

NATIONAL PLEDGE OF INTEGRITY FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW HONDURAS

Having been summoned by the National Council of Sustainable Development (CONADES) and the Honduran Chapter of Transparency International (TI Honduras), on the 19th of November, 1998, in the Auditorium of the Central American Bank of Economic Integration (CABEI), we are a group of people and entities representing the government, the private enterprise and the civil society, in the First Integrity Workshop to elaborate a integrated strategy to fight corruption, with a different moral and ethics for Honduras within the context of the specific principles and objectives of the Central American Alliance for Sustainable Development, and especially the goals to promote human rights, strengthen democratic institutions and fight corruption and impunity.

With the participation, as main speakers, of the Archbishop of Tegucigalpa Monsignor Oscar Andres Rodriguez, President of Transparency Honduras and of Dr. Michel Camdessus, Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, we have reflected upon the elements of a national integrity system, based upon ethics, morals and honesty for the sustainable development of Honduras.

We acknowledge that Honduras faces the gravest crisis of its history and that the tragedy that we are forced with gives us the opportunity to reflect, and restate our attitudes and promote an ethical and moral conduct of honesty, faith, hope, work and solidarity, we now commit to abide by President Carlos Flores's decalogue, support his work towards national reconstruction, with order, transparency, coherence, national unity and discipline, with the full participation of the civil society.

We acknowledge that it is not enough to uproot or avoid corruption with the political will of a president who is strict in his work, who refuses the frivolity, the abuse of power and suffers with the peoples' indifference to the troubles affecting the poor. We now commit to pushing in the same direction so we can all be honest in all the acts of our public and private lives. The personal testimony of honesty, sacrifice, simplicity and human solidarity is the best antidote against corruption, since an honest government cannot prosper in a corrupt society. Corruption and those that are corrupt deserve the same punishment.

We are convinced that only unity, tolerance, transparency and justice can make democracy sustainable. We shall continue to work on strengthening democratic institutions, in order to ensure fundamental liberties and the creative participation of the civil society in the steps toward sustainable development, integrating those sectors that have been traditionally excluded from its benefits.

We are convinced of the need to formulate and execute a national plan of reconstruction, within a strategy of long-term sustainable development, with goals and objectives of 10 to 20 years, through the unification of the government, civil society and the public sector, and with the support of the international aid as complementary to the

national effort, we sign this National Pledge of Integrity for the Sustainable Development of a New Honduras.

1. To build a State that is eminently democratic and participatory, strong and effective, of legitimate origin, ethical in its conduct, and efficient in its administration, the government of the republic, within the independence of the three Powers of the State, must commit to the moralization of the State, proposing the following measures:
 - 1.1 impel, through the Ministry of Public Education, the obligatory incorporation to the lesson plans at all levels, of courses that promote ethical, moral, environmental and tax values within an educational system geared towards work and life, with principles of gender equality, improving incentives for teachers;
 - 1.2 insist that all public servants respect the principle of legality and promote administrative institutional reforms to reduce the conflicts of interest, when possible, in the public administration and control the acts of corruption within it;
 - 1.3 establish transparency mechanisms that offer public servants and the society, means to report acts of corruption and ensure the interdependent control of systems and procedures;
 - 1.4 support an independent judicial power so their procedures and determinations constitute an effective barrier against corruption;
 - 1.5 endorse the development of mechanisms that promote responsibility and transparency in those democratic processes, such as the supervision of elections, controlling spending in political parties and in assigning them State resources;
 - 1.6 ensure the existence of a free and independent press to execute the role of public supervisor;
 - 1.7 strengthen the State Inspection Entities and develop an open, competitive and transparent public system of acquisitions and awards, through the Department of Administrative Integrity (Dirección de Probidad Administrativa);
 - 1.8 promote a clear definition of functions and responsibilities, public access to information, transparency in budget preparation, execution, publication and control, with an independent evaluation which ensures integrity, with a process of accountability regarding public actions;
 - 1.9 limit, interpret and make clear that parliamentary immunity corresponds uniquely and exclusively to protect parliamentary actions and under no circumstances to promote impunity in administrative and civil acts, as well as any other nature that does not refer to the Parliamentary function. Also, that the Congress declare with cause, everyone having business pending with the State, whenever it may have been when they acted, and that are still hiding behind their parliamentary immunity;
 - 1.10 in the present legislature, ratify Decree 160-97, which the National Congress approved on October 16, 1997, through which Article 202 of the National Constitution is reformed, reducing, from 128, to 80 the number of representatives to the Congress. In order for this decree to become effective

in the general elections of 2001, it must be ratified by the current legislature, as established in article 373 of the Constitution; otherwise, it will not become effective until the 2005 elections; and

1.11 approve and ratify constitutional reforms, such as the Electoral Law and the Political Organizations law, so that the elections for President, representatives and mayor, be by separate ballot, so as to achieve a better assurance that the representatives and mayors represent the interests of the people that elected them and not of interest groups.

2. Within a new framework of convergence between ethics and politics, competition brings upon the best results and violence loses its foundation if citizen participation is improved, creating effective mechanisms that bring credibility to political participation. Therefore, the political parties, based upon ethical and moral principles, should:

2.1 unite the interests of various groups and articulate its demands to contribute to the internal stability and peace to make the ordered and foreseen participation of diverse groups in the political process, not only to give some credibility to political participation, but in a broader scope, so it can cover all aspects in the context of a project for the country;

2.2 promote the formation and training as far as ethical and moral values of its members;

2.3 carry out its task as mediator between the people and the public spheres to avoid corruption in the latter;

2.4 to ensure that its members do not commit acts of corruption while in their duties;

2.5 strengthen its discipline councils and in carrying out their code of ethics;

2.6 promote transparency in the process of financing its political campaigns and activities; and

2.7 serve as liaison between the decision-making process and the general public, offering an organized manner for the political transfer of power.

3. Within the context of the Inter-American Convention against Corruption and the Ethical Declaration against Corruption of the Latin American Bishop Council, the entities and people participating in the Workshop, recall that corruption not only affects the public sector, but also the private sector, particularly in monopolistic activities, in the behavior of the private companies' administrators, and in the concentration of economic power, etc. Therefore, it is necessary to have all abide by the law, to assure public integrity and fight corruption and prevent corruption in the private sector, create, strengthen and update Codes of Ethics in all public and private institutions, the media, interest groups, developing formation and training policies towards ethics and moral for the members. Therefore, we commit to:

3.1 adopt the bases for a legislative project on public integrity and against corruption, elaborated by CELAM and Transparencia Honduras, reducing bureaucracy, procedures, secrets, the simultaneous exercise of functions, incompatibility of interests, impunity, etc.;

- 3.2 elaborate, approve and put into practice a Code of Ethics for the Public Servant;
 - 3.3 support the development of Codes of Ethics and Procedures by the private sector and promote the role of legal dissuasive measures against corrupt practices;
 - 3.4 promote a free market social economy, competitive in conditions of equal opportunity in an unconcentrated and decentralized form, with equality, to incorporate those often left aside (natives, women, illiterate, the very poor, etc.), to a more active participation in the market;
 - 3.5 elaborate an adequate anti-monopoly legislation that also ensures the transparency of information, which moralizes contract relations, avoids the concentration of economic power, that ensures straightness in management, protects the interests of minority shareholders, punishes fraudulent bankruptcy, private bribes, and swindles;
 - 3.6 elaborate cooperation mechanisms in the judicial and bank sectors to make an easy and quick answer possible for the investigation of corruption cases; and
 - 3.7 give priority to the strengthening of rules for government acquisitions, tax collection, administration of justice and legislative and electoral processes.
4. According to commitments made in the framework of ALIDES, the participants commit to "articulating economic with social and cultural policies so that, with an integral focus, promotes family as the center of which public policies are empowered and programs are directed to them". Family is the base of the Honduran society and this should be recognized:
- 4.1 by the churches in their religious services, pastoral work and their own media;
 - 4.2 In the public and private teaching centers, and in the home;
 - 4.3 In the media, workplace and local governments;
 - 4.4 in civil society organizations and in the community;
 - 4.5 in the political parties; and
 - 4.6 in the government.
5. The environment forms an integral part of the economy. Natural resources should be used in an efficient and responsible manner for the well being of the Honduran society. Therefore, the participants commit to respect and take care of the earth, protecting and restoring the diversity, integrity and beauty of Honduran ecosystems to achieve sustainable human development and equally sharing the benefits of natural resources and environmental protection between rich and poor, men and women and present and future generations.

Therefore, within the specific objectives of ALIDES, the participants commit to promote the following immediately:

- 5.1 stimulate an ethics of life to promote and strengthen sustainable development as a progressive process of change in the human being's quality of life which places him as the center and main subject of development, through economic

- growth with social equity and the transformation of production methods and of the consumer patterns and that is sustained by the ecological balance and the environment;
- 5.2 harmonize and modernize the environmental norms and parameters, legislation and national institutions pertaining to this;
 - 5.3 strengthen the regulation, supervision and application of environmental norms and incentives, as well as the classification of environmental crimes;
 - 5.4 promote conscience and the participation of society through the incorporation of environmental aspects in formal and non-formal educational systems, with gender orientation;
 - 5.5 promote consensus process for territorial organizing, taking into account technical and gender aspects;
 - 5.6 revert the deforestation process, with forest protection programs, especially in the high basin of the rivers and community water sources, to prevent flooding and drought;
 - 5.7 promote social development and adequate financial systems, to create and maintain sustained means of sustenance, uproot poverty and strengthen local communities;
 - 5.8 not harm others' environments the way we do not want ours harmed; and
 - 5.9 develop and implement a framework of the Earth Charter (Carta de la Tierra), as a declaration of fundamental ethical principles towards sustainable development.
6. For the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Honduras, it is imperative to set priorities, create a climate of respect for the law, which should be the result of educational and publicity campaigns which change Hondurans' attitude, committing to always look forward, with a vision to the future. Therefore, to prevent corruption and promote transparency and civic participation, the new agenda in Honduras should:
- 6.1 carry out educational campaigns at all levels, and by every means, to create social pressure in favor of transparency, unconcentration and decentralization of the state, especially in the strengthening of local government and its organizing structures, such as Community Development Councils (CODECOS), and Municipal Development Council (CODEM), and others, as basic, territorial units for the achievement of sustainable development;
 - 6.2 point out norms that are missing, are left over, or difficult this task, by training personnel, especially in integrated financial administration systems, evaluation and quality control;
 - 6.3 promote citizen participation in sustainable development, creating open, accessible, efficient, expedite mechanisms that stimulate public participation and the perception of the citizens on the strategy to promote transparency and integrity in the rehabilitation and reconstruction tasks of Honduras;
 - 6.4 incorporate the media to the construction process of a new society, with ethics, honesty and transparency, so that, never again, may we destroy, with controversy and corruption, our highest goals;

- 6.5 to promote different moral and ethics for Honduras, where we all set an example. Let each person, within their activities, practice ethics, moral and honesty. The same punishment for the corrupt, those who corrupt and those who benefit from corruption; and
 - 6.6 to overcome corruption, a simple and austere lifestyle must be assumed, in coherence with the word we believe and understand all public responsibility, as a service to the community and never to take advantage of public resources.
7. The participants in the Workshop consider it is necessary to promote public conscience about what His Holiness Pope John Paul II considers a culture of legality and good governance that tends to double the fight against corruption, giving lasting solutions and measures to end poverty. Within this context, facing the initiative for highly indebted poor countries (HIPC), and the initiative of the Jubilee of 2000, the participants request that the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the Interamerican Development Bank pardon Honduras's debt with them, while we do the following:
- 7.1 promote transparency as the golden rule for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Honduras;
 - 7.2 make use of, support and mobilize private initiative, competitive markets, and creative entrepreneurial forces, to find optimal environmental solutions, supporting projects that directly or indirectly increase the exporting capacity and generate enough foreign exchange;
 - 7.3 define a national strategy for sustainable development with the participation, work, devotion and actions of all Hondurans through the National Council for Sustainable Development and the different sub-councils organized and to be organized at an institutional, sectorial, regional and municipal level;
 - 7.4 create a favorable investment climate, stimulating savings and capital formation with equal opportunities in education, health and housing for affected families in particular, but also for the poor population in general, which represents 80% of the total population;
 - 7.5 adjust to the new realities of the country, the terms of the ESAF and adhere to the Special Norms for the Disclosure of Data and the Code of Good Practices for the Fiscal Transparency of the International Monetary Fund (IMF);
 - 7.6 constitute an "island of integrity" in public national and international awards for contracts for the reconstruction of Honduras and the development of agile, efficient, effective and transparent systems in acquisitions, public works and the awarding of concessions from the State or its organizations; and
 - 7.7 propose that the pardoned debt be converted into a reconstruction and sustainable human development fund, with broad transparency and effective participation of the Honduran civil society, to ensure that the resources reach the needy with social audit **supervised by international financial institutions.**

8. For the implementation and follow-up of this National Integrity Pledge for the Construction of Honduras, the National Council for Sustainable Development (CONADES), the National Forum of Convergence and Transparency of Honduras, among others, shall be the mechanisms to ensure an active participation of the civil society, through an alliance between the participating diverse sectors at the First National Integrity Workshop. This alliance should permit the formulation of a sustainable development strategy, concerted within the values, principles and objectives of ALIDES and Agenda 21 to:
 - 8.1 establish, as a central theme of economic policies, the theme of the fight against poverty, particularly against the feminization of poverty;
 - 8.2 establish mechanisms to define, elaborate, follow-up and evaluate economic policies with an active participation by the citizens;
 - 8.3 overcome the urban slant in the development vision that reduces opportunities for rural development;
 - 8.4 abide by the International Human Rights conventions, civil and politically, as well as economic, social and cultural;
 - 8.5 establish, as a country, development goals by sector and that these goals be disclosed to the people as criteria to analyze the work of the government. Also, rely on mechanisms for citizen control in case these goals are not met justifiably;
 - 8.6 promote a vision as a country, that becomes a project for the country and not of a social class; and
 - 8.7 ensure consensus mechanisms BEFORE the discussion of proposed legislation that strengthens the legislators' role as representatives.

9. Within the context of the Central American Alliance for Sustainable Development, and the agreements in the Summits of Presidents of the Americas in Miami, Santa Cruz, Bolivia, and Santiago, Chile, public participation shall be supported, in a transparent, effective and responsible decision-making process, and in the formulation and execution of policies relating to sustainable development, picking up on successful experiences of the Inter-American Strategy of Public Participation of the Organization of American States (OAS) and in the integrity systems of the World Bank and Transparency International. These processes of consultation and public participation, should:
 - 9.1 elevate conscience and promote understanding of relevant subjects, for sustainable development;
 - 9.2 give the opportunity to make contributions and commitments, as individual and union level on diverse perspectives and experiences;
 - 9.3 develop a broad public sense of ownership with relation to the process and formulation of the Earth Charter, based on the values of diverse cultures, religions and social groups;
 - 9.4 promote conditions that permanently strengthen the capacity and participation of the society, to improve present and future quality of life; and

9.5 transmit this National Pledge of Integrity for the Sustainable Development of a New Honduras, to the international community, maintaining coherence and consistency with the policies, programs and projects, with the concerted strategy of a sustainable future.

10. Proclaiming our faith in God, and in the future of a new Honduras, within the Central American Alliance for Sustainable Development (ALIDES), we sign this Pledge of National Integrity, at the Central American Bank of Economic Integration (CABEI), on Thursday, November 26th, 1998.

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Also, other persons and institutions may be adhered to this National Integrity Pledge for the Sustainable Development of a New Honduras, and, participating as Honorary Witnesses are Mr. Jose Alejandro Arevalo, President of the Central American Bank for Economic Integration, Mr. Neil Mussell, Representative of the Government of Canada in Honduras, and other members of international organisms and the diplomatic corps accredited in Honduras.

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