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A SOCIO-ECONOMICS COMPARISON AND CONTRAST OF BOLIVIA BETWEEN PREVIOUS TIME AND TODAY

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If we travel back in time, 80 to 100 years ago, we will see that Bolivia was facing social and economic problems. The discrimination, between indigenous and no indigenous people, meant that they were unable to study and couldn't get a proper jobs or acquire land. In some cases, they were forced to hard work labouring jobs. In 1952, after the agrarian revolution, the land was deemed to belong to who works in it. But this didn't resolve all the problems. Some years later, a period of dictatorship began in Bolivia. This period was very difficult for everyone and when the country became democratic, the governments tried to implement different reforms to reduce the educational and social gaps. Unfortunately, the result was not completely successful.

On the other hand, what was happening with the economy? Bolivia is a Mediterranean country in the centre of South America and is rich in natural resources, like as gas, wood, lithium and other minerals. But the country did not have the technology to extract and manufacture them. Who then were exploiting them? International companies. The biggest issue was that these companies didn't pay for tons' units of product. On the contrary, they had the legal right to use those lands for an unlimited period, which became years, and without any kind of control from the government and where Bolivia, and its people, were not receiving the right price. People were tired of past governments, they wanted to see something different, and when elections came in 2005 Evo Morales won because his proposal was different both social and economically, it was the communitarian economic model.

The main objective of this communitarian economic social model is that everyone will have equal amount of opportunities. The State was looking forward to reducing the gaps between rich and poor and to allocate the resources in a more efficient way. For example, unlike past years, these days departments receive the monetary resources according to the population. In addition, this model looks for a friendly environment and economic growth.

The community economic social model comes from indigenous people who lived in Bolivia before, especially Aymara, Quechua and Guarani, and who lived in the territory even before the discovery of the continent. These people had different forms of organization, production and planning based on the welfare of the entire community. They thought that the work was the energy that transform the resources into the satisfaction of their needs.

These people didn't have the notion of "private property" that we have now. They shared their resources between all its members and with other communities too. If they had any extra or "surplus" resource they distributed it and even saved it for difficult situations in the future or helped other communities.

The actual model in Bolivia is written in the constitution as "Economic, social, communitarian and productive". It is social because it makes more emphasis on solving overriding social problems before individuals. It is communitarian because it seeks the common welfare and collective values and traditions of indigenous peoples. And it is productive because it looks forward to changing the historical mono exporter way of production to looking for the diversification of production.

With this purpose, the government's plan stipulates that there are 4 strategic sectors: hydrocarbons, mining, electricity and environmental resources. From them Bolivia gets the major part of its GDP (Gross Domestic Product). From its revenues, the State is looking to

promote other sectors such as manufacture, agricultural, etc., to create new jobs and increase the income for the country.

To conclude, this communitarian model is not just in Bolivia. On the contrary, it is emerging in other countries of South America like Ecuador. The state has divided the country in communities which have autonomy and decision authority over their own resources. In the main the State tries to balance the inequalities in, for example, access to education, health care, basic services and employment.

And in terms of the exploration and exploitation of resources, even if the country fights to become more technological, the capacity of production can't change overnight. Therefore, international companies continue to work in Bolivia, based on contracts that establish greater control and regulation. The State have ultimate control and responsibility trying to minimise the potential social and environmental impacts.

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