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**IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 60/251
OF 15 MARCH 2006 ENTITLED “HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL”**

**Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food,
Jean Ziegler**

Addendum

**Preliminary note on the mission to Bolivia*
(29 April to 6 May 2007)**

* The mission covered by the present report took place after the completion of the fourth session of the Council. It however bears a symbol number of that session for technical reasons.

1. The Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate food visited Bolivia from 29 April to 6 May 2007. This preliminary note provides initial information on the visit of the Special Rapporteur. A full report of the mission and formulated recommendations will be submitted subsequently to the Human Rights Council.
2. The Special Rapporteur expresses his great appreciation to the Government of Bolivia for welcoming his mission and for engaging in frank and open discussions on the realization of the right to food. The Special Rapporteur would like to thank Ambassador Angelica Navarro and her team at the permanent mission of Bolivia to the United Nations Office at Geneva for facilitating the organization of his mission. The objectives of the visit were to examine the realization of the right to food and to learn from Bolivia's new approaches to meeting its national and international obligations to respect, protect and fulfil the right to food. Bolivia is currently in an historic moment of change under the new Government of President Evo Morales, in the process of drafting a new founding Constitution and adopting a range of new and innovative strategies to address hunger and malnutrition that will serve as important examples for the rest of the world.
3. During his visit, the Special Rapporteur had the honour to be received by the President of the Republic, Evo Morales, and was impressed by the public commitment of the President to make the fight against hunger and malnutrition a key priority of his administration. This offers new hope for millions of Bolivia's poor and hungry. The Special Rapporteur also benefited from constructive dialogue with a number of Government Ministers, including the Minister for Rural Development and Agriculture as well as the Minister of Health, and senior staff of other ministries. He also met with representatives of the Constituent Assembly and with Waldo Albarracin, Bolivia's Defensor del Pueblo (Bolivia's ombudsman) The Special Rapporteur also benefited from meetings with a wide range of United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations as well as a variety of social and indigenous movements, academics and individuals. The Special Rapporteur travelled widely to visit a number of communities in urban and rural areas.
4. As a result of a long history of colonial exploitation, marginalization of indigenous peoples and the harsh structural adjustment and privatization of the Bolivian economy under the previous Governments of, among others, former President Sanchez de Lozada, one in four Bolivian children is permanently and gravely malnourished. Sixty per cent of Bolivians today live in poverty and at least 40 per cent live in conditions of such extreme poverty that they cannot afford to feed adequately their families. Poverty and hunger remains concentrated in rural areas, amongst those who struggle to survive as small farmers or on poorly paid agricultural labour. In Bolivia's western departments, or Occidente, the poor and hungry are mostly indigenous Quechua or Aymara people living in rural areas, struggling to survive from small scale and subsistence farming, on the cold and windy high plateau of the *altiplano*. In the eastern departments, or Oriente, the Special Rapporteur was informed that many agricultural workers are still held in feudal conditions of bonded labour or semi-slavery on the huge plantations and agro-industrial estates of the east, particularly indigenous peoples such as the Guarani. In both the west and the east, there are also serious levels of urban poverty and hunger that has followed rapid rural-urban migration.

5. Despite the fact that Bolivia is a country enormously rich in natural resources, natural gas, oil and metals, including silver, gold, iron, zinc and tin, which have long been exploited by colonial powers, the vast majority of its people have not benefited from this natural wealth. Rooted in its colonial history, a small wealthy elite has dominated economic and political power over the indigenous majority for 500 years. Longstanding inequalities between rich and poor and between non-indigenous and indigenous populations are reflected in the fact that wealthiest 7 per cent of Bolivia's landholders still control 85 per cent of cultivated land while millions of subsistence farmers struggle to produce enough food to feed their families on small plots of land. Inequalities have recently been deepening further as a result of economic adjustment and privatisation. This economic model has failed to address the social divide and Bolivia now has one of the highest levels of inequality in the world. As a result, recent years have been marked by deep social unrest which reached critical levels in the recent "water wars" against the privatisation of water in Cochabamba and in El Alto.

6. In December 2005, Bolivians elected Evo Morales, the first indigenous President in Latin America, with 54 per cent of the vote, the biggest margin since the restoration of democracy in Bolivia two decades earlier. Despite Bolivia's great wealth of natural resources, including oil and natural gas, the vast majority of Bolivia's people have not benefited from this natural wealth. The Special Rapporteur therefore welcomes the initiative of the new Government of the President Evo Morales, to renegotiate its contracts on oil and gas to seriously increase the revenues accruing to the Bolivian State. This new revenue will enable the Bolivian State to finance its far-reaching "Zero Malnutrition" programme and programmes for food sovereignty and the social sectors.

7. The Special Rapporteur particularly welcomes the Government's Zero Malnutrition programme, a multisectoral programme led by the President of the Republic and coordinated by the Council of Food and Nutrition with the participation of nine ministries. This programme will address the chronic levels of malnutrition amongst Bolivia's young children. It gives priority to eradicating malnutrition amongst children under the age of 5 and thereby arresting the vicious cycle of malnutrition that limits physical and cognitive development of Bolivia's children. He also welcomes the new focus of the Government on investing in small-scale agriculture that still provides a livelihood for millions of Bolivians. The strategy to promote food security and food sovereignty will give primacy to promoting local production, especially small-scale family agricultural production, including the promotion of local products, especially quinoa, cañahua and amaranto. He also welcomes efforts to promote progressive agrarian reform that will focus on eliminating feudal practices of bonded labour and improving access to land for campesinos, communities and rural families as well as recognizing traditional forms of land tenure and restituting lands of indigenous communities. The Special Rapporteur found that the intentions of these initiatives show the positive political will of the Government to meet commitments under the right to food and he now urges the full implementation of these programmes for the realization of the right to food for all Bolivians.

8. The Special Rapporteur also welcomes the formation of a Foundational and Sovereign Constituent Assembly with a vision of reviewing the founding document of Bolivia's Constitution. The Constituent Assembly is now sitting in session in Sucre, Bolivia's historic capital, fulfilling its important role of drawing up a new framework for the rights of all Bolivians. The Special Rapporteur received assurance from the Constituent Assembly that the

right to adequate food and the right to water will be included as fundamental human rights in Bolivia's new Constitution.

9. The Special Rapporteur will elaborate a full report of his mission for subsequent presentation to the Human Rights Council. This report will also include his final recommendations with respect to the realization of the right to food in Bolivia.

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