

## **Statement of the communities environmentally affected by toxic substances and pollutants**

As organizations participating in the Caravan #ToxiTourMexico, we acknowledge the important effort that has been carried out, since December 2019, jointly with the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (Semarnat), headed by Dr. Víctor Manuel Toledo Manzur.

This work aims to start building new paradigms and socio-environmental policies in the territories devastated by pollution. In our regions, the living conditions are very difficult because of the critical problems arising from damage to the environment and health caused by toxic agents and their polluting processes. This toxification has been generated as a result of neoliberal policies that for many years have chosen to put economic interests above the health and life of the communities.

While our problems have not yet been solved and there is still a long way to go, we acknowledge however the willingness that Semarnat has shown to listen and take actions that aim to encourage solutions and not at intensifying damage. In this regard, on July 30, 2019, the Environment and Natural Resources Secretary published in the newspaper La Jornada that: "the ruthless exploitation carried out by a minority of minorities throughout the world on human work and on the processes of nature, especially in the marginalized sectors, brings territories where the peoples lives are lived under inhuman conditions. These spaces are true environmental hells".

Indeed, our communities have suffered in these environmental hells for decades. In this context of serious concern for people's well-being, Semarnat has shown sensitivity towards our demands, a willingness to move forward and dialogue - opening conciliation paths that were closed until now.

Unlike the situation during previous administrations, where our demands were never taken seriously, we are moving towards an inter-institutional dialogue, which, if kept open, can mean real changes in favour of people's health and of environment in our affected communities. That opportunity had never been given before. Today, we say the roads are not finished but their construction is progressing. We do not want now to lose the efforts and years of struggle that have cost us so much.

We condemn the veiled attacks in the media through supposed leaks that seek to derail the work of the Secretary of the Environment, Víctor Manuel Toledo, who at least in regards to our demands has so far been conciliatory.

The #ToxiTourMexico Caravan was held between December 2 and 11, 2019 and travelled the route through the worst areas of contamination exposing also social and labour exploitation. Parliamentarians, activists, academics and international observers were able to visit: El Salto, Jalisco; Dolores Hidalgo, Guanajuato; Apaxco and Atitalaquia in Hidalgo, and the State of Mexico; the Atoyac River, in Tlaxcala; Puebla and the North Isthmus, as well as Coatzacoalcos, Veracruz.

## **Organisations**

Centro de Desarrollo Agropecuario A.C. (CEDESA); Coalición en Defensa de la Cuenca de la Independencia (CODECIN). Guanajuato; Caminando por la Justicia. Atitalaquia, Hidalgo; Fundación para el Desarrollo Integral Apaztle. Apaxco, Estado de México; Museo Comunitario Atotonilli. Atotonilco de Tula, Hidalgo; Red de Conciencia Ambiental Queremos Vivir A.C. Tula, Hidalgo; Centro Fray Julián Garcés Derechos Humanos y Desarrollo Local A.C. Tlaxcala; Asociación Civil Chogosteros en Acción. Jáltipan, Veracruz; Asociación de Productores Ecologistas Tatexco (APETAC). Ixhuatlán del Sureste. Veracruz; Ecología y Desarrollo Sostenible en Coatzacoalcos A.C. Veracruz; Organización Pesquera de la Boca del Uxpanapa. Río Coatzacoalcos, Veracruz.

## **Other organisations**

1,2,3 por mi, por él y por todos; Campaña por el Derecho a la Educación en México; 41 árboles para salvar el planeta, A.C; Accion Colectiva Socioambiental,A.C.; Centro de Atención a la Familia Migrante; Centro de Desarrollo Educativo Zacatelco; Asociación de Apicultores del Norte de Guanajuato (ASANG); Centro de Economía Julián Garcés A.C.; Centro para la Justicia Global; Ciudadanos Unidos por el Medio Ambiente, (CUMA). Huichapan, Hidalgo; Colectivo Insurgencia Magisterial; Concejo Ciudadano Rural del Agua (COCIRA); Coordinadora Por un Atoyac con Vida; Comité de Derechos Humanos “los jicotes” Xicohtzinco; Comité de Derechos Humanos Luis Munive y Escobar, Atlihuetzian; Comunidades en Lucha por el Agua y Vida Sana (COENLAVIS); Comunidades Unidas por la Vida y el Agua Pastoral Social, (CUVAPAS); Frente de Comunidades Unidas de Tizayuca; Educación Colaborativa; Slowfood. Estado de Hidalgo; Sociedad Cooperativa Impulso Verde. San Miguel de Allende, de la Cuenca de la Independencia; Pastoral Social de Xicohtzinco; Tianguis Natural, Artesanal y Orgánico (TOSMA); Unión de Comunidades Campesinas del Norte de Guanajuato (UCCANG).

## **Individuals**

Cristina Caldera Muñoz. Médica Veterinaria Zootecnista, Diplomada en Ecotoxicología. Integrante de la Red de Toxicología de Plaguicidas y de la Sociedad Mexicana de Toxicología; Alejandro Castro Ruiz. Permacultor, representante de Omniunity A.C., Vocal de Mantenimiento y Permacultura, Asociación cívico-técnica Fracc. Los Atlantes, Atitalaquia Hidalgo; Julisa Hernández Gijón. Médica general y licenciada en C.N. Presidenta del Comisariado Ejidal de San Lorenzo, Mpio. de Jáltipan, Veracruz.