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**Bolivia: Towards the Second and Final Independence with Homeland and Social Justice**

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By: Bertha Mojena Milian / Special for CubaSi

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With a floral offering and the hoisting of flags, from Sucre, the cradle of freedom, the Honor Session for the 198th anniversary of the independence of Bolivia began this Sunday, with the presence of President Luis Arce Catacora and the leadership of the country, as well as representatives of political parties and social movements from all over the nation.

As is traditional, an ancestral offering was also made to thank Pachamama for all her blessings and ask her to continue guiding the country towards stability and progress, while congratulatory messages and good wishes arrived from many parts of the world, including that of the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba and President of the Republic, Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez, who considered the Bolivian people as an example of those who fight for their sovereignty.

"It was 198 years ago that Bolivia broke into the concert of free, sovereign and independent nations, an act preceded by an intense and bloody war that for 16 years kept a check on the colonial power in Alto Peru, which was sealed in the famous fields of Junin and Ayacucho," recalled Arce Catacora when speaking at the ceremony.

The president reaffirmed the patriotic conviction and undying decision, commitment, and perseverance to not stop fighting for a Homeland with social justice, since "it took 181 years for Bolivia to open a process of change whose paternity belongs to all those who fought against imperialism, capitalism and all forms of neocolonial exploitation".

He repeated that his country is experiencing today a democratic and cultural Revolution with which the Bolivian people were dignified, with which sovereignty over natural resources has been established and progress is being made "towards the second and definitive independence"; that is the existence of "our Plurinational State."

For Lucho Arce, the path the people have taken to achieve full economic independence and political sovereignty is not free from dangers and threats of reversal, as happened with the rupture of the constitutional order in 2019. He recalled that in 2020 thanks to unity, the struggle and the conscience of the people, recovered democracy and left uncertainty behind. "The struggle of the Bolivian brothers and sisters has not only allowed us to recover the path of

stability, but also of hope," he said.

Despite these achievements, he warned about the new threats that loom over Bolivia due to foreign ambition over its natural wealth and that divided and confronted could once again make them an easy prey for foreign interests to the Homeland. And he assured: "Being aware of this possibility should lead us to join efforts to face future contingencies with a sense of Homeland, prioritizing the common good and not personal interests."

He called for a qualitative leap - in view of the Bicentennial of independence - to stop being a consuming and importing country and definitively become a producing and industrialized country, which produces what it needs first and then promotes exports, in which strong steps are already being taken with the import substitution policies that have been directed at micro, small, medium and large entrepreneurs in the productive sector for the reactivation and development of the national industry.

"Today we can tell our people that the national economy has already managed to overcome many economic and social variables, the pre-pandemic levels of 2019 and this is something we should be proud of," Luis Arce added in his words, remarking that his government has been recognized as that of "industrialization" because it advances like never before in the sovereign transformation of natural resources.

He also called for continuing to encourage self-knowledge, the path of science and technology and that this day of national celebration allows them to strengthen unity as a diverse, dignified people, who strives, works, and looks into the horizon with the certainty that they are building a better future for their daughters and sons.

"Consequently, you Bolivian sisters and brothers are the legitimate heroes and heroines of our Second and definitive independence towards which we are advancing," concluded his words, with what could be defined as a declaration of principles, the path to follow.

In context: Bolivian economy.

- The average growth rate of the economy between 2021 and 2022 was 4.8%, higher than that reached in 2019 of 2.2%.
- The nominal GDP of 2022 was \$44,315 million, higher than \$41,193 million in 2019 and GDP per capita reached \$3,691 in 2022.
- Positive balance in the average trade balance of \$1,044 million between 2021 and 2022, higher than the consecutive average trade deficits of more than \$1,000 million between 2015 and 2019.
- It's once again among the nations with the greatest stability and economic growth in the region.

**Translated by Amilkal Labañino / CubaSí Translation Staff**

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