

*Conaie to hold VII Congress of  
Indigenous People of Ecuador*

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**?As part of the Congress, the Governing Council of the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (Conaie) will be renewed after three years of mandate and an additional one due to the pandemic. | Photo: EFE?**

Quito, June 25 (RHC)-- Representatives of Ecuador's ancestral peoples are arriving to the province of Tungurahua to attend the VII Congress of the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (Conaie).

During the event, scheduled for this weekend, the communities of the 18 peoples and 14 Ecuadorian nationalities will discuss issues of interest to them, such as the defense of their territory against extractivism.

Other topics are the organizational processes of CONAIE, indigenous justice, intercultural bilingual education, intercultural health and community transportation, as well as the negative impact of rising fuel prices.

On the other hand, the election of the new board of directors of the organization for the next three years will be one of the central issues on the agenda, since the current Governing Council has an additional year of mandate due to the pandemic. Some five candidates are aspiring to the Presidency of the Confederation so far.

Two women and three men aspire to the presidency of Conaie and respond to the names of Maria Andrade (Kichwa-Sarguro people), Matilde Tenesaca (Indigenous Movement of Chimborazo), Marco Guatemala (communities of the Northern Sierra), Leonidas Iza (president of the Indigenous and Peasant Movement of Cotopaxi) and Javier Aguavil (leader of the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of the Coast).

According to the organizers, more than 2,000 people from 53 organizations are expected to participate in the congress, so they will have to comply with strict biosecurity measures in order to avoid contagion by coronavirus.

The venue will be the parish state of the Salasaka people, in Tungurahua and will be in a tense context after the arrest of the Kichwa leader Antonio Vargas, which, according to leaders of indigenous organizations, is politically motivated.

In addition, the event will take place in the midst of demands to repeal the decree that established the fixing of bands for fuel prices, thus increasing the values of gasoline and diesel on a monthly basis.

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