



SPECIAL REPORT

Ecuador gets into the electoral scene with a view to 2017

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INTRODUCTION

The political, social and economic future of Ecuador for the next four years (2013-2017) will be decided by voters on 17 February 2013. The country is undergoing a new electoral process that will conclude with the appointment of the President and Vice President of the Republic, 134 lawmakers (national, regional and migrant) and five representatives for the Andean Parliament.

Pre-electoral panorama points to the re-election of the current Head of State, Mr. Rafael Correa, as he stands as the strongest figure with greater leadership in comparison to its seven contenders. If forecasts are right, Correa would consolidate his position as the president with longer consecutive tenure, although he already achieved a record on 15 January 2013: six years in power without a break.

What about the other seven contenders? They all have an official opposition to the current Government, even Alberto Acosta, who seven years ago was one of the ideologues of the called “citizens’ revolution”. However, opposition in Ecuador is still unfocussed, with individual agendas and interests, whose sole point of convergence is to criticize economic and social policies of Correa’s regime.

The electoral campaign started with that outlook on January 4, and it will last up to 14 February 2013. Thus far, figures reveal that Rafael Correa-Jorge Glas pairing is widely leading Ecuadorians voting intention. According to Cedatos, this political pairing gathers 55.7% of voters’ intention, followed by Guillermo Lasso-Juan Carlos Solines pairing with 22.8%, while on third place appears the blank vote. If the trend continues, Correa’s re-election will only need the first round, as happened in 2009.

THE REVOLUTION IS STILL UNFINISHED

There has been five areas of action that have determined the called “citizens’ revolution”, led by the President, Rafael Correa, since the beginning of his Government in January 2007. However, none of these areas have reached their climax in six years. A review of the Regime’s debt with the country is presented below:

- **Constitutional revolution:** This area has two readings. One is intended to assert that institutional revolution is based on the approval of a new Constitution in 2008, underpinned by the good living ideas.

The second demonstrates instead that the Constitution of the citizens’ revolution is not completely tangible for Ecuadorians yet, given that there are still laws awaiting passage, such as the ones related with Water Resources, Lands and Cultures, which are vital to make the constitutional principles a reality since they give rights to nature, tend to an equitable distribution of private property and ensure cultural rights of citizens. But these are only a few examples.

- **Fight against corruption:** It is one of the most questioned topics of the “citizens’ revolution”. The self-named Government of clear hands, lucid minds and burning hearts has left a mark of its scandalous corruption internal activities,

such as the signing of public contracts with companies linked to Correa’s brother, accusations of overpricing ambulances before purchasing them and contributions to the Ministry of Public Health. The last scandal comes from the multi-million credit to the Argentinian Gastón Duzac by Cofiec, a seized bank that is also managed by the State, since one of the major accomplices would be Pedro Delgado, Correa’s cousin that was ousted of the Government after admitting that he has faked its university degree.

None of these cases have been investigated in depth nor cleared up. The Government has come out well by pointing out that accusations are derived from the “media lynching” against the State that the corrupted press has orchestrated by using all its communication equipment (State media, national channels, advertising...) to warn that former governments (also) registered high rates of corruption.

However, the great milestone in fighting corruption has taken place in the last 18 month with the called “metida de mano en la justicia” □ handling the justice□. In May 2010, Ecuadorians approved by Referendum the creation of a Transitional Judiciary Council (whose members were appointed by three powers of the State) to reform the whole system of justice



Rafael Correa stands up as the only leader for the citizen’s revolution. Thus far, Alianza País, his political party, has appointed no successor.

“I’m going to handle justice, but only for the sake of the people”

Rafael Correa

through, for instance, the abolition of bureaucratic processes and the dismissal of judges lowering resolutions or allowing the expiration of protective measures.

The main objective: reducing criminal rates by implementing a more efficient judicial system. Now, 18 months later, thanks to an investment of about USD 300 million made only in 2012, the judicial sector has modern facilities and informatics systems. According to polls, instability remains as the first cause for concern among the citizenry.

- **Economic revolution:** It has been promoted the popular and solidarity-based economy (micro-entrepreneurs, non-official traders and artisans) through performing credits like 5-5-5 (up to USD 5 thousand, a term of five years at 5% interest), but at the same time, this effort has been clouded by the increase of the Human Development Voucher (BDH) from USD 35 to USD 50 since 2013, given that this grant does not promotes citizens’ productivity aiming at generating sustainable employment.

Furthermore, the discourse of the economic revolution has focused on the exploitation of natural resources and the promotion of agricultural production. In the first case, the change in the model of oil-contracts was a success for the State: providing services so that

the country may receive the greatest percentage of product generated by this market and launching the tender procedure for 16 oil blocs to carry out exploration activities.

Nevertheless, the major pending issue is the signing of large-scale mining contracts. In 2012 only one agreement was reached with the Chinese company, Ecuacorriente, but important companies like Kinross are on the waiting list. The current political panorama does not help the Government to sign a new mining contract, due to the likely demonstrations by the indigenous and environmentalist sectors.

Finally, the great debt is in the agricultural sector. The regime has not fulfilled expectations of re-distribution of lands nor activation of unproductive lands offered from the electoral campaign of 2006. Added to this are the problems that productive and export sectors of rice, corn and banana are undergoing, due to the impossibility of fixing prices that satisfy all the value chain and also due to the pests in vegetable crops, which have caused massive losses in the agricultural field.

- **Education and health revolution:** Despite this Government has registered the greatest allocation in education and health sector in Ecuador’s history, the results are not satisfactory yet.

The lack of State's planning, and the little trust in public services by users, have hindered the development of this two pillars. However, it should be recognized that both the education and health system have considerably changed, particularly regarding infrastructures, due to the technological endowment and improvement.

In this sense, in the public health field, it is worth mention the recruitment of doctors working full time (8 hours per day) in State's hospitals, while in the basic education field it has been set the obligation for teachers to work full time, and not five-six hours per day as in the past. The evaluation to universities is other milestone of the education revolution, whose purpose was the closure of 14 educational establishments that did not meet quality standards required: infrastructure, libraries, investigation, teaching staff...

- **Rescue of dignity, sovereignty and search for Latin American integration:** It is the fifth pillar of "citizens' revolution". Actions and outcomes: the agreement with US by which that country had a military base in the coastal city of Mantal has terminated, Ecuador joined the ALBA bloc, searched for closing relations with Iran, the relations with the International Monetary Fund has been set aside to have as main creditors Chinese banks and investors, and important investments with Venezuela in terms of oil refineries and waterworks have been negotiated.

The pending topic is achieving that Latin America accepts the proposal of creating a body parallel to the Organization of American States (OAE) that, according to Mr. Correa, ensures sovereignty of countries, by not excluding countries like Cuba from leaders' summits, which the President of Ecuador will not attend as long as the Caribbean island is not invited.

The relations that Correa's Government has promoted with Iran have been the most questioned by the international community. The picture captures the visit of the President of Iran, Mr. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.



CAMPAIGN MACHINE: THE CANDIDATES AND THEIR RESOURCES

Eight pairings will participate in elections on 17 February 2013. The electoral campaign officially had begun on January 4, although it was since October, when candidatures were defined, when participants have started their tour around the 24 provinces in

order to announce their proposals and gain new followers. However, the majority of approaches had focused to criticize practices developed by Rafael Correa's Government between 2007 and 2012. Among the most recurrent criticized practices are, for instance, the defense of freedom of expression and press, the cut in tax burden and the decision of not exploiting mining resources.

Furthermore, there are the candidatures for occupying 134 seats in the National Assembly where the Government expects to consolidate a majority to pass the laws required for implementing its economic and social policies. The truth is that nowadays the governing party, Alianza País, has no longer a substantial majority, but it is "the greatest minority", as it has self-named it, since in the last four years it had to negotiate to carry out its plans with minor legislative blocs (variable majority) that occasionally contribute to reach its goals. In light of the above, electoral analysis point that the governing party wouldn't reach a wide parliamentary majority either in next elections; it should therefore strengthen its capacity for negotiating.

An overview of the electoral proposals of the eight presidential pairings is presented below:

- . **Rafael Correa - Jorge Glas:** "We already have a President, we have Rafael" is its slogan. This pairing have had to dismiss the most charismatic and cherished (even by the opposing ones)

figure: Lenín Moreno, the current Vice President, who was even worthy of a nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize due to his social work in favor of people with special needs. However, he has decided to withdraw from politics, leaving Jorge Glas as successor, who once in Government will manage policies related to strategic sectors in Ecuador (oil and mining, mostly).

The communication power of the current Government has provoked the enhancement of works carried out by the Regime in the last few months through, for example, broadcasting up to one hour the inauguration of a center to reinforce citizens' security control in Quito (ECU 911). Thanks to resources like this, we have known in advance that, if Mr. Rafael Correa reaches once again the power, he will aim, among other issues, to:

- » Diversify productivity to come out of dependency on raw materials exports.
- » Control monopolies.
- » Go further on lands redistribution and sustainable agricultural productivity.
- » Ensure universal access to education and permanence of children and youth within the system.
- » Provide universal access to health, education, integration and social security.
- » Democratize, diversify



These are the fifth candidates for the presidency in top positions in Ecuador voters' intention polls: Rafael Correa, Guillermo Lasso, Lucio Gutiérrez, Alberto Acosta and Álvaro Noboa.

“A different Ecuador is possible” is the slogan of Guillermo Lasso and his political movement – CREO– for the campaign for the presidency”

and regulate mass media to ensure full freedom of expression.

- » Delve into the political strategy to consolidate Yasuní-ITT Initiative and, thus maintaining the crude oil underground.

Those are some of the proposals by the governing pairing that, according to the latest data by Cedatos, has 55.7% of voters’ intention.

- **Guillermo Lasso - Juan Carlos Solines:** The candidate comes from the banking sector. He was the executive director of the Bank of Guayaquil, the second-biggest bank of Ecuador, until mid-2012. Within the electoral frame, his career as a banker served him to promote an intense advertising campaign of that bank during the last year to publicize himself and his most important work: “El Banco del Barrio”, an initiative that turned grocers and small traders into small “bankers”, including this profession, highly criticized in Ecuador since the economic crisis underwent in 1999 and 2000, in people’s economy.

However, this point in favor has represented also his biggest weakness, as the current Government has served of this situation to remind the country –through advertising and national channels– that as a consequence of the banking fraud of the last century, many Ecuadorians

had lost their money, so many had died from depression and others (millions) had been forced to emigrate to United States and Europe, with the resulting family breakdown. The Association of Private Banks of Ecuador have also used economic resources to support this sector through publicity pointing out that the banks that were guilty of the crisis no longer exist, and that bankers causing it are no longer in the country. Anyway, the proposals of the Lasso-Solines pairing are the following:

- » Ensure universal access to health.
- » Create incentives for generating social housing.
- » Promote youth integration in labor markets.
- » Simplify procedures for starting and managing a business.
- » Promote the opening of new markets for Ecuadorian goods and services.
- » Foster trade agreements that serve national interests.
- » Reduce tax costs for importing and exporting.

Since 4 January 2013, Lasso and Solines are dedicated to disseminate a work proposal each day. That is, on February 14, the last day of the electoral campaign, they will offer the proposal number 45. Thus far, this pairing ranks the second in Ecuadorians’ intention to

vote with 22.8%, according to Cedatos.

- **Lucio Gutiérrez - Pearl Ann Boyes:** Lucio Gutiérrez intends to reach the presidency for the second time, and his fundamental premise is not to repeat past mistakes when, as a consequence of corruption and nepotism of his first legislature, he was overthrown in April 2005 by a citizen's revolt called "the rebellion of the forajidos". This pairing, according to polls by Cedatos, is in third place of voters' intention with 8.8%, and propose in campaign the following:

- » Eliminate taxes-
- » Eliminate waste and overprice in public works.
- » Provide low-cost productive credits.
- » Request visa to foreigners in order to avoid that criminals, hitmen and drug dealers enter freely to Ecuador.
- » Conduct a national census for foreigners, and expel from the

country those who have criminal records.

- » Raise salaries and wages in a fair manner for everybody.
 - » Re-open closed universities that meet minimum requirements.
 - » Raise the Human Development Voucher to USD 65.
 - » Re-open the media which are closed.
- **Alberto Acosta - Marcia Caicedo:** The leader of the called Coordinadora Plurinacional de Izquierda, that has gathered left-wing parties such as the Movimiento Popular Democrático and Pachakutik, has its origins in the "citizens' revolution", of which was one of its main ideologues. He was President of the Constituent Assembly in 2008, but when the constitutional reform process concluded, he announced his withdrawal from Correa's Government, which apparently had moved to the right.

In March 2012, Ecuador signed the first large-scale mining contract with the Chinese company, Ecuacorriente, to exploit the resources of the Mirador's project, located in Zamora Chinchipe, in the Amazon.



Alberto Acosta is radical regarding the oil and mining exploitation and the access of international companies in Ecuador. His fundamental precepts are opposed to large-scale mining, which, additionally, is one of the most important projects that Correa's Government has at economic level. The proposals of the pairing Acosta-Salcedo are the following:

- » Audit every oil, mining contract and large-scale projects to ensure the compliance of constitutional mandates.
- » Develop a sovereign economy and society based on food, energy, finances, culture and technology.
- » Generate mechanism to enhance rights and care of migrants.
- » Promote Latin American integration and unity.
- » Equitable distribution of radio spectrum frequencies.
- » Massive and permanent national campaign for computer literacy.
- » Ensure social justice as the basis of citizens' security, overcoming hunger, marginality, unemployment and poverty.
- » Foster public and private business endeavors that allow developing clean technologies.

The pairing composed by Alberto Acosta and Marcia Caicedo ranks, with these proposals, fourth in voters' intention with 8.2%, according to latest polls by Cedatos.

- **Álvaro Noboa - Anabella Azín:** In 2013 the richest man of the country tries for the fifth time to reach the presidency of the Republic. In this occasion, Álvaro Noboa, banana magnate of Guayaquil, chose his wife –Anabella Azín– as his pairing, a fact that has been criticized by public opinion. The charity (giving food, mattress...) is once again the common denominator of his electoral campaign, in which he appears closer to people, more vulnerable when carrying quintals of potatoes or sugar on his back, food that he gives to people with poor economic resources. In his fifth electoral participation, Mr. Noboa ranks fifth in voters' intention with 3%, according to the company Perfiles de Opinión. His main proposals are the following:

- » Prioritize investment in health, education, mass transport, environmental sanitation and security.
- » Transform universities into a center for research and development.
- » Exploit the touristic field in Ecuador.
- » Establish legal standards to ensure investment and clear rules to tax payment.

Álvaro Noboa, a businessman from Guayaquil, has presented his candidature for the presidency for the fifth time. Charity is, once again, a key point in his campaign.



“Even people with such propensity (to homosexuality), that in my opinion as well as in the eyes of God is wrong, come from heterosexual families”

Nelson Zavala, PRE's candidate

- » Conduct evaluations to public employees.
- » People deprived of their freedom should work to have incomes for their maintenance.
- **Nelson Zavala - Denis Cevallos:** Nelson Zavala is the successor of the senior leader of the Partido Roldosista Ecuatoriano (PRE), Abdalá Bucaram, because after 17 years having been overthrown given that a mental disability to be the President was argued in the National Congress. He is an evangelical preacher, and since his candidature was announced, he has been strongly criticized due to his opposition to LGBTI groups. An overview of his proposals is presented below:
 - » Modernize the productive machine of Ecuador by fostering science and modern productive techniques.
 - » Create the Ministry of Poor.
 - » Boost oil and energy sectors, by promoting the construction of more hydropower plants.
 - » Establish a plan for popular housing to reduce housing shortage.
 - » Deliver school bag.
 - » Develop science and technology in the agricultural sector.
- **Mauricio Rodas - Inés Manzano:** Mauricio Rodas was the founder of Efthos Foundation, in Mexico. It is considered an eminently theoretical politician. He appeared in Ecuador's public scene in 2008, when he was promoting a strong “No” campaign to Referendum in which Montecristi Constitution was approved. From then on, he has opposed to Correa's Government on issues such as freedom of press and expression. This pairing, that has 1% of Ecuador voters' intention, proposes the following:
 - » Eradicate poverty and generate equal opportunities for all the Ecuadorians.
 - » Create quality employment and provoke a productive leap of economy.
 - » Promote national and foreign investment.
 - » Encourage international relations with all the countries of the world and compliance with international treaties and commitments.
 - » Create an effective first job program that benefits youth between the age of 15 and 30.
 - » Create a crime prevention policy.

Current voters' intention for the Zavala-Cevallos pairing is less than 1%.

Voters' intention for this presidential pairing is under 1%, according to the pollster Perfiles de Opinión.

- **Norman Wray - Ángela Mendoza:** He comes from the political movement Ruptura. Norman Wray and his party was ally of Correa's Government until the first half of 2011. His separation from the current Government was the result from the proposal of the Referendum, which propitiated the "handling" in the judicial sector. Ruptura gathers left-wing intellectual young politicians. Polls conducted by Perfiles de Opinión reveal that this pairing has less than 1% of voters' intention. It is expected that this party proves its political influence in the National Assembly, since it has strong well-positioned candidates at national level, like Paco Moncayo and María Paula Romo. The proposals they make are the following:
 - » the financial system.
 - » Provide public services directly and efficiently in territories.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE ECONOMY

The country's economic development is one of the main concerns when talking about Ecuador in 2017. Economic analysts hold that, in the case that Mr. Rafael Correa won once again, the economic policy would continue in the same line, based on the increase in demand pushed by public expenditure. It means that the economy will continue to grow thanks to resources that the State may invest in. For this purpose, it will try to generate more resources through oil, mining and tax burden, that is, deepening in extracting policies, which is what sustains public works funding.

Nevertheless, in the event that the right reached the power (Guillermo Lasso or Álvaro Noboa), economy experts forecast that the first step would be reducing public expenditure, which may provoke a destabilization of the economy and a possible economic downturn. There would be cuts, especially, in allocations for infrastructure projects (waterpower plants, the Pacific Refinery, metro in Quito...), since they do not think that cuts would reach social expenditure, due to the voting and political weight. Yet, to offset the investment in public works, a government of such characteristics could opt for privatizing projects. The third clearly-evidenced trend

- » Fully exert stewardship, control and management of environmental resources.
- » Define people's participation policies on deciding the extraction and exploitation of natural resources, as well as the income distribution.
- » Mainstream policies and program agendas with initiatives that include the fight against family violence, violence and sexual exploitation.
- » Speed up the change in matrix energy as a high-impact measure.
- » Increase the level of national saving to convey more trust to



Three of the candidates for the presidency have been in the ranks of Correísmo: Alberto Acosta (left) and Norman Wray (right).

“In the event that the right reached the power, the first step would be reducing public expenditure”

is the one led by Alberto Acosta, whose agenda is channeled to avoid mining exploitation, which would also mean less tax incomes and less public expenditure. Moreover, Acosta has repeatedly insisted in tax elimination (as the right-wing candidates) such as the Tax on the Remittance of Currencies. However, if this happened, the most likely scenario –according to what experts have said– is that imports would rocket and the balance of payments would therefore destabilize, which would jeopardize the dollarization.

Nonetheless, the most likely to happen is that the economic model already adopted by the President continues. If so, economic analysts warn that a future growth cannot be expected, because the current model is being exhausted. Evidence of this is that the Government has not been able to reach the growth registered in 2008, when public expenditure exceeded expectations. The formula to reach sustained growth will be then investing in the production machine and, the subsequent employment creation.

CONCLUSION

- Elections of 2013 had proven once again the little room for competing that candidates for the presidency have against the President Rafael Correa in terms of communication. Since 2007, the Government maintains a constant flow of information by allocating about USD 12 million per year in governmental advertising.

It should be added to this the usual national channels and Saturday programs in which the President makes a weekly account of his activities.

- Up to now, there is a lack of contents in the electoral campaign. As usual, the candidates are travelling all over the country to greet voters, deliver calendars and flyers, but not necessarily to explain their proposals. Against this, there is the fact that the current Government can demonstrate the work that has done during these last six years, which somehow disadvantages Correa’s contenders.
- The possibility that Rafael Correa was elected in the first round is overwhelming. About a month before elections, polls show that he has more than 50% of voters’ intention, despite the scandal because of the falsification by his cousin, Pedro Delgado, of the university degree and that it has been put into doubt the way in which Correa’s pairing, Jorge Glas, obtained his tertiary degree.
- Once again, Ecuador’s electoral process proves that there is a lack of leadership in the country and that political parties have little or no concern for preparing figures that can relieve the current Government and aim to hold political offices to define democratically the economic and social path of Ecuador. There are no attempts in that respect or, at least, have yet to be seen.

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