

Speech by the Ambassador of the Plurinational State of Bolivia

H.E. Valeria D. Vilaseca Chumacero

At the solemn act of commemoration of the 197th Anniversary of the Independence of the Plurinational State of Bolivia

Brussels, August 6, 2022

In this solemn and sovereign act to Bolivia, on behalf of my people and on behalf of my president Luis Arce Catacora, it is an honour for me to receive the Ambassadors of Cuba, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Maldives, Kazakhstan, Bangladesh, Laos, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Azerbaijan, Peru, Chile, Guatemala and the Dominican Republic; and the representatives of the Embassies and Missions of Bahamas, Oman, Indonesia, Russia, Pakistan, Brazil, Chad, Mauritania, Paraguay, Ecuador and Armenia.

Allow me to deliver greetings to the representatives of the Kingdom of Belgium, of the European Union, to the Bolivian community represented through its committee in Belgium, a fraternal and revolutionary greeting to the MAS IPSP Committee (*Movement for Socialism–Political Instrument for the Sovereignty of the Peoples*), to the friends and companions of the international community, ma Coordinadora Latino Americana de Solidaridad en Bélgica, and all the friends of Bolivia. Welcome!

With joy I greet the feeling of unity, sister and brotherhood and the freshness that this brings towards this new time and I want to extend a special and fraternal greeting to Ambassador Claudia Salerno, who delivered such profound words on behalf of the glorious Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA), with the strength and dignity that the projection of “La Patria Grande” (*Great Homeland*) and the freedom of the people of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Today, August 6, 2022, we are brought together by the celebration of one of the most important steps in the construction of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, a State of which we are a part of nowadays. Hundred ninety seven years ago, after many struggles, indigenous and popular uprisings, battles and resistance, on August 6, 1825, Bolivia’s independence was declared.

Like from “Rómulo: Rome”, from “Bolivar: Bolivia”. We thus adopt the name of Bolivia in honour of the Great Captain General and liberator Simon Bolivar. We were and we will forever be his “favourite daughter”.

We were the first libertarian shout and the last country to free itself from the colonial chains of Spain. Our statement that day, reads as follows:

“The world knows that Alto Peru has been on the continent of America, the altar where the first blood of the free was shed and the land where the tomb of the last of the tyrants lies. [...] The departments of Alto Peru protest to the face of the entire earth, that their irrevocable resolution is to govern themselves.”

From our perspective today, we honour the great Bolivar, Sucre and Santa Cruz and the triumph in the battles of Junin, Ayacucho and many others. From our Plurinationality, from our decolonization and de-patriarchalization process, with our heads held high, we can finally honour and celebrate the battles of female heroines and our indigenous heroes who had been made invisible through colonial history. Today we also remember with profound honour, proud and glory Juana Azurduy, Mariana Zudañez, Manuela Gandarillas, the heroic Túpac Amaru II, Julian Apaza (Tupak Katari), Bartolina Sisa, Gregoria Apaza, and many more. Their resistance heroically brought us to where we are, to a Plurinational state where we continue to advance in rights and freedoms, with economic stability, in harmony with nature, with the mother Earth guiding our steps and following our ancestral knowledge in the path of the Kapak Ñan, para el “vivir bien”, to live well.

In 2009 we founded the Plurinational State of Bolivia through the implementation of the productive community social economic model, Bolivia’s own model for the redistribution of resources for our people through the nationalization of our hydrocarbons.

After almost a year of kidnapped freedom, in 2020, with the recovery of democracy lead by our President Luis Arce and Vice President David Choquehuanca, we undertook the economic model of industrialization with import substitution that allows us to encourage national production, generate sources of employment and reactivate the Bolivian economy, avoiding the flight of foreign currency and strengthening internal demand.

Let me share some data:

- Today we have the best economy in the region, highly resilient against external armed conflicts. In 2021, GDP grew 6.1% compared to 2020;
- This year, even with the global economic recession, growth is projected to be 5.1%;
- This year, we have already doubled exports from the agricultural sector compared to 2021;
- Tax collection grew by 22.3% from January to July 2022;
- Bolivia is one of the countries with the lowest inflation in the world. We are the country with the lowest accumulated inflation in South America (1.2 percent as of June 2022);
- The exchange rate for the dollar has remained the same for 11 years;

- Extreme poverty will be reduced by 1.4 percentage points in 2022 according to the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), while in Latin America poverty will increase by 33%;
- Close to 86 percent of the savings of the Bolivian population is in the Bolivian currency (Boliviano), as well as 99 percent of the loans;
- As of April 2022, Bolivia exported USD 4,278 million, achieving a trade surplus of USD 698 million, the highest figure since 2014;
- In 2021, the net Foreign Direct Investment in Bolivia reached USD 594 million, which reverses the negative figure of USD 1,129 million divestment registered in 2020;
- Bolivia has 46 percent of the planet's biodiversity, with more than 3,000 species of fauna and with more than 21 million tons of lithium, we possess the largest reserves in the world.

Likewise, we have a multiplicity of microclimates. It is for this very reason that we are aware of the importance of caring for our Mother Earth, and of Her rights. We are the promoters of the Rights of Mother Earth, of the Human Right to Water and in 2013, together with our brother country Peru, we gave to the world the golden grain of quinoa (*2013 was recognised as the International Year of Quinoa by the United Nations in recognition of its "potential contribution in the fight against hunger and malnutrition"*). Our main target on sustainability and climate change is the importance of fighting against the extractivist, capitalist and colonialist system that constantly wants to oppress us.

Our independence is not only reflected in institutional sovereignty, but in the decisions of our peoples and of our social organizations, aiming for food sovereignty, working to generate clean energy resources and to respect the production of local organic food.

Our veins carry freedom running inside, they carry indigenous and Creole resistance with great loads of love for the land, for the pacha, they carry the eternal determination to never have owners again, because we are clear that we will not belong to anyone, to no foreign interest, we owe ourselves to our mountains, our rivers, our fauna, we owe ourselves to our ajayu, our spirit, we owe ourselves to our people, diverse and rich. Today the South is the horizon of the new time!

Long live Bolivia!

Viva Bolivia!

Jallalla Bolivia!