-based future that can inspire the necessary constitutional reforms in other regions of the world, which will allow the survival of the planet and the coexistence of humanity.

In this regard, we emphasize the following aspects:

- 1. The complete constituent process has been a celebration of democracy. Contrary to the current Constitution, drafted by the military dictatorship, this proposal has been written by a constitutional convention of the Chilean people in its great diversity. The constitutional text echoes the phrase “nunca más!” to an authoritarian regime and the violation of human rights.
- 2. From its first article, the New Constitution sends an inspiring message even beyond its borders, when it

declares that “Chile is a social and democratic State under the rule of law. It is plurinational, intercultural, regional and ecological. It is constituted as a republic of solidarity. Its democracy is inclusive and parity. It recognizes as intrinsic and inalienable values the dignity, freedom, and substantive equality of human beings as well as their indissoluble relationship with nature".

- 3. The New Constitution not only redefines the Chilean State, but also proposes elements to democratically rebuild the social fabric. It defines the social rights of its citizens and communities. This includes the right to care that encompasses the entire life cycle from birth to death.
- 4. This new Constitution is the first in the world to establish the principle of gender parity in public office. It also recognizes the diversity of genders and sexualities and their corresponding individual rights and forms of coexistence.
- 5. This new constitutional text not only recognizes but celebrates diversity, protecting both individual and collective rights. By defining the state as plurinational, intercultural and multilingual, it echoes one of the main demands of Afro-Chileans and indigenous peoples and nations, to whom territorial autonomies are recognized. Granting more rights for those excluded from history consolidates the rights of society as a whole in terms of equity, equality and justice.
- 6. This autonomous orientation is also expressed at different levels for citizens in general as well as in proposals for the decentralization of the country, for example, in the establishment of a chamber of regions to replace the oligarchic senate.

- 7. The constitution reconquers basic labor rights such as free association, strike and collective bargaining.
- 8. Chile is also the first state in the world to define itself, in its first constitutional article, as ecological. This claim is supported not only by environmental rights but also by the rights of nature, explicitly including animal rights.

In institutional terms, the 1980 Constitution has been the bulwark of neoliberalism and authoritarianism in Chile. Overcoming the Pinochet Constitution is an essential step towards a dignified future for all the people of Chile.

With the proposal of the New Constitution, two great steps are advanced. On the one hand, the overcoming of the authoritarian legacy of the dictatorship. But, beyond this, the New Constitution is a response of the Chilean society to the most urgent problems of humanity and a bet on an ecological, dignified and solidarity-based future.

The plebiscite of September 4, 2022 on the approval or rejection of the conventional proposal of the constitutional convention is a milestone in the global history of democracy. We, the signatories of this letter, want to express our strong support for the approval of the New Constitution in Chile. REJECTION (Rechazo) would be a backlash not only to Chilean democracy, but to the emancipatory processes underway in Latin America and the whole world. In contrast, the APPROVAL (Apruebo) will be, no doubt, a starting point to widen and deepen the emancipatory perspectives in Chile and in the whole world.

List of the initial signatories

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