

Speech of David Choquehuanca

After a decade as Chancellor of Evo Morales, David Choquehuanca was the leader chosen by the Pacto de Unidad to represent indigenous, native and peasant peoples in the Movimiento al Socialismo's (MAS) binomial. Following the victory by 55% of the votes, in his speech, the Vice President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia called for reconciliation and dialogue among the Bolivian people. Regarded as a wise Aymara, for his knowledge of the worldview of "Vivir Bien" (Living Well), he called upon the indigenous peoples of Abya Yala, to the complementarity of the Chacha-Warmi and to the Andean solidarity of the Ayni.

1st December 2020

With the permission of our Gods, our older siblings and our Pachamama, our ancestors, our *achachilas* spirits, with permission of our *Patujú*, our rainbow and our sacred coca leaf. With the permission of our peoples, with the permission of all those present or not in this chamber. Today I'd like to take a few minutes to share our thoughts. Our duty to communicate, the duty to dialogue, is a principle of *living well*.

The peoples of millennial-old cultures, through the culture of life, we maintain our origins since the dawn of time. As their children we have inherited a millennial-old culture that understands that everything is interrelated, that nothing is divided and that nothing is on the outside. Because of this, we are told to continue together, that no one stays behind, that we all have everything and that no one lacks anything.

And that the wellbeing of all, is our own personal wellbeing, that to help is a reason to grow and be happy, that to resign for the benefit of the other makes us feel strengthened. That to unite and recognize ourselves in the whole is the path of yesterday, today, tomorrow and forever, a path from which we have never strayed.

The *ayni*, the *minka*, the *tama*, the *tumpa*, our *colka* and other codes of millenary cultures are the essence of our life, of our ayllu. Ayllu is not only a societal organization of human

Debates INDÍGENAS

beings, ayllu is a system of organization of life, of all beings, of all that exists, of all that flows in equilibrium on our planet or Mother Earth.

For centuries, the civilizing standards of Abya Yala were disintegrated, given new semantic meaning and many of them, exterminated. Indigenous thought was systematically suppressed by colonial thought.

But they didn't manage to extinguish us. We are alive, we are from Tiwanacu, we are strong, we are like stone, we are *kala wawa*, we are *cholke*, we are *sinchi*, we are *rumy*, we are *jenecherú*, a fire that can't be put out. We are from Samaipata, we are jaguar, we are Katari, we are *áinos*, we are *maurías*, we are *comanches*, we are Mayans, we are *guarani*, we are *mapuches*, *mojeños*, we are *aymaras*, we are *quechuas*, we are *jopis*, and we are all the peoples of the culture of life that awaken our larama, *larama* as in rebellious with wisdom.

Today Bolivia and the world is experiencing a transition that repeats itself every 2000 years, as part of the cyclical concept of time. We go from timelessness to time, giving rise to a new dawn, a new Pachakuti in our history. A new sun and a new expression in the language of life, where empathy for the other or the collective good replaces egotistical individualism. Where we Bolivians view ourselves as equals and know we are worth more together. We are in times of returning to Jiwasa. I am not I, we are us.

Jiwasa is the death of egocentrism. Jiwasa is the death of anthropocentrism and of Eurocentrism. We are returning to being *Iyambae*. *Yyambae* is a code protected by our guarani brothers and *Jambae* means a person without an owner. No one in this world must view themselves as the owner of anyone and anything.

Since 2006, we have begun the arduous task in Bolivia of connecting our individual and collective roots, to return to being ourselves, return to our centre, to the *taypi*, to the pacha, the equilibrium from the wisdom of one of the most important civilizations of our planet emerges.

We are in the midst of a process of recovering our knowledge, the cultural codes of life, the civilizing standards of a society that once lived intimately connected with the cosmos, with

Debates INDIGENAS

the world, with nature and with individual and collective life, to build our *sumak kamaña*, of our *aillincausay*, of our *symajakalle*, which is to guarantee the individual wellbeing as well as that of our collective or community.

We are recovering our identity, our cultural roots, our *sake*. We have a cultural rooting, we have a philosophy, a history, we have everything. We are people and we have rights.

One of the unwavering standards of our civilization, is the inherited wisdom surrounding the Pacha. To guarantee balance at all times and in all spaces means understanding how to administrate all complementary energies; the cosmic one that comes from heaven, with the earth that emerges from below the ground. These two cosmic and telluric forces interact to create what we call life, visible as a totality in Pachamama and the spiritual Pachakama.

By understanding life in terms of energy, we have the possibility to change the course of our history, seeing matter and life as the convergence of the forces of *chachawarmi*, when referring to how opposites complement each other.

This new age that we are beginning will be upheld by the energy of the ayllu, the community, consensus, horizontality, complementary balances and the common good.

Historically, revolution is understood as a political act to change a social structure, thereby transforming the life of the individual. No revolution has ever succeeded in changing the conservation of power in order to keep control of its people. The nature of power was not changed, but instead power distorted the minds of politicians. Power can corrupt, and it is very difficult to change the nature of power and its institutions, but it is a challenge which we take upon ourselves with the wisdom of our peoples. Our revolution is the revolution of ideas, it is the revolution of balance. Because we are convinced that in order to transform a society, the government, bureaucracy, laws and the political system, we must first and foremost change as individuals.

We are going to encourage oppositional agreements to find solutions between the right and the left, between the rebellion of the youth and the wisdom of the elders, between the limits of science and relentless nature, between creative minorities and traditional

Debates INDIGENAS

majorities, between the sick and the healthy, between the governors and those governed, between the cult of leadership and the gift of serving others.

Our truth is very simple, the condor takes flight only when its right wing is in perfect balance with its left wing. The task of shaping us into balanced individuals was brutally interrupted centuries ago and we have yet to complete it and the era of ayllu, community, is already among us. We need to become free and balanced individuals to be able to construct harmonic relationships with others and our environment. It is urgent, that we become beings capable of sustaining our own balance and that of our community.

We are in the era of the brothers of *apanaka pachakuti*, brothers of change, where our struggle was not simply for ourselves, but also for them and not against them. We seek brotherhood, not confrontation. We seek peace. We do not belong to a culture of war or domination. Our fight is against all forms of subjugation and colonial thought, patriarchal thought, wherever it may come from.

The idea of the encounter between spirit and matter, heaven and earth, of Pachamama and Pachakama, allows us to think that a new woman and man can heal humanity, the planet and the beautiful life that it harbours and restore the beauty of our Mother Earth. We will defend the sacred treasures of our culture from all interference. We will defend our peoples, our natural resources, our freedoms and our rights.

We will return to our *Kapakñan*, the noble path of integration, the path of truth, the path of brotherhood, the path of unity, the path of respect for our authorities, for our sisters, the path of respect for fire, the path of respect for the rain, the path of respect for our mountains, respect for our rivers, respect for Mother Earth, the path of respect for the sovereignty of our peoples.

Brothers, sisters, to conclude, we Bolivians must overcome the division, the hatred, racism, discrimination among compatriots. No more persecution of our freedom of speech, no more judicialization of politics.

Debates INDIGENAS

No more abuse of power. Power must serve to help, power must circulate. Power, just like the economy, has to be redistributed, has to circulate. It has to flow like blood flows through our organisms. No more impunity, justice, brothers and sisters.

But justice has to be truly independent, let us bring an end to intolerance, to the violation of human rights and our Mother Earth.

This new era means listening to the message of our peoples, that stems from the bottom of their hearts. It means to heal wounds, observe ourselves with respect, retrieve our homeland, dream together. Build brotherhood, harmony, integration, hope to guarantee peace and happiness for future generations.

Only then can we reach wellbeing and govern ourselves.

Jallalla Bolivia.

Jallalla.