

GUERRERO GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATIONS CALL FOR TRANSPARENCY REFORMS

It is often assumed that demand for transparency in government is limited to urban professionals. Recently, however, in one of Mexico's most impoverished rural states, a wide range of grassroots organizations came together in a state-wide forum entitled, "Toward a Democratic and Transparent Guerrero," held in the state congress' library. More than 140 representatives from 34 indigenous, peasant, environmental and human rights organizations, as well as 12 public institutions, exchanged experiences about how to exercise their right to access government information. Remarkably, participants in this dialogue ranged from social movement leaders— including the indigenous Community Police of the Costa Chica-Montaña region and the Community Coordinating Committee against the "La Parota" Dam— to state and federal government representatives. Excerpts from the plenary session were broadcast live on a state-wide radio station. The following proposals for bolstering the exercise of the "right to know" were reached by consensus:

"The civil society organizations that have signed below, gathered together today in the State-wide Forum, "*Toward a democratic and transparent Guerrero,*" held in the Library of the State Congress, after analyzing several national and international experiences regarding with the process of fostering transparency in public affairs, and after having evaluated the level of citizen access to public information in Guerrero (with special emphasis on the issue areas of most interest to us), have come to the following conclusions and resolutions:

Considering:

1. That citizens have the "right to know" about public affairs, as has been recognized since the mid-20th century through the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
2. That in our country, as a result of the initiative of several civil society organizations, the Federal Access to Public Information Law was passed in 2002;

3. That in the state of Guerrero, since February of 2006, the State Access to Public Information Law is in effect, which, though insufficient to allow citizens to fully exercise their right to know, is an important step toward meeting this goal;

4. That in the context of the current process of State Reform project in Mexico, in which the executive, legislative and judicial branches are involved, it is necessary—as an essential element of the process—to include greater transparency, access to information, and the informed participation of society;

5. That due to the changes and instability that our country, and especially the state of Guerrero, are experiencing, and in light of economic inequalities and political competition, it is necessary to establish a true “culture of transparency and accountability” in all spheres of public authority;

6. That in order to reach a point where government institutions truly act with transparency, it is not enough to rely solely on “good intentions”, but must also be accompanied by the active participation of society;

7. That a “culture of transparency” in all domains of public life, as well as an informed citizenry, are key to eliminating past institutional practices, such as centralism and clientelism.

Given the above-mentioned considerations, we have reached the following general resolutions:

1. To create a working group or network of social organizations that promote transparency in Guerrero, who will meet monthly, to follow up on the resolutions of the forum;

2. To carry out a second forum, “Towards a Transparent Guerrero”;

3. To carry out regional and municipal workshops to train communities on how to exercise their right to know effectively;

4. To promote a reform and update of the current Guerrero State Public Information Access Law, through a process of outreach, consultation and discussion;

5. To create municipal regulations regarding public information access rights, and to call for the State Congress to encourage municipal governments to implement transparency reforms;
6. To disseminate information access rights, the content of federal and state transparency laws, as well as instructions on how to use them, through publications, the internet and community radio;
7. To make the public funding of civil society organizations more transparent;
8. To call for public information to be published taking into account linguistic diversity;
9. To create a Citizens' Committee for Transparency to monitor governance and public spending by issue area;
10. To carry out citizen evaluations of the performance of public agencies, and to urge government to hold public hearings for the planning, monitoring and evaluation of public policies;
11. The participants of this Forum publicly declare our opposition to the construction of the "La Parota" Dam, and openly support the social movement in Oaxaca, "Asamblea Popular de los Pueblos de Oaxaca (APPO)". We also demand that all political prisoners receive just and fair treatment from the justice system.

Respectfully,

Social and civil society organizations:

Promotores de la Autogestión para el Desarrollo Social (PADS)
Taller de Desarrollo Comunitario (Tadeco)
Centro Operacional para el Fortalecimiento de Iniciativas Sociales (Copefis)
Centro de Capacitación, Investigación y Estudios Estratégicos (CIES)
Sociedad de Producción Rural *Sinecio Adame*
Universidad Campesina del Sur (Unicam-Sur)
Coordinadora de Ejidos y Comunidades Opositoras a La Parota (CECOP)
Tecoanichan, A.C.
Red de Agricultores Sustentables Autogestivos, S.C. (RASA)
SSS Productores de Tierra Caliente

Consejo Supremo de los Pueblos del Filo Mayor, A.C.
 Productores Unidos del Balsas
 Comité de Defensa Popular “Hasta la Victoria Siempre”, A.C.
 Unión de Pueblos para el Desarrollo Sustentable de la Región Oriente de Coyoaca de Benítez y Poniente de Acapulco
 Coordinadora Regional de Autoridades Comunitarias, San Luís Acatlán (CRAC)
 Coordinadora Nacional Plan de Ayala, Región Costa Chica
 Locallis, A.C.
 Esperanza de Vida de Acapulco, A.C. (Es Vida)
 Asociación de Familiares de Desaparecidos y Exiliados de México (AFADEM, FEDEFAM)
 Tlachinollan, A.C.
 Movimiento de Acapulco, A.C.
 Agroindustriales Amucoti, SPR
 Ciudadanos de Xochixtlahuaca
 Centro de Consultoría e Investigación Antropológica de Guerrero
 Unión de Ejidos Luz de la Montaña
 Movimiento Indígena
 Sindicato de Trabajadores Académicos de la Universidad Autónoma de Guerrero
 Coordinadora Estatal de Trabajadores de la Educación de Guerrero (CETEG)
 Centro Mexicano del Derecho Ambiental (CEMDA)
 Unión Estatal de Organizaciones Económicas y Mujeres Productoras de Guerrero, A.C.
 Unión de Grupos Colectivos de Trabajo de Techan, A.C.
 Sociedad de Producción Rural de Responsabilidad Limitada A-gua Natse
 Federación Agronómica Guerrerense
 Organización para el Poder de los Trabajadores y Campesinos (*Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan, MKSS*)

Public Institutions

Comisión de Desarrollo Agropecuario y Pesquero, Congreso del Estado
 Comisión de Acceso a la Información Pública de Guerrero (Caipegro)
 Instituto de Estudio Parlamentarios Eduardo Nerí
 Secretaría de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (Semarnat-Guerrero)
 Secretaría de Desarrollo Social (Sedesol-Guerrero)
 Desarrollo Integral de la Familia-Guerrero (DIF)
 Coordinación de Planeación para el Desarrollo del Estado de Guerrero (Copladeg)
 Comisión Estatal de Defensa de los Derechos Humanos
 Coordinación de Fortalecimiento Municipal del Gobierno del Estado de Guerrero
 XEUAG, Radio Universidad de Guerrero
 Fundación Produce de Guerrero
 Colegio de Bachilleres

Chilpancingo, Gro, State Congress, November 16, 2006