Evo Morales en route to reelection

11/08/2014



Bolivia has experienced sustained growth under the leadership of President Evo Morales, who is running for reelection this coming October 12, with a new 12-point programmatic agenda, which could allow the country to become one of South America's most developed economies, devoted to the goal of buen vivir, a good life for all with social justice and equality.

President Evo Morales is currently supported by 60% of voters, going into the October elections.

When Morales assumed office for the first time in 2005, capitalist technocrats and the regional right wing thought he wouldn't last long, lacking, they believed, the knowledge needed to carry out the anti-neoliberal policies proposed in his campaign, with the goal of creating a new nation.

The President, however, not only outwitted enemies who attempted to overthrow him, but ensured that Bolivia's economy maintained a steady growth rate over the last 13 years, generating earnings which were used to meet social needs, thanks to new policies not based on market laws.

This past year, the country's economy grew at a rate of 6.8%, and its reserves went from eight billion dollars in 2006, to 33 billion currently. According to estimates by the International Monetary Fund, this trend should continue, with a growth rate of 5.1% forecast for this year, and 6.8% in 2015.

The Morales government nationalized the economy's most important sectors – oil and gas – and promoted industrialization of these, along with that of lithium, and has to its credit a transparent system of administration, which has not, to date, allowed for incidents of corruption, or the misappropriation of funds, ills afflicting some other Latin American nations.

Economic expansion is expected to be strengthened by the country's new foreign investment law, which should be a success given careful planning and security offered investors.

Bolivia also has to its advantage, extensive lithium reserves, 85% of the metal worldwide. Industrial processing of this high-demand resource, within the country, will be expanded over the next seven years.

The President recently presented his new platform to members of the Movimiento al Socialismo, MAS (Movement toward Socialism) and other national leaders, outlining the 12 essential points he would emphasize if reelected, fundamentally focused on economic and social issues.

Analysts believe the so-called Evo-factor is fundamental to the realization of these great plans for a nation which has historically been known for repeated coup d'etats. His modesty, charisma and popular communication skills have allowed him to unite the country - once fragmented both ethnically and regionally - and mobilize support for a common objective.

The government platform's agenda items are ambitious, but achievable, since Morales has carefully formulated economic plans and enjoys the population's majority support, especially among descendents of original peoples.

Participants in the meeting to discuss the new government plan included MAS representatives, the Bolivian Workers' Federation executive (COB), ministers, deputy ministers, governors, mayors and legislators.

The platform includes proposed action in social, economic, productive and political spheres, and will be subsequently considered by the country's principal social organizations, such as the COB and its affiliates, so that it becomes a true national project.

Among the most important goals of the government plan are the reduction of extreme poverty to 9%; construction of some 100,000 new homes; development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes; ending the importation of gasoline; construction of four specialized hospitals equipped with the latest technology; and the creation of new jobs for recently graduated professionals.

During his presentation, the President recalled that when he took office in 2005, extreme poverty stood at 38%, which with considerable effort has been lowered to 18%, although there remain citizens living in precarious conditions in 100 of the country's 339 municipalities.

He emphasized that by 2020, 100% of the urban population should have access to potable water, 90% in rural areas, while sewer systems should serve 80% of urban dwellers, and 60% of rural residents.

The electrical system is planning to eliminate the use of oil lamps for illumination, still necessary in some communities, projecting that the entire country will have access to electricity by 2025, Morales reported.

Morales explained, "After this great meeting, we will officially present the 2015-2020 Government Program to the Supreme Electoral Court," adding that the plan had been extensively discussed with cabinet members and Vice President Álvaro García Linera.

In the social arena, proposed is the construction of four specialized hospitals - focused on Cardiology; Neurosurgery and Nephrology; Oncology; and Gastroenterology - plus 40 general hospitals, all fully equipped with the latest technology.

In education, school schedules are to be extended, and new subjects added to the curriculum to elevate culture in general, while three sports stadiums with a capacity of 60,000 each will be constructed in the cities of La Paz, Cochabamba and Santa Cruz, in addition to centers for high performance athletes and semi-Olympic pools in rural areas.

The country's housing stock will be expanded with the building of 83,000 dwellings, including 43,000 apartments in multi-family buildings and 40,300 houses. Additionally projected is the repair of 125,000 homes in poor condition.

The President insisted that, during the nine years of his administration, Bolivia has achieved political and economic liberation, and that, if he is reelected, the country's fundamental task will be technological and scientific liberation, based on the development of research and innovation centers, which will be assured of investment.

Currently, the Morales-García Linera ticket is supported by more than 60% of voters, while opposition parties have yet to unite under a common banner for the October elections. (Cubahora)

EVO MORALES GOVERNMENT'S 2015-2020 PROGRAM

1. Elimination of extreme poverty

2. Basic services

3. Together for a dignified Bolivia (Health)

4. Technological-Scientific Independence Revolution

5. A productive, industrialized nation with employment

6. Promotion of our food

7. Water for life and respect for Mother Earth

8. An integrated Bolivia

9. Taking care of the present to assure the future

10. Together for a safe nation

11. Revolutionize Bolivian justice

12. All for a new world order