



DECLARATION "WHAT'S PUBLIC STAYS PUBLIC"

Union Forum of the Americas - October 7, 2020

The Trade Union Confederation of the Americas (TUCA), together with the International Trade Union Federations (PSI¹, UNI², IndustriALL³, ITF⁴, BWI⁵ and EI⁶) and the Brazilian Committee in Defence of Public Companies, stand in defence of public companies and services, which are particularly essential in times of crisis for sustainable development and for the quality of life of everyone.

The coronavirus pandemic and shutdown measures to contain it, have made visible what we have been denouncing for years, the shortcomings and flaws of the current model of government and global economic policy which has created a large and growing concentration of wealth in the hands of a few, and the lack of access to quality public services, universal social protection and decent work for the masses of workers.

Today more than ever, it is necessary to recognize the true value of water, seeds, forests, energy, land, biodiversity, ancestral knowledge, public services, health and education as common goods. We demand and defend the right to access, use and control these common goods, which must be guaranteed by the States, based on democracy, justice and sustainability.

What is public should stay public for all citizens, with transparency and real participation of society in decision-making, and increasingly aimed at serving the people, especially women, girls, children, youth, the elderly, people with disabilities, people of African descent and indigenous peoples.

Public companies and universal public services, in addition to being basic human rights, are fundamental to the processes of economic development, social justice, income redistribution and to serve the most needy population.

Privatized services only contemplate the interests of the 1%. That is, those who control the large transnational companies that increase their profits at the expense of the workers and of society in general, with very high costs that could be much lower with quality public companies and services, under democratic control by the whole of the society.

TUCA and the International Trade Union Federations, together with our national trade union centrals and national unions, will continue to fight every day against privatization and for democracy, becoming stronger and uniting with more solidarity the trade union movement, locally and globally.

We will also reinforce the work of alliances with other sectors, social movements and organizations that defend a democratic and rights based agenda that includes the demand for a democratic State, with a public budget that strengthens the institutions in charge of

¹ Public Services International

² UNI Americas, continental arm of UNI Global Union

³ IndustriALL Global Union

⁴ International Federation of Transport Workers

⁵ Building and Wood Workers International

⁶ Education International, Latin America



guaranteeing social rights, especially health, education, water, basic sanitation and social protection, among others.

We demand that billionaires and large transnational companies pay their proportional share of taxes, and that the governments of the region promote proposals for progressive tax reforms, in which the 1% pay proportionally more, and the most vulnerable workers and people pay less taxes. We do not accept the growing social inequity in the region, already the most unequal in the world.

We will continue to reject free trade agreements and investment protection agreements, which only favour the interest of large transnational companies, deregulating the State, promoting privatization, prioritizing the rights of transnational companies over the rights of workers, such as decent work and the increase in the agro-extractive model that destroys the environmental and the cultural heritage of native peoples.

A democratic response to the crisis of the neoliberal model, which has been accelerated by the pandemic, requires active policies to create employment. We demand more opportunities for decent work that contribute to a just transition from capitalism that destroys jobs, labour rights and the environment towards a sustainable society.

To achieve all these objectives, it is essential to democratically build a new global social contract, where the State and public policies play a central role in favour of the population excluded from the current political-economic model.

It is necessary to combat the decades-long prevailing neoliberal narrative in the region that claims that what is public is inefficient, corrupt and depletes the resources of the State. Historic experiences demonstrate that public services are essential to overcome crises, advance economic development, decent work, reduce inequalities and improve the quality of life of the population. Today, some Northern countries are putting public services back into public hands. We have seen that the private sector will never be able to provide basic services with the universality, quality and values that public sector delivers.

Our union organizations will continue to fight in unity for quality public companies and services, with decent jobs throughout America. We will organize debates, materials and disseminate studies on the topic, promoting and supporting national campaigns and joint actions in defence of our claims and wherever there are threats to what is public.

We will take this fight to the different international spaces in our region, such as the "Continental Day for Democracy and Against Neoliberalism" of which we are part, the platform "Latin America better without Free Trade Agreements" and other coalitions, aware that the fight for jobs, companies and quality public services goes beyond the union movement, it includes those who fight for human, social, economic and environmental rights and for a more just society.

- For a New Social Contract, with decent work and universal access to public goods and services.
- For a democratic State, a public budget at the service of society and for tax justice.
- Against the privatization of the State and corporations assuming control of public companies - if it is public, it belongs to all of us.
- We demand that what is public remains public, because if it is public it belongs to all of us!