

Conclusion of the III Global Progress Conference

Lula affirms that the world “does not have the right to allow the EU to do away with the democratic heritage of Humanity” and thinks it is “unacceptable” that an economy the size of Greece “puts the whole Europe at risk”

Former Brazilian President calls on multilateral institutions to enforce the fulfillment of the recommendations of international organizations such as putting an end to the lack of transparency of banks, expanding financial controls, fighting against tax havens and enforcing sanctions to protect public finances

The candidate of the PSOE to the Spanish Presidency, Pérez Rubalcaba, argues in favor of “the cushion of Social democracy” and the adjustment of “the usual values to today’s challenges”

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Former Brazilian President, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, during his closing speech of the III Global Progress Conference, affirmed that “the world does not have the right to allow the EU to end” because “what Europeans achieved after the II World War are part of the democratic heritage of Humanity” and therefore, he said it is “unacceptable that an economy the size of Greece has to put at risk the whole EU. It is as if a nail of my little finger could kill me.”

Lula Da Silva recalled that during the G-20 meetings of 2008 and 2009 “a precise diagnosis was carried out on the causes of the crisis. Then, we said at that time –he continued- that it was not enough to fight the symptoms but rather to address the causes. WE also said that we could

not defeat this crisis with only adjustment measures, but it was rather necessary to restore growth and development on global scale.”

Despite this, according to Lula, “despite proclaiming in Washington in 2008 and repeating in London in 2009 that the era of the stealth action of banks has come to an end, the recommendations were not fulfilled.” In his opinion, this is due to the fact that “we lack multinational institutions that enforce the fulfillment of the agreement signed by international organizations to identify risky actions, extend the control of financial markets, including hedge funds, fight against tax havens and enforce sanctions to protect public finances.”

Lula thinks that the main problem nowadays is “the high indebtedness of banks, corporations and consumers, which were forced to believe in the policy of credit, through which human beings could buy what they could not pay for.” And, this being so, in his opinion, “the only solution depends on politics. We need brave politicians who are ready to serve bitter beverages, but not to allow the people to pay for the crisis; politicians who think that more about the next generations than the next elections.”

He also remembered his country, Brazil, as well as the whole of Latin America “which is going through its best moment in decades” and recalled that, during his term in office, in only 8 years “Brazil created 16 million jobs and other 28 million people escaped poverty and other 28 million joined the middle class. Moreover, the average income of poor people grew up to 68%”. And that being important, for Lula it was also important to “establish a new State-citizens relation. We restored confidence among the people; we held 73 national conferences all over the country explaining the policies and all the sectors of the population of Brazil were invited to collaborate.”

After Lula da Silva, the candidate of the PSOE to the Spanish Presidency, Alfredo Pérez Rubalcaba, took the floor to officially close the III Global Progress Conference.

Rubalcaba blamed the current crisis “on the consequences of right – wing policies” and added that “although globalization has created huge employment opportunities, there are generations which are left outside the social welfare, while it is true that hundreds of million people have escaped poverty and new economies have emerged, but globalization has also brought about risks and insecurities.” “We have expanded the culture of information –he explained- but this has exacerbated the general feeling of inequity in some countries; we have doubled the life expectancy of our grandparents but we are also the first generation to have jeopardized the future of our Planet.” Faced with this new reality and considering that globalization has changed the rules of the game, the socialist candidate considers that there are only two choices: “let the markets or the conservatives –whoa are generally the same- govern the change, or, we can govern them ourselves with the citizens.”

For this to be feasible, Rubalcaba thinks it is necessary to “match economic growth with the guarantee of equity, because it is the only way citizens can feel that they are part of the same common project, part of a system that it beneficial to the majority.”

At this point, Rubalcaba upheld more than ever Social democracy and its values like “a formula to make recovery, not only efficient, but also just. Right-wing policies have led us to this economic disaster and it is thanks to the cushion of Social democracy that the crisis did not spiral into human tragedy.

For all these reasons, the socialist candidate proclaimed that “Social democracy has worked, it must be updated, but it has worked. Now it is time to combine social protection and redistribution with the extension of equal opportunities” for which it is vital to “train people who are able to create, to innovate.”

After claiming the “adaptation of the usual values to today’s challenges”, Rubalcaba defended the public and active participate of the State “as a guarantor of social protection, redistribution, job creation and an answer to the deterioration of the environment and the fight against poverty.”

He ended by urging Europe “to leave behind its self-absorption” and claimed an effort for “the institutions that are already created, like the Lisbon Treaty, to work at least” and has repeated again the urgent need “to protect the single currency against speculation with the creation of Eurobonds” while he once again demanded a tax on European financial transactions.