

Mexican Congress approves reform in favor of indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples

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This is a fundamental step towards recognizing the rights of indigenous peoples, and especially

Mexico City, September 19 (RHC)-- The Chamber of Deputies of the Mexican Congress approved on Wednesday a constitutional reform aimed at recognizing the rights of indigenous and Afro-descendant communities, presented by the president of Mexico, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, as part of a package of 20 initiatives.

The ruling reforms, adds and repeals the second article of the Mexican Constitution on indigenous peoples and communities and thanks to this, indigenous peoples can be recognized as subjects of law in Mexico, where more than 23 million people identify themselves as such, out of a total of 126 million inhabitants.

The text, which after the debate will be sent to the Senate, where it is also expected to be approved until it becomes a decree, recognizes the multiethnic and pluricultural composition of the North American country, as well as indigenous peoples and communities as subjects of public law with legal personality and their own assets.

With 492 votes in favor, we approved in particular the constitutional reform that gives broad recognition to the rights of indigenous and Afro-Mexican peoples.

In addition, it elevates to constitutional rank the right of communities to free, prior, informed and culturally appropriate consultation regarding legislative and administrative measures that may cause harm and impact on their lives or environment, in order to obtain their consent or reach an agreement.

It also determines that indigenous people will have, at all times, the right to be assisted and advised by interpreters, translators, defenders and experts specialized in indigenous rights, legal pluralism, gender perspective, and cultural and linguistic diversity.

Claudia Salas, from the opposition Citizen Movement, stated that "With the approval of this constitutional reform, we are taking a fundamental step to recognize the rights of indigenous peoples, and especially of indigenous women, who have been doubly ignored and marginalized for a long time."

For his part, Asael Hernández Cerón, opposition deputy of the National Action Party (PAN), considered that the reform "does not contemplate resources and a law or public policy without resources is simple demagoguery. In the Parliamentary Group of the PAN we request that this fundamental point be considered for its correct and effective implementation."

The package of reforms presented by President Andrés Manuel López Obrador last February includes, among others, the reform to the Judicial Branch approved last week and that of the National Guard that is about to be discussed in the Mexican Congress.

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