

UNITED TOWARDS THE BICENTENARY. FOURTEEN YEARS OF THE PLURINATIONAL
STATE OF BOLIVIA

**ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE PLURINATIONAL STATE OF BOLIVIA, LUÍS
ALBERTO ARCE CATAORA**

ANNIVERSARY OF THE PLURINATIONAL STATE OF BOLIVIA

La Paz, January 22, 2023

(APPLAUSE)

Good morning, everyone. On this special day, I'd like to extend greetings to our *Jilata*, David Choquehuanca Céspedes, Vice President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia and *ex officio* President of the Plurinational Legislative Assembly of our country.

I should also like to extend greetings to brothers Andrónico Rodríguez, president of the Chamber of Senators, and Jerges Mercado, president of the Chamber of Deputies, as well as to our sister ministers, and ministers of State;

to the General of the Army, Hugo Arandia López, Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, and to the Military Command that accompanies him today; to General Orlando Vladimir Ponce Málaga, acting General Commander of the Bolivian Police, and to the Police Command;

to the ambassadors, diplomatic corps, and representatives of international organizations who honor us with their presence;

to brothers Jorge Richter, presidential spokesman, Juan Carlos Huarachi, executive secretary of our Bolivian Workers Union, Ever Rojas Alvarado, executive secretary of the Single Trade Union Confederation of Peasant Workers of Bolivia; to sister Flora Aguilar, executive secretary of the Bartolina Sisa National Confederation of Peasant, Indigenous, and Native Women of Bolivia, and through her to all the Bartolina sisters who have joined us today;

(APPLAUSE)

to brother Esteban Alavi, executive secretary of the Trade Union Confederation of Native Intercultural Communities of Bolivia, and to all the intercultural brothers and sisters;

(APPLAUSE)

to brother Jorge Ramiro Cucho, *jiliri apu mallku* of the National Council of *Ayllus* and *Marqas* of the *Qollasuyo*, CONAMAQ, and to all the CONAMAQ representatives that accompany us today;

(APPLAUSE)

to brother Justo Molina, president of the Confederation of Indigenous Peoples of Bolivia's Eastern, Chaco and Amazon regions, and to all his entourage;

(APPLAUSE)

to Sister Amalia Yanarico, executive secretary of the Trade Union Confederation of Intercultural Women of Bolivia and to all our intercultural sisters who honor us with their presence today.

(APPLAUSE)

I should also like to extend a special greeting to all the sisters and brothers of the indigenous peoples who accompany us today, as well as to the national, departmental and regional representatives of our social, mining, labor and worker organizations.

I extend a special greeting to all Bolivians on this 14th anniversary of the Plurinational State of Bolivia and a big hug to our Afro-Bolivian brothers and sisters who are present with us today.

(APPLAUSE)

I'd like to thank the Moxos Ensemble, from the Artistic Training Institute of San Ignacio de Moxos, Beni, for having delighted us with their musical presentations. Many Thanks.

(APPLAUSE)

Finally, I should like to extend the warmest greetings to all Bolivian sisters and brothers who are following us through the media and social networks within our national soil, as well as to those who live abroad for circumstantial reasons.

Sisters and brothers, Bolivian men and women who inhabit the plains, the valleys, the Amazon, the Chaco and the highlands of our beautiful country; Bolivian men and women living in other countries.

Today, we commemorate one more year of the glorious birth of our Plurinational State of Bolivia, which, unlike the old colonial Republic --that blatant State of hierarchies we had had since the founding of Bolivia--, recognizes all of us and brings us all together in our plurality, with our similarities and differences.

This is our identity today and our sense of belonging as human beings within a great and diverse society, but also as collective beings organized around our nations and our ancestral communities.

(APPLAUSE)

The traumatic presence of the Spanish empire in our lands, the exploitation and looting of our natural resources, and exclusion ultimately forged an

awareness that soon turned into a struggle for independence, sovereignty, dignity, and social justice.

The oppression exerted by the Spanish crown on the native peoples worsened and grew stronger as more wealth was found in the lands of Upper Peru. Indigenous rebellions soon became more frequent and new leaders also began to emerge and stand against the rule by those who had implemented a society of castes, privileges and hierarchies in our territory, where the owners of those lands --the native indigenous peoples-- were reduced to mere labor force.

The most geographically widespread indigenous rebellion took place towards the end of the 18th century. In March 1781, Tupac Katari began the first siege that lasted for more than a hundred days. Accompanied by his life and struggle partner, Bartolina Sisa, a great leader, and his sister, Gregoria Apaza, Katari fought against the Spanish rule.

Tupac Katari's last words before being dismembered still resonate in our history and, as an inescapable sentence, they guide the steps of our Democratic and Cultural Revolution: *"They will kill me alone..., but I will return tomorrow and I will be millions."*

The views of Tupac Katari, Bartolina Sisa and so many indigenous warriors from our lands --who sought to end the abuses imposed by the Spanish empire-- guide our steps today in the effort to build a decolonized, more inclusive and just society.

As early as during the republican life, the seigniorial oligarchy reproduced an internal colonialism that developed rapidly, sustaining spaces of injustice and social inequality, racism, submission and contempt for the indigenous, the chola, the cunumi, and the people of color.

During the colonial Republic, the majorities were politically, socially, culturally, and economically excluded; and their rights continued to be mutilated because they were not considered citizens.

Society was built on a farce of democracy, as privileges, hierarchies, and servitudes continued. It was a State where doctors, soldiers, priests, landowners, professionals, technicians, merchants, industrialists, and others made up the privileged stratum, with the servitude --deprived of human dignity and a salary-- below them.

Bolivia saw its first mass party, Belzu's party, in 1843; that which Arguedas contemptuously referred to as "the mob in action." These were times in which the popular strata of the newly-formed Bolivian society emerged as political protagonists for the first time. Belzu stated before the 1855 Congress: "The popular masses have made their voices heard and played their role spontaneously; they have put down revolutions and fought for the Constitutional government. The emergence of this formidable power is a social fact of undeniable significance." It was a brief and fruitful time of reparation and construction of popular awareness.

It was at this point when the indigenous sectors saw that their lands did not belong to them and Pablo Zárate Willka led an army of indigenous and

native peoples to confront the abuses of the republican State and its reluctance to give them land as property.

In the Caracollo Proclamation of 1899, Zárate Willka asked for reciprocal respect in the treatment between whites and the indigenous, "whites and the neighbors should respect the Indians in the same way because they have the same blood and are children of Bolivia, and they should love each other as brothers and as Indians." Reciprocal respect --a phrase that even today some people do not understand in its true dimension.

During that time, which corresponds to the so-called Mining Oligarchy, the majority class, the indigenous and peasants, remained mired in poverty, deprived of the right to education or health.

The harsh conflict that the Chaco War entailed for all Bolivians revealed how little we knew each other in our own country and the ineptitude of an indifferent political class.

Social demands and popular clamor made their way from various social sectors and regions. It was a time of ideological change in which, in 1936, General David Toro expressed his manifest intention to implant "State Socialism" in Bolivia. The new daily terminology of national politics now incorporated words as "social justice", "vindication", and "reactionary parties". From the government of Toro onwards, the decisive presence of unionism in Bolivia, with a view towards preserving the rights of workers, began to take shape. Toro founded YFPB and nationalized the Standard Oil Co., given the tax fraud incurred by the latter foreign company.

We recognize the contribution made by Colonel Germán Busch to the popular national construction, his call for social constitutionalism approved in 1938, and the deep and structural changes made, which include: the nationalization of the Central Bank of Bolivia, the nationalization of profits from big mining, the implementation of the Labor Code, Bolivia's railway connection with Brazil and Argentina, and the strongly social-in-nature 1938 Constitution, among other measures of necessity and historical reparation. Germán Busch's actions paved the way for another soldier committed to popular causes to continue his legacy.

Gualberto Villarroel deepened the social and popular path. In his two-year mandate, which began in 1944, he underpinned important social changes in favor of the working and indigenous classes; it was in the latter that the idea expressed in the phrase we still remember to this day translated, namely: *"I am not an enemy of the rich, but I am more a friend of the poor."*

On May 10, 1945, Villarroel made possible the holding of the First Indigenous Congress. Last year, I stated in this regard that this Congress undoubtedly marked a milestone in the history of our country. Everything the indigenous movement has done, from its resistance to Spanish colonialism to its different expressions of discontent in the face of the abuses and inhumane treatment endured by our brothers and sisters for so many years, is highly significant.

We also owe President Villarroel the abolition of *pongueaje* and *mitaje*. The words he uttered then come back to life today: "Work the land with enthusiasm, fulfill your duty, but do not humiliate yourselves. We are all equal; there should be no *pongos* or *mittanis* in Bolivia. Article 5 of the Constitution states that slavery is illegal in Bolivia. There are no servitudes and no one can be forced to provide personal services without prior agreement and without being paid a fair salary."

There is so much dignity in that message and so much commitment in the historic determination of a man that ended up a victim of the oligarchic and reactionary sectors of our country.

Following the uneasiness of the assassination of Villarroel, the Pulacayo Thesis marked another milestone in the construction of a proletarian awareness in the Bolivian labor movement. With the miners defined as the most advanced and combative sector of the national proletariat, the unions proposed a bourgeois-democratic and agrarian revolution, and posited the fight against imperialism, fascism and classist collaborationism.

The construction of the historical subject as within the essence of the national popular took decades of a historical accumulation process which had been canceled and interrupted by successive military dictatorships.

As early as in 1969, the presence of Marcelo Quiroga Santa Cruz, accompanied by a deep commitment to democracy and the non-negotiable preservation of our natural resources made that commitment manifest when he became the architect of the recovery of gas and oil from the transnational Gulf Oil Company. The benefits for our country from the nationalization of this company were economically essential.

Marcelo's fight is also the fight of thousands of Bolivians for a society with greater equality and a fair democracy in their political representation.

The economic and social asymmetries produced by the neoliberal model, applied insensitively by the old actors of participatory, led to a setback in the popular and social struggle for a more inclusive State without hierarchies. Years of exclusion and neoliberal policies that privatized our state companies and basic services unleashed mobilizations that were increasingly committed to change.

At the end of the 1980s and during the 1990s, several important mobilizations of the organized peoples took place, including the "March for Life" --a large mobilization of Bolivian mine workers and popular sectors against the relocation of miners and the trampling of their labor rights provoked by the famous 21060 Decree.

Reference can also be made to the historic "March for Territory and Dignity", in which indigenous peoples from the lowlands demanded recognition, inclusion, and respect for their territory and culture.

And it is also necessary to recall the 500-Year Campaign of Indigenous Resistance.

Subsequently came the Water War in 2000, the Gas War in 2003, the demand

for a Constituent Assembly and the nationalization of our strategic companies, which configured an agenda that called for a new State, with better and broader political representation, with the presence of historically invisible political actors --who were the majority-- and relegated political organizations.

It was then that the leadership strength of brother Evo Morales ultimately became the unifying axis of the popular movement to move from resistance to the seizure of power.

Our brother Evo, on January 21, 2006, in a historic ancestral ceremony in Tiwanaku stated: "*aymara, quechua, and mojeño peoples, we are presidents*" in light of the fact that this was the first time in our history that an indigenous person swore in as President of our country.

(APPLAUSE)

And since January 22, 2006, a new era has opened for the Bolivian people: the time of our Democratic and Cultural Revolution, of the Process of Change that re-founded the old colonial and neoliberal State, nationalized our strategic natural resources, and redistributed wealth which had until then concentrated in the hands of few.

Likewise, upon swearing in office, he recalled liberation martyrs as Tupac Katari, Bartolina Sisa, Zárate Willca, Apiaguaiki Tumpa, Andrés Ibañez, Marcelo Quiroga Santa Cruz, Luis Espinal, Simón Bolívar, and the indigenous movement of Bolivia and all of Our America.

Sisters and brothers, we evoke our history because it is important to know where we come from and where we are going.

(APPLAUSE)

Bolivian men and women have August 6 as the date that marks the anniversary of our independence, and today we are on our way to our Bicentennial.

And we also have January 22, which constitutes the re-foundation of our State; a Plurinational State which is studied and considered an example to many countries; politically, socially, economically and culturally inclusive; one which takes into account and values our nations, deepening democracy, as the expansion of political rights and the incorporation of intercultural democracy broadens and preserves our various forms of self-government.

A historic Constituent Assembly was installed in 2006, allowing everyone to be represented for the first time in our history, as well as to have a voice and listen to one another without there being first-, second-, and third-class Bolivians.

Our sister Silvia Lazarte, an indigenous woman in a traditional skirt, a fighter committed to the interests of the peoples, was president of that Constituent Assembly.

(APPLAUSE)

We collectively built a new constitutional text, aware that our plurinationality is our greatest wealth and strength. And, following the approval of our Political Constitution of the State, in 2009, with more than 60% support in a constitutional referendum, we gradually began to leave behind those inert structures of a State that was in place for only a few and that turned its back on the great majorities.

A new horizon has been drawn. The bases for a new State have been laid; one of Social Unity and Plurinational Community Law; a free, independent, sovereign, democratic, intercultural, and decentralized State with autonomies, founded on plurality and political, economic, legal, cultural and linguistic pluralism, within the integration process of our country.

Our Bolivian nation comprises the entirety of Bolivian men and women, the native indigenous peasant nations and peoples, and the intercultural and Afro-Bolivian communities, which together constitute the Bolivian people, as established under our Political Constitution of the State.

(APPLAUSE)

And just as we define a new political, social and cultural fabric, the new economic structure and organization of our State is also established with a model aimed at improving the quality of life and Living Well for all Bolivians, articulating state, private, social, cooperative, and community economic organization forms to ensure comprehensive development through the equitable redistribution of economic surpluses in social, health, education, and cultural policies, and in reinvestments and productive economic development.

We have regained sovereignty over our natural resources. The State took over the leading role in our economy, controlling and redistributing the economic surplus that was once externalized.

We have left behind the neoliberal model, a privatizing and starving model, of State looting, imposed on the majority of Latin American countries as part of the strategy of unipolar domination and hegemony, which always sought to expropriate our natural resources to finance the capitalist development of northern countries.

Our Productive Community Social Economic Model is sovereign, made by Bolivians and for Bolivians, and responds to our reality. With it, we work for economic growth with social justice, and stability becomes heritage of the Bolivian people.

We must never lose sight of the fact that with the rupture of the constitutional order of 2019, an attempt was made to return to the colonial Republic and the neoliberal model; but the Bolivian people have democratically defined our horizon, our project as a country, with a dignified, sovereign Plurinational State, founded on decolonization and depatriarchalization; an intercultural democracy, and an alternative economic model to neoliberalism.

The Bolivian people recovered our democracy in 2020, in the streets and at the polls, with more than 55%.

(APPLAUSE)

And thanks to that fight we have returned to the path of building our Plurinational State, the path of inclusion, the path of stability and economic growth with social justice.

As of today, despite an adverse international setting and as a result of the policies implemented within the framework of our economic model --aimed at an economic and productive reconstruction-- we have recorded a positive growth of 6.1% for the 2021 term and about 4% for late 2022.

(APPLAUSE)

We cannot fail to recall that we come from a deep economic crisis provoked by the de facto government's terrible economic administration and the pandemic. As of the second quarter of 2020, a 12% decrease in our economy was recorded that year.

It has not been easy to get out of that crisis, but thanks to the trust vested in our Government by the people and the work of all those who bet on our Homeland, we are moving forward, committed to the reconstruction of our Homeland, working for productive diversification, food security with sovereignty, and industrialization with import substitution, thus reducing poverty and economic and social inequalities.

International organizations as the World Bank position our country among the 3 countries with the highest growth in the region for the 2023 administration.

(APPLAUSE)

Various economic indicators attest to our economic reconstruction and, above all, to the stability of our economy, in comparison to other countries that have been affected by the international crisis that is overwhelming the entire planet today.

Our economic model has the great virtue of not only looking abroad, but also betting on the revitalization of internal demand, which is what allows us to face the international economic crisis in better terms.

As part of some of the measures adopted in this direction, we established soft loans for entrepreneurs who substitute imports with their production through *SI BOLIVIA* with 2,393 million BOB and, up to December, an amount of 1,280 million BOB had been disbursed in favor of 9,466 productive units, of which 98% are micro and small companies; 71% of the total disbursements correspond to credits for the Manufacturing Industry.

With the purpose of boosting production "Made in Bolivia" we have established the mobile application "*Consume lo Nuestro*", which to date has generated 210 million in income in favor of 810 production units.

Likewise, through the incentives for the importation of capital goods, more than 4,200 million BOB entered the country free of VAT payment, and more than 1,941 million BOB have been sold in the domestic market, benefiting the agricultural, livestock, industrial, construction and mining

sectors. We continue to promote Public Investment through the Support Trust for the Reactivation of Public Investment - FARIP, which already has 1,918 million BOB prioritized, oriented towards infrastructure and social projects pertaining to the Autonomous Territorial Entities.

Through the Competitive Fund for Productive Public Investment - FOCIPP, 669 million BOB have already been approved for productive projects aimed at import substitution in 74 municipalities that have benefited from this program.

Regarding the implementation of the VAT refund, we have more than 64 million BOB in taxes refunded to more than 97,000 beneficiaries.

Through these and other economic and social measures we have been applying since November 2020, we are obtaining concrete results that directly benefit the people, and that have allowed us to resume our path of economic growth with social justice.

The unemployment rate went from 11% in the third quarter of 2020 to 4% in a similar period in the past administration. Throughout that period of time, more than 214 thousand people ceased to be unemployed. Extreme poverty went from 14% in 2020 to 11% in 2021 and, in the same trend, moderate poverty went from 39% to 36% in the same period of time.

(APPLAUSE)

These are both the lowest figures recorded in recent years in our country.

Only until November 2022, our exports reached a figure of 12,617 million dollars, more than 25% compared to the total for 2021, reaching record levels in the history of national exports. Thus, the trade surplus in the country has been maintained with more than 760 million dollars, which is positive for our country this time.

On the other hand, as of the third quarter of 2022, a surplus of 1,026 million dollars has been recorded in the current account of payment balance, reversing the deficit recorded since 2015. The surplus in the current account of payment balance improves the external position of the country and strengthens the Bolivian economy.

In the financial area, public deposits increased by 6.1% compared to 2021, reflecting the people's confidence in the financial system. The loan portfolio increased by 7.3% compared to the 2021 administration. Loans for the productive sector increased by 9.3% compared to the 2021 administration, allowing companies to increase and/or improve their productive capacity. In this vein, social interest housing loans increased by 7.3% compared to 2021. These are some of the data that reflect the growth and dynamism experienced by our economy today.

(APPLAUSE)

Despite the unprecedented international crisis affecting the entire world, Bolivia has the lowest inflation rate in the region, with a percentage of 3.1% recorded in the past administration.

(APPLAUSE)

Our Government's economic policies have been basically aimed at maintaining the purchase power of Bolivians and protecting the well-being of families.

We are also redoubling our efforts to strengthen our security policy with food sovereignty by improving the processes of technological innovation, phytosanitary management, technical assistance, agricultural production, and commercialization.

Within this framework, we have support programs for the production and commercialization of vegetables, focused on tomatoes, onions, carrots, broad beans and peas, such as: the National Program to Support Cotton Production, the National Program for Tubers and Roots, and the National Program to Strengthen and Support Beekeeping Production, which add an investment of 1,317 million BOB.

(APPLAUSE)

Sisters and brothers, I would like to emphasize a commitment we had undertaken, which we are also fulfilling and which is very important for our country --which, had been condemned to being a supplier of raw materials before our Democratic and Cultural Revolution. I mean industrialization with import substitution, which will undoubtedly change the economic and political history of our country.

In the second semester of the preceding administration, the Bolivian Hydrocarbons Industrialization Company, EBIH, inaugurated the Granulated Fertilizer Plant, located in the department of Cochabamba, to become operative by mid-2023, which will contribute to the development of national agricultural production and food sovereignty with an investment of 62 million BOB and will create 110 direct jobs and more than 2,800 indirect jobs.

(APPLAUSE)

It will have an actual production capacity of 60,000 tons per year of different formulations of controlled NPK and Urea release fertilizers, covering the entire national demand, exporting the surplus, and generating economic surpluses for our Plurinational State of Bolivia.

(APPLAUSE)

Our import substitution industrialization policy aims at building a solid, integrated economy, with industrial sovereignty, strengthening the internal market to accelerate our integral development and it is fundamentally based on promoting the growth of the productive capacity of the Bolivian industry, allowing the substitution of imports by using the largest amount of inputs and national raw materials to displace imported products and reduce our dependence on the importation of inputs, industrial equipment and production of consumer goods.

In this sense, in 26 months of administration, a resource of 3,727 million BOB has been guaranteed for the implementation of 33 industries throughout the national territory and a laboratory for industrial services, by

carrying out the following interventions:

The development of new industries for the generation of inputs and processed raw materials for our national industry, strengthening the productive chains. To date, resources of 1,660 million BOB have been guaranteed for the implementation of three palm oil extraction plants in the departments of La Paz, Cochabamba and Beni; a macororó and jatropa oil extraction plant in Villa Montes; and four collection and processing centers for used oils and fats in the departments of La Paz, Oruro, Cochabamba and Santa Cruz. These inputs will be used for the production of organic diesel.

(APPLAUSE)

An industry for the processing and industrialization of our sacred coca leaf and medicinal plants is also being implemented in the department of Cochabamba, as well as a facility for the transformation of soybean by-products and another one for the production of fertilizers and biofertilizers in Santa Cruz. The glass plant in Chuquisaca is also being expanded to provide glass containers to micro and small companies.

We develop each region's potential, encouraging the increase and diversity of their productivity in order for them to transform raw materials instead of exporting them without any added value, initially to satisfy the domestic market with sovereignty and ultimately to export them with higher added value. To date, resources of 2,024 million BOB have been guaranteed for the implementation of an Amazonian fruit processing plant in the Pando department.

(APPLAUSE)

[Mention can also be made to the following:] a camelid industry in the department of Oruro, an almond industrialization plant in the Beni department, a production industrialization plant in the Chuquisaca Chaco, as well as two potato industrialization plants, one in La Paz and another one in Chuquisaca; three fish industrialization plants in La Paz, Beni and Tarija; a fruit processing plant in La Paz and a cereal and almond processing plant in the department of La Paz; two grain storage plants in the department of La Paz, a plant in Santa Cruz and another one in Tarija; two milk processing plants in the departments of Oruro and La Paz, respectively; and a confinement and refrigeration center in the department of Beni.

(APPLAUSE)

We are also working to strengthen the quality infrastructure to improve the competitiveness of the national industry, through the establishment of laboratories. For this purpose, we have started up the IBMETRO laboratories in Sucre and we are building specialized IBMETRO first quality laboratories in the department of La Paz, with an investment of 43 million BOB for quality, weight and composition control of our foods in order to protect the health of the Bolivian people.

We are going to implement the basic chemical industry through the Sulfuric

Acid, Hydrochloric Acid, Sodium Carbonate, Sodium Hydroxide and Calcium Hydroxide plants, which will make it possible to produce the main inputs required by the lithium industry, and which will also provide inputs for the national industry that produces glass, food, detergents, paper and cardboard, medicines, water treatment, among the most important.

Likewise, the pharmaceutical industry will produce inputs and raw materials for other national industries to replace imports in addition to granulated medicines, tablets, capsules, ointments, ointments, injectables, syrups, suspensions, and emulsions, in order for our people to have access to safe, effective and quality medicines at a fair price.

(APPLAUSE)

In the same way, we are working on the implementation of the agro-inputs industry, which will provide biofertilizers with micronutrients to the agricultural sector in order for the latter to improve its productive yields, as well as storage centers for wheat, corn, potatoes, and quinoa, which will allow increasing the strategic food storage capacities of our country in order for our people not to lack food and to have available food reserves. These projects have an estimated budget of more than 3,000 million BOB.

It is also important to highlight that within the framework of our import substitution industrialization policy, through FOCIPP, financing has already been approved for 78 projects in 74 municipalities throughout Bolivia, for an amount of 669 million BOB, among which the following can be highlighted:

The Construction and Equipment of the Garlic Processing Plant in the Municipality of El Punte - Tarija; the construction of the Potato Plant and Industrialization in Chullchungani - Pocona in Cochabamba; the Implementation of a Balanced Feed Processing Plant in the Municipality of Cuatro Cañadas, in Santa Cruz; the Construction of the Andean Potato Industrial Plant in Calamarca - La Paz; the Construction of the Maize Storage and Balancing Plant in Monteagudo - Chuquisaca; the Implementation of a Precast Concrete Plant for the Municipality of Oruro; the Implementation of the Municipal Company Benefiting Amazon Coffee in the municipality of Filadelfia - Pando; the Construction and Equipment of the Salt Industrialization Plant in Colcha K - Potosí; and the Construction and Equipment of the Brick Factory in the municipality of Trinidad; which are among the most relevant.

(APPLAUSE)

All this financed by the National Treasury.

(APPLAUSE)

Regarding evaporitic resources, our company, Bolivian Lithium Fields, ended the 2022 administration with a 555-million-BOB income from lithium carbonate and potassium chloride sales. That is to say: for the second consecutive year, the state-owned lithium company has broken its own sales record. This is the highest figure recorded in history. In addition,

Bolivian Lithium Fields recorded the highest production of lithium carbonate in 2022, reaching 600 metric tons exported to China, Russia and the United Arab Emirates for a value of 367 million BOB.

And with great optimism, I would like to herewith inform you that we have already entered the era of Bolivian lithium industrialization.

(APPLAUSE)

Two days ago, Bolivian Lithium Fields signed an agreement with the Chinese CATL Consortium, for the construction of two lithium carbonate plants, with the Direct Extraction of Lithium - EDL technology, with an investment of more than 1,000 million dollars in our country. This will lay the foundations of the industrialization policy, with a sovereign exploitation model that generates investments in the lithium industry. Bolivia will thus lay the foundations for the industrialization and transformation of our country with sustainable grounds, contemplating the control of the entire production chain by our State company.

Sisters and brothers, we are making progress in health, in education, in our economic and productive reconstruction, and now we are taking the qualitative leap towards industrialization with import substitution. Our country is moving forward. We have recovered the path of stability and hope.

(APPLAUSE)

Today, our Plurinational State of Bolivia turns 14, and we joyfully celebrate our plurality, working irreversibly and inalienably towards a fairer country, free of racism and all forms of discrimination.

With the unity, work, commitment and courage of the Bolivian people, we ratify the love for our Homeland. And I would like to take this opportunity to highlight the organization and permanent mobilization of the working Bolivian people.

(APPLAUSE)

They have always been and will be present in defense of our democracy and our economy.

(APPLAUSE)

Alongside you, sisters and brothers, we are building a more equitable and inclusive society. We dream of a strong country where we can all make our dreams come true, strengthening the culture of life, dialogue, peace and social justice.

We are moving forward, but we still have a lot to do, and today, new conditions at the international and national level also impose new challenges on us. In the case of the former, we commit ourselves to the struggles of the peoples and nations that fight for social justice, strengthening integration to put an end to hegemonic abuses. Domestically, we are committed to formulating, creatively and in permanent consultation with the organized people, new contents to not only give continuity, but

also deepen our Democratic and Cultural Revolution.

(APPLAUSE)

Our Cultural Democratic Revolution has among its most important milestones the re-founding of our Bolivia in a Plurinational State of which we are all proud.

To move forward in this perspective, we must also redouble our efforts to consolidate serious alliances with peoples, nations and governments that share the ideals of a Great Homeland that, respecting our particularities, integrates and strengthens us in the fight against all types of exploitation and oppression, moving forward relentlessly towards the Living Well of all, men and women.

(APPLAUSE)

Today, our Homeland calls us to never again allow democracy and the achievements of the people to be put at risk. From this perspective, the unity of our Plurinational State of Bolivia is a strategic necessity. Today, more than ever, Bolivians must be alert to the call of our Homeland, which calls upon us to defend it above all political, party or group calculations.

United, towards our Bicentennial, sisters and brothers, we will move ahead steadily to consolidate our Plurinational State of Bolivia.

(APPLAUSE)

We shall consolidate our Plurinational State of Bolivia as a world benchmark for inclusion and justice, diversity, pluralism, good economic management and recognition of the native indigenous nations, revaluing and enhancing our great cultural wealth. To fight for our country and for our Plurinational State of Bolivia is and will always be the best tribute to so many heroes and heroines who have given their lives for our dignity and sovereignty.

(APPLAUSE)

From here, from the Great Home of the Peoples [*Casa Grande del Pueblo*], I also want to extend a warm greeting and big hug to the Bolivian community abroad on this day when we celebrate another year of our Plurinational State; we understand the reasons why they left our country, for circumstantial reasons. From here, from the Plurinational State of Bolivia, we also wish Bolivians living abroad a happy Anniversary of the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

(APPLAUSE)

We all comprise the collectivity of a united Homeland, aware of itself. Proud of our plurinationality and confident in the search for common good, we strengthen ourselves as a Bolivian people. Let us continue working with hope in the better days that we are building for our daughters, our sons, our granddaughters and grandsons!

We are all our nations! We are all our roots! We are countryside and city!
We are the highlands, the plains, the Chaco, the valleys and the Amazon!
We are La Paz, we are Santa Cruz, we are Cochabamba, we are Beni, we are
Pando, we are Oruro, we are Tarija, we are Chuquisaca, we are Potosí! We
are the Plurinational State of Bolivia!

Long live the united people!

(LONG LIVE!)

Long live our Plurinational State of Bolivia!

(LONG LIVE!)

Thank you.