

in all of the ministries, left by the previous government. Within only two months of the new government, all ministries were in full restructuring, resulting in one part of the population seeking more drastic changes in the authority of the national bureaucracy. One thing that marks the new governmental politics is the establishment of diplomatic relations with Cuba, which will open a new Cuban Embassy in our country.

The new political reality begun in June, 2009, is a transcendental change with a government of the left which anticipates a difficult task of improving the deteriorated Salvadoran economy, improving the conditions of life for the majority of the people and needs to engage the huge private enterprise that systematically opposes radical changes in the distribution of the nation's wealth and undue privileges. In addition, it needs to confront the large pro-right communications media and a legislative assembly governed by the right. The movements of the right-wing parties, principally ARENA, have made sure there will be a very strong opposition to the changes, which the people who stand with the new government will defend it at all costs.

One can see the desire of the government to change the form of administering the state, but the challenges are great, there are huge unresolvable social needs with few resources, in the midst of a grave economic crisis which has not reached the worst. The great national problems need the participation of all the sectors: unemployment, migration, the huge gap between rich and poor, the flu epidemic, insecurity due to the epidemic of violence where gangs, organized crime, narco-trafficking, violence against women and traffic accidents all come together, and others.

The expectations are great and this is shown in the most recent polls where 70% of the population hope that the new government will change the direction of the country.

The deterioration of the environment, the impunity of the big corporations, the privileges of an economic elite which continues stuck to power, the weak judicial system, the polarization, the loss of credibility and the dehumanization of institutions are among the many problems which Salvadorans have to confront.

Health Situation

At the national level, as in many countries, there remains a health alert for the H1N1 virus. Up until now authorities report 469 confirmed cases, six deaths including a pregnant woman who suffered from morbid obesity. The group most affected is concentrated in 46% (214 cases), followed by the 5-9 years olds 17% (77 cases) and in the third place, the group of 20-29 years with 60 cases (13%). The pandemic affects 53 of the 262 municipalities concentrated in the most highly populated: San Salvador and La Libertad. The flu pandemic is mixed up with the seasonal flu which the country suffers and this makes it difficult to watch the epidemiology of the cases of the A H1N1 flu.

The new health authorities of the new government came to power with the pandemic growing, along with what they had to confront in sickness and the reorganization of the gravely deteriorating system.

The most evident actions taken by the new government with regard to health are:

1. The suspension of the voluntary payment for all health services, from health clinics to hospitals. This increased the demand for services 20-25% as soon as this was announced in the media.
2. The supply of medicines and other medical consumables to the whole network of health services, among them Tamiflu for the flu pandemic.
3. Temporary contracts for more than 400 health workers to confront the epidemic.

The new government has committed itself to not sacrifice funds for health care in spite of the crisis. This is evidenced in the boosts in the health budget in recent days.

The new health authorities led by Dr. María Isabel Rodríguez, Minister of Health, has developed a health policy with the participation of many sectors. Her vision is that the health system is constructed by all who are committed to the change.

This new vision of healthcare proposes an extensive reform of the Salvadoran health system, based on Primary Care and health promotion, wide ranging in coverage and improved accessibility and quality of services; and to change the conception of a system organized to attend to sickness to one that sees healthcare as a right and as a product of social determinants.

For all this demands (it is necessary) that there be full social participation by all society, that works in an inter-sectoral form and that strengthens community organization so that communities are directly involved in health promotion. At the same time they are committed to work so that the Ministry of Health be the governing body of the national health system and reduce the fragmentation of the public health system.

The reorganization of the Ministry of Health began with the creation of two vice-ministries, from the first days of the new government. The first vice-ministry attends to the network of services and the second public policies and the surveillance (oversight) of health. The second vice-minister has as one objective, the development of human resources in health, an area forgotten by the previous governments.

Local and Regional Situation in El Salvador

Guarjila, like all the communities of the Northeast part of El Salvador, continues in the expectation of a new government and the actions that this will realize. The joy of having changed to a government allied with the people is a characteristic mark of this community. There are many hopes that things are going to improve, principally the socioeconomic situation of the poorest. That implies a great challenge for a new government directed by former journalist Mauricio Funes and the FMLN, to make real many of the dreams maintained by this people over the last 20 years.

The social and economic situation of the community and the region is worsening as the purchasing power of the greater majority of the population diminishes, with few possibilities of improvements in the short term. The impact of the crisis is evidenced in the lowering of the remittances for many of the families, the loss of employment and the constant increases in costs of the nutritional basics, fuel and electric and telephone services, among others. The service with the largest increase is electrical energy, owing to the government's suspension of a subsidy to those who consumed more than 100 kilowatts, but left intact subsidies to large businesses. Besides this service, by law, they get an increment every year that they receive a large increment. Many poor families who were paying 5 to 10 dollars now pay between 15 and 30 dollars.

Migration to the United States remains constant as a result of the precarious economic situation of many families. And to make matters worse, the return of various migrants has increased, owing to the constant raids due to the hardening of the anti-immigrant laws of that country. It almost seems like a revolving door of the migration of some and the return of others.

To confront this difficult situation, the majority of families have increased their cultivation of corn and beans. This activity has been favored with a government incentive of a little seed and agricultural fertilizer at the onset of the agricultural season. That will guarantee the means for families to grow the basic crops sufficient to feed their families.

Concerning the construction of the longitudinal highway of the North, it is still awaiting the exact route it will traverse. The community is waiting for the new government to change the officials responsible for final negotiation of the route. One factor is that the epidemic of violence confronting the country continues without significantly impacting the northern regions. There are robberies and sometimes arguments among groups of young people, but there is not the anxiety that is found in many cities and other communities in our country.

The health situation in our community is fairly stable relative to 2008, due to the fact that we haven't had serious illnesses like dengue, diarrheas, and so on. Neither have there been complications of pregnancy or birth. We have had various hospital admissions of young children, but without deaths or complications.

In mid-June we had a lot of uncomplicated respiratory infections, mostly common cold and flu, but so far we have not had any cases of H1N1. Cases of diarrhea are managed, similar to the last 3 years, with very few cases and without complications.

National Situation

With the arrival of the new government (June, 2009) and president Mauricio Funes and the FMLN, an era in the history of this country has closed, with its impunity, corruption, and marginalization of poor people characteristic of the right wing governments which preceded it.

The population maintains its high expectations and hopes that the new government will move toward improving the deteriorating socioeconomic situation of the majority of the people. In his inaugural speech, the president promised to work for the most poor and cited Monsignor Romero as guide in this new era of the nation. His first actions are aimed at improving conditions of life for the poorest, concentrated in 100 municipalities with the program Rural Communities of Solidarity, in which there will be an effort to increase coverage of water, electrical service, basic sanitation, improved health and educational services, and the granting of a basic pension of \$50 to those over 70 who have no pension. This action will be amplified in the poorest urban zones with the program Urban Communities of Solidarity. In the health area, he announced the creation of a program integrating health and nutrition in the poorest 100 communities with the highest levels of malnutrition which will benefit 85,000 children between 0 and 3 years of age; this includes a glass of milk daily for these children.

Other immediate concerns are the construction of 25,000 residences for the poor, improve educational facilities, uniforms and shoes for all students beginning in 2010 and strengthening agriculture to increase production nation-wide. There will also be measures to combat violence which has a grip on the country.

Among the initiatives of this new government are the creation of a Secretary of Strategic Planning and Secretary of Social Inclusion. The first will be similar to a Ministry of Planning which includes modernization of the state and national development.

The highest officials of the new government are initiating meticulous audits in order to identify corruption