

# *Afro-Ecuadoreans Join National Debate on Wealth Distribution*

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Quito, July 30 (teleSUR-RHC)-- More conversations over social equality and wealth distribution are being held Ecuador, with an increasing number of people and groups opening themselves to debate. Teresa Suarez is the President of the Afro-Ecuadorean Association of Ecuador, which represents nearly two million Afro-Ecuadoreans in the country, who are among the poorest groups of society. Her organization has participated in dialogues, which have largely focused on educating the public on the inheritance tax and capital gains bills, in the face of what has been a right-wing misinformation campaign surrounding these measures.

"I can tell you that I live with honor and in dignified conditions," Suarez told teleSUR English on Wednesday. "But I do not have a property valued at \$300,000 because the inheritance tax has a base. And no poor person, and especially someone from the Afro-Ecuadorean community, has an inheritance."

The dialogue meetings hosted by the national government have had favorable results since they began in mid-June. The national debate called for a response to acts of violence by opposition groups over the inheritance tax and wealth redistribution bills.

The governing PAIS Alliance Party has also committed to promoting this dialogue, and has held hundreds of meetings and debates in neighborhoods across the country. "We are widening this dialogue, with all of society. And to date, PAIS Alliance has sponsored more than 400 dialogues in the whole country. There

have been about 22,000 participants already in these dialogues," said coordinator for the national dialogues of PAIS Alliance Alvaro Saenz.

Authorities have made it clear that the dialogue is open to all citizens, but the opposition continues to refuse participation. They have opted instead to organize an indigenous uprising and national strike for August 10 and 13, and are demanding the wealth redistribution bills are discarded.

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