

CONAIE leader affirms no major progress has been made in Ecuador dialogues



Representatives of the Government of Ecuador and the leaders of the three indigenous groups participating in these talks signed an agreement on the issue of energy and natural resources. Sept. 10, 2022. | Photo: Twitter: @CONAIE_Ecuador

Quito, September 11 (RHC)-- Leonidas Iza, leader of the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities (CONAIE), spoke with reporters, saying that "not much progress has been made on the oil and mining issues".

Iza made this assessment on the same day that the representatives of the Government of Ecuador and the leaders of the three indigenous groups participating in these talks signed an agreement on the issue of energy and natural resources.

Regarding oil, a temporary moratorium was declared on the development of 15 oil blocks and the suspension of new mining contracts until a law on prior community consultations is established. In the mining sector, the government committed to suspending the issuance of mining titles and environmental

licenses for the initiation of new activities in the sector until the necessary regulations are in place.

In turn, the Minister of Energy and Mines, Xavier Vera, declared to journalists that the round tables are working, although he acknowledged that there have been "agreements and also disagreements, but that is what dialogue is," he said.

In fact, the commitment was to close on Friday, September 9, the dialogue roundtables that remained open; that is to say, the focalization of fuel subsidies, price control, productive promotion and energy and natural resources.

However, the last three were reinstated, although there was the signing of a document with the agreements and disagreements. The remaining five roundtables will be installed next Monday and will meet until October 12th.

On June 13, the indigenous communities of Ecuador left their regions to march to the cities, including Quito, the capital, to demand a series of social and economic demands from the government of conservative President Guillermo Lasso.

These protests were joined by various unions and continued for several weeks, leaving at least eight people dead and severely affecting the oil industry. The protests forced immediate cuts in gasoline and diesel prices, fertilizer subsidies and other measures which, according to the government, will cost hundreds of millions of dollars.

Protesters outraged at the government's inaction began calling for the resignation of Lasso, who put an end to the protests on June 30, proposing the opening of a 90-day dialogue with indigenous leaders from three groups to discuss the demands.

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