

# *Venezuelan Electoral Head Praises Constituent Assembly as Path to Peace*

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Caracas, May 4 (RHC)-- Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro has presented the official decree to the National Electoral Council in Caracas to call for a constituent assembly in a move to diffuse high-running political tensions in the South American country.

Tibisay Lucena, president of the National Electoral Council, known as the CNE, said this constitutional process comes at a time when Venezuela is experiencing a crucial moment in its political history. "This process will lead to the peace that we all want and deserve," said Lucena.

President Maduro said he convened a constituent assembly to call for dialogue that will lead to peace, saying that the process would be characterized by deep popular participation. "I've come to fulfill my responsibility," said Maduro in a speech as he delivered the decree. "I come with a willingness for constitutional peace and to activate the most important mechanism for dialogue."

The president said the decree already has legal force and that with its publication in the official gazette, the organization process is set to begin. He also criticized the right-wing opposition for rejecting calls for dialogue and instead urging people to rebel against the call for a constituent assembly to reform the

constitution.

"While they call for violence, I call for a constituent assembly. While they call violent groups, I call the people." Nicolas Maduro addressed thousands of supporters outside the CNE, saying that the new constitution will make history and "change everything that needs to be changed."

"Today I have given the power to the people; the people will decide if they want war or peace," he said. He proposed protecting all the social missions in the constitution so that they will not be easily scrapped in the future and to include a chapter on the rights of the youth in order to enshrine their right to study.

"I dream of a united youth, and a constituent assembly in the hands of the youth," the president said. Maduro announced popular elections will take place in the coming weeks to select the representatives to sit in the constituent assembly.

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