

PROPOSAL TO ENHANCE THE VISION AND THE STRATEGIC GUIDELINES OF THE IIRSA

Everybody knows that without infrastructure there is not development. However, we have also learned that infrastructure is not a synonym of development and, in fact, reality in South America shows us that the infrastructure built up to date has kept neighboring settlers under extremely poor conditions. In other words, it has not been very effective to eradicate poverty or eliminate the fragility of our economies or achieve an economic development with much social participation or have sustainable growth.

So far, the IIRSA has worked to boost the infrastructure projects and some complementary initiatives; nonetheless, if we do not provide it with elements that turn infrastructure into real mechanisms to improve the quality of life of our inhabitants, we will necessarily have to consider this topic in the future. This is why Bolivia's proposal is to discuss some related initiatives in the hope that they will enhance the Integration Initiative.

1. Conception of South America as an economic-social bloc that is able to negotiate with other blocs or world powers.

The IIRSA has already stated where we want to go, and we propose to include in the objectives the conception of South America as an economic-social bloc that, turning its resources into development, participates in the global scene, with its own force and being able to have an influence on the relations with the rest of the economies in the world for the benefit of its own interest. This bloc should be so strong that the crisis of the big powerful countries, like the current one, can relatively affect us.

2. Infrastructure as a service to production complementarity

Without excluding extra-regional trade, our main objective must not be the development of infrastructure to trade with the big economies. Instead, we must give priority to the fact that infrastructure should be used to develop our economic complementarity potentials and take profit from the advantages of being regionally close. Infrastructure must follow the guidelines that the policies related to economic complementarity and sustainable growth in our region indicate.

3. More socialization of the IIRSA and more possibilities to participate

We all know the critics on the IIRSA and we can understand that they may be solved by extending the participation of social sectors, such as: indigenous communities, farmers, working and intellectual classes, in the debates of the IIRSA. We must foster meetings with many sectors in the society and include them in the debates on the South American integration.

4. UNASUR – Membership

Lately we have discussed, without much success, the role of the GTI of the UNASUR and its relation with the IIRSA. However, being the latter a South American initiative for the integration of the region, related to infrastructure, and being the UNASUR a more integral instance, it is reasonable to think that they must complement each other instead of being isolated from each other. Additionally, in order of preference, the IIRSA must take shelter in the UNASUR.

5. Initiative of an organization that outlines production complementarity

In order to develop the proposals related to production complementarity and regional commercial advantages, we think that an organization must be created (inside or outside the IIRSA). But this organization must provide the political lines that the IIRSA must use as a guide. So, we propose that this organization should be part of the Infrastructure Initiative and that it should start working by the first half of 2009.