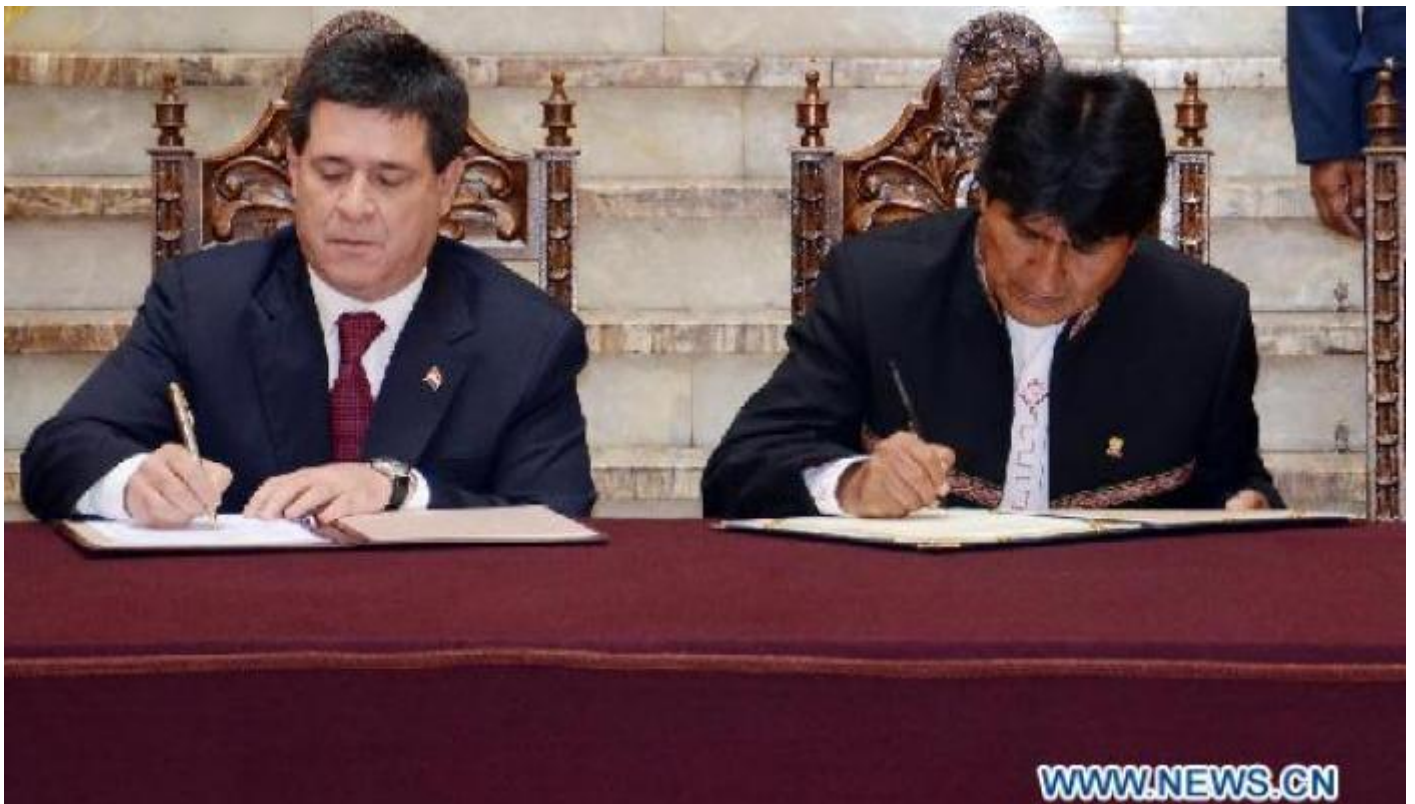


Paraguay: Annual Farmers March Demands President's Resignation



Asuncion, March 28 (teleSUR-RHC) For the 22nd annual march of poor farmers in Paraguay, thousands of people from around the country gathered in Asuncion on Thursday, despite heavy rains.

"We came here for this 22nd march of poor farmers because we need agrarian reform," stated Teodolina Villalba, leader of the National Federation of Farmers, which organized the event. "Each government that comes to power, especially (president) Horacio Cartes's government, has implemented laws that go against people's interests, such as privatization or militarization."

She read a document at the march demanding the implementation of agrarian reform, as well as the dismissal of the conservative president.

In Paraguay, farmers have a hard time defending their right to land, as many parcels of land that belong to the state were donated by former dictator General Alfred Stroessner (1954-1989) to his relatives and political allies.

Villalba, who has participated in the rallies since they began, said that initially people used to lock themselves up inside their homes or shut down stores when protesters came by; however, these sectors now come out and greet marchers, applaud, provide them with water, or even join them.

She expressed her satisfaction at the peaceful nature and huge size of the march. She also welcomed the participation of the Democratic Congress of the People (CDP), a movement created earlier in March that consists of 20 political parties, unions, student and indigenous movements, among others.

The movement aims to be a means to defend the interests of the majority against the government, gathering all the progressive forces of the country. It includes Frente Guasu, the only center-left party that has so far managed to win a presidential election with former priest Fernando Lugo, who was removed from power one year before the end of his presidential term via a parliamentary coup.

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