Copenhagen Summit: Undemocratic and Exclusive Says Venezuela

By TAMARA PEARSON - VENEZUELANALYSIS.COM

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- Climate Change (/tag/climate-change)

Merida, December 21st, 2009 (Venezuelanalysis.com) – Venezuelan representatives denounced that the Copenhagen Climate Summit was undemocratic, that its final document was made behind closed doors, and that developed countries, those most responsible for global warming, want to solve climate problems by throwing small amounts of money around.

The Venezuelan delegate to the Copenhagen Summit, Claudia Salerno said on Saturday that only twenty-five countries participated in writing the document L-7, the draft of the final summit resolution that the chair of the summit "noted", and that was not voted on.

The United Nations Climate Summit in Copenhagen, from 7-18 December and with delegations from 193 countries, ended with a U.S led, non-legally binding, "agreement" called the Copenhagen Accord. The accord was initially discussed among around 25 countries, then amongst U.S president Barack Obama and the leaders of China, India, Brazil, and South Africa. Obama then presented it late on the evening of December 18, as a "final" document.

Venezuelan representative Claudia Salerno Caldera described the US-brokered deal as a "coup" against the UN.

She said they had agreed at the start of the summit that, "the chair wasn't going to write documents, wasn't going to negotiate, the presidents weren't going to write anything" but this wasn't what happened.

Salerno said that they had divided the summit into two groups, and the 25 countries had worked together on an upper, separate floor, while the other countries worked separately and "transparently".

Cuban ex-president Fidel Castro said that after that, the Danish government offered the, "conference's plenary hall to US President Obama for a meeting where only he and a selected group of guests, 16 in all, had the exclusive right to speak."

Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez, speaking on his weekly TV show yesterday, recognised the role Solerno played in the "battle of Copenhagen"; "I saw her…become tired from hitting the table where she was [trying to get on the call list], and the … prime minister of Denmark … refused to let her speak."

Also, during his second intervention in the summit on Friday, Chavez classified the action of the small group announcing an unconsulted document as a violation of UN proceedings, "We dispute [the document]… It [is] fraud to the peoples of the world. If anything needs to be recovered in the world, it is trust…Enough of some thinking they are superior to us, the indigenous of the south, the Africans."

"We want it to be clear that all countries are equal…and we're all on the same level, there aren't presidents of first and second class here, there aren't peoples of first and second class," he said.

Referring to Obama, Chavez said, "The Nobel war prize winner said that he came to act. Well show us that sir; don't go out the back door. Do everything you can so that the United States adheres to the Kyoto Protocol"

Content of the accord

Solerno warned that the accord "doesn't contain any points that could respond to the problems experienced by developing countries," and that the content of the accord

refected the fact that it was written by just 25 countries.

The accord coming out of Copenhagen was meant to succeed the Kyoto Protocol in 2012, a treaty which obliges 37 industrialised countries and the European Union to cut their carbon dioxide emissions.

However, the document only expresses a general aim of limiting global warming increase to 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, well above the targets most delegations were calling for. It “recognises the scientific view” that countries need to curb their emissions, but there are no penalties if countries don’t meet their pledges. It also includes some aid to developing countries to help them cope with the impact of climate change.

The document was heavily criticised by Venezuela, Nicaragua, Cuba, Bolivia and Sudan, among others.

The industrialised countries have concentrated, “on 2 degrees Celsius and on money, some 210 billion dollars per year, and they spent 112 billion dollars in 2008 on war,” Salerno said.

The rich countries should put their cheque books back in their pockets, “principles aren’t bought,” she added.

Along similar lines, Chavez said at the summit that Obama said he would “contribute 10 billion dollars a year, a ridiculous figure, its like a joke, the United States spends 700 billion dollars a year on military expenses.”

Tuvalu delegate Ian Fry, whose country is one of those most at risk from rising sea levels, rejected the deal, saying it sounded like "30 pieces of silver to sell our future.”

“I add my voice to that of the Maldives, Tuvalu… we’re not begging here,” Salerno said, calling on countries to focus on numbers that, “allow for lives to be saved.”

The Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA) countries said in a press conference that they blamed US president Barack Obama, as well as another score of presidents for the failure of the summit and said the presidents, “broke with the democratic process and we denounce the breaking with proceedings that were being carried out at the Summit.”

“The countries of ALBA, we’re clear that we reject any document that Obama brings out from behind closed doors, or that comes from out of the blue, trying to present it as the saving solution.” Chavez said

Meanwhile, ALBA countries wrote their own document in response to the Summit, where they state that the capitalist system of production and consumption is the true cause of global warming and the “catastrophic consequences” that it has brought to the whole world.

“What we are debating here is if we are going to live or die. We’re talking about saving lives or wiping them out… if we want to come out proud of these types of events we must work in a transparent and democratic way, to have a document that allows us to save lives,” said ALBA member, Bolivian president Evo Morales.

The ALBA countries “didn’t come here to ask for charity, we came under conditions of equality to …look for solutions,” Chavez said.

At a press conference, the ALBA countries said they were leaving Copenhagen knowing that an agreement wasn’t possible due to the lack of political will “of those most responsible for the destruction of the earth: the developed countries.”.

“We want to take Copenhagen away in our hearts as a hope, not as a frustration. Copenhagen doesn’t finish today, rather it opened the doors so that we can maintain a world debate about how to save the life of the planet,” he told the summit delegates.

“Copenhagen was barely the start of the decisive battle to save the planet,” Chavez wrote in his weekly column on Sunday.

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- 16/12/2009: Chavez Slams Rich Nations at Copenhagen, Calls for Systemic Change to Save Planet (/news/5012)
- 17/12/2009: Venezuelan President's Speech on Climate Change in Copenhagen (/analysis/5013)
- 29/11/2009: Venezuela and Amazon Countries Prepare for Copenhagen Climate Summit (/news/4963)

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