



### *International Seminar of Public Health Policy Asuncion, Paraguay April 7th and 8th, 2008*

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For the past several years the National Movement for the Right to Health, the Latin American Association of Social Medicine (ALAMES) and the No Excuses Paraguayan Platform Against Poverty have campaigned for the Paraguayan government to fulfill commitments it has made before the international community both in terms of human rights and the right to health.

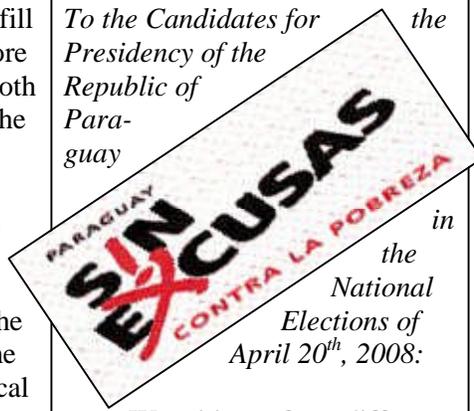
The main purpose of the April International Seminar of Public Health Policy was to place public health at the center of the national debate as well as at the top of the government's political and social agenda. The Seminar was also a forum to share experiences regarding the legal foundations for public health policies in the countries of the region. As a result the seminar brought together experts from Brazil, Uruguay and Bolivia.

The seminar included the perspective of common citizens whose input was sought on the various public health proposals

made by the Paraguayan political parties and opposition social movements.

We would like to share the final declaration of the Seminar:

*To the Candidates for the Presidency of the Republic of Paraguay*



We, citizens from different national social organizations, participants in the International Seminar on Public Health Policies held in the city of Asuncion on April 7th and 8th of 2008, do manifest:

The deepest repulsion and indignation before the inhuman living conditions to which the populace is condemned and before the intensification of extreme poverty,

exclusion, and abandonment. These are both products of the dominant social model which places the profit of the few over the right of the many to a decent life for their families and communities.

That health is a fundamental human right, a public entitlement, and an obligation of the State.

This right is irrevocable and its implementation cannot be put off. We thus demand the implementation of public health policies which put these principles in operation, thus fulfilling the requirements of the Constitution and current law.

That health is the by-product of the totality of historic, social, environmental, cultural, socio-economic, productive, housing, ethnic and gender conditions of the population.

*We reject:*

Any form of users fees for access to health services. These charges serve to exclude, condition and

limit the possibilities for citizens to access health services. Health services must fulfill their mission of health promotion, disease prevention, and clinical care without charge to the users.

Any program which reduces, limits or seeks to carve up the provision of health services. We will not accept proposals that limit health services to a “basic health package” or offer care for a specific group in detriment of the rest of the population.

The adoption of health policies developed without the active participation of the citizens.

*We declare:*

The need for a Universal Health System, egalitarian, comprehensive and adapted to the health needs and potentialities of the population. The system should operate in a non-profit manner and without turning health services into commodities.

That the population must participate in the definition, execution and financial structuring of health system.

That social participation must have a binding character which holds the state and its administrators accountable to follow up on agreed-upon plans.

*We demand:*

That an effective land reform policy be implemented, so that peasants as well as indigenous communities can see the

realization of their rights to health and a decent life. Such policies require the active participation of social organizations to limit the preponderance of large estates and unused lands.

The development of sustainable environmental policies with respect for biodiversity and ancestral knowledge. There must be strict control over the application of such a policy, as well as study on the toxic impact of agrochemicals on both workers and communities and meaningful sanctions for the irresponsible usage of these resources.

That the State assigns the necessary resources for the integral and intersectorial fulfillment of its sanitary obligations. Specifically, we demand that the health system be assigned adequate public funding. This funding must be sustainable and independent from the will of the governing party.

That any increase of the Gross Domestic Product and/or tax revenues be destined to redistributive social policies, among which health is included.

That adequate and ongoing provision of human, material and financial resources be ensured for the optimal functioning of health services.

That there exist permanent access to all information regarding health services, plans, and programs as well as transparency in budgetary processes and in periodic public financial statements. We demand that any administrator who neglects or obstructs this social control is severely sanctioned.

Decent working conditions for the whole population, a safe environment, and a decent salary.

The development and professionalization of public health jobs, eradicating politically motivated privileges through contracts issued on the basis of public bidding under social control.

The training of health workers in the principles of legality, intercultural work, ethical principles, community orientation, and the promotion of social participation, health, and improved life standards.

We remind the candidates in the Presidential elections of April 20th elections that their supreme obligation is to obey the constitutional mandate to guarantee that all Paraguayans live decently in dignity, health and solidarity.

**National Movement for the Right to Health**



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