

International Congress: Young Adults and the Environment

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Host: Joining Hands for Life, Bolivia

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In Potosí, Bolivia there was an international congress on the environment in which delegations participated from the United States, Canada, Peru and Bolivia.

Presentations were given on the following themes:

1. **Water resources in Northern California.** Bottled water has had an impact on the environment, including the Lake Shasta. The water sources may be depleted beyond repair if the company in question does not use greater moderation in production. Also, this has generated interesting discussions about indigenous peoples' rights to preserve their natural resources.
2. **Slash and Burn Agriculture in Santa Cruz, Bolivia.** Slash and burn agriculture is the easiest and fastest method of getting immediate yield in agriculture and opening up space for grazing. The long term outlook is grim for productivity and there is also a high level of emissions of carbon. This method is used very often for sugar cane planting.
3. **Milluni River affected by Achachicala Plant (La Paz, Bolivia).** The Milluni River valley is contaminated by mining pollution from the area. The public and private sectors should be capable of dealing with this issue and combine efforts to prevent environmental impact in the medium and long term.
4. **Water quality - Sipe-Sipe, Bolivia.** The water in this area contains a high level of minerals, in particular magnesium and calcium. These elements cause the water to be hard.
5. **Life Water Project- Potosí, Bolivia.** All of the sources of water in the area show high levels of contamination due to mining and sewage dumping. 47% of them have fecal parasites, which make the water unsuitable for human consumption.
6. **Canada and the Environment.** The destruction of the boreal forest and the indiscriminate use of water for mining and fossil fuel extraction are key themes of concern in Canada. The local rivers have been contaminated and the representative from Canada is working on a petition.
7. **Lake Poopo and the Deaguadero River (Bolivia).** There has been degradation to and the loss of water sources due to mining activity in Bolivia. The mining deposits and also the sewage dumped into the river are clear problems that require immediate solutions. The Bolivian State should protect the waters as natural resources, basic resources for the vitality of the people.
8. **Cement Factory Campaign in Segunda Jerusalén, Peru.** The right to health and a clean environment were threatened by the emissions of a cement factor. According to production and health reports, there was serious lung damage being done due to the emissions. The fall in the quality of air and the environment sparked local advocates to speak out. There was a report done on television in Peru's capital Lima that caused the company to put filters in the chimneys and as a result the respiratory diseases slowly fell.
9. **Interregional Conflict over water. Ica and Huancavelica, Peru.** The uncontrolled use of water for agriculture in the State of Ica has left many areas

of Huancavelica without water. The water resources of the Andean highlands are being depleted for the use of agroexportation along the coast.

- 10. Ecological alternatives to persevere environment in Quechua Communities in San Lucas, Bolivia.** The possibility of using organic fertilizers is a key to better agricultural production and is a health alternative. This requires close work with the community to educate and to recover old customs and traditions.
- 11. The life Salmon in the USA.** The hydroelectric dams located in the rivers of the USA is causing difficulties in the salmon's life. Salmon have to go from the river to the ocean and back to the river, but the hydroelectric dams get in the way of this process. An alternative would be to create spaces where salmon can return without difficulty.
- 12. La Oroya: Contamination and Death.** Because of the mining and metallurgical activity in the area, there is atmospheric contamination and water contamination that affects the whole Mantaro River Valley. Community groups have joined hands to demand that the government make the companies operating in the Mantaro River valley comply with the laws. Also, there is a movement to make the environmental laws more stringent.

Conclusions:

The problems in the environment are varied and need immediate intervention. We as humans are the only ones responsible for the problems and we should be the first to look for solutions and to work to be participants in a health live and healthy environment. We should all fight for a healthy environment.

The following themes were voted priorities:

1. Slash and Burn in Santa Cruz
2. Life Water Project in Potosí
3. Canada and the environment
4. Interegional Conflict between Ica and Huancavelica

Besides the formal presentations given at the congress, there was also a time for expositions of the members of Joining Hands in the center plaza of Potosí, Bolivia.

There was also active participation in the cultural night, in which delegations danced the pandilla, a dance from Moyobamba, Peru.