

## **Donatives and Donations from Pemex to Municipalities in Tabasco**

Jose Manuel Arias Rodriguez and Hugo Ireta Guzman/Santo Tomas Ecological Association

On July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2007, Santo Tomas Ecological Association presented the document titled "Donatives and donations from Pemex to Tabasco".<sup>1</sup> It is interesting that in their reactions, the authorities and to some extent the press have only wanted to see the part regarding the state government, even though the document also looks into the municipal arena and analyzes the use of Pemex's resources. Our interest in re-addressing the issue in this space originates there.

We began saying that Tabasco's municipalities are among the main beneficiaries of the resources which Pemex grants via donations and donatives to Tabasco, since they are favored twice. On the one hand, the state government allocates resources through the Inter-Institutional Commission for the Environment and Social Development (CIMADES) in several municipalities and, on the other, the municipal governments make use of the mechanisms established by Pemex to directly request support from the state-owned company.

The review of the requests made to Pemex's Administration Council accounts that municipal presidents have employed a pressure language to obtain resources from the company. As an example we cite the request of the citizen Gregorio Arias Perez, former municipal president of Comalcalco.

(...) Mexican Petroleum is a company that belongs to all Mexicans, and it is our duty and obligation to help it so it can help us and I have had to use public force to free the machinery of the companies which provide services to the Company, I have also sought to strongly support the Sub-direction of Mexican Petroleum and I have walked hand in hand with Engineer Teodulo Gutierrez Acosta, but, Mr. Director, I have not felt reciprocity from the Company towards my administration and much less towards the Municipality that I govern, which, to your knowledge, currently has 205 thousand inhabitants, 117 communities and many roads which until now have not even been painted in black, which is the reason why it makes me sad to have to complain about the null attention paid by the company which you direct.

As it can be observed, the argument used by the municipalities is that of social pressures, produced by the way in which oil activities are developed in Tabasco. It may then be considered that the requests do not obey a municipal development program previously established, but rather the quest for rapid solutions to the social unhappiness generated by oil activity.

Between 1997 and 2006, Pemex gave directly to municipalities in Tabasco a global amount of 67.2 million pesos in goods and cash. The municipality of Comalcalco was the one most benefitted since it obtained 25% of such resources, followed by Macuspana (19.4%) and Central (17%). It is important to point out that the municipalities of Balancan, Centla, Jalpa de Mendez and Emiliano Zapata are the ones which have received the least amount of benefits.

Regarding the resources which CIMADES gives to Tabasco's municipalities, it is possible to observe that the Central Municipality, where the state's capital is located, is the most benefitted with 15.9% of the resources, followed by Huimanguillo and Cardenas with 7.3 and 7.2%, respectively. Among the

municipalities where CIMADES channels less resources are Emiliano Zapata, Tenosique and Teapa. This data evidences that the state's capital is the most benefitted with resources given by Pemex in order to support social development, specially thanks to the prioritization of CIMADES.

Due to the lack of documentation, we ignore the criteria which evidence these priorities in handing out resources. But it is clear that poverty in the municipalities does not play a fundamental role whilst making the decision, since if we take into account the marginality index of the municipalities as a referent to compare poverty levels, only Huimanguillo is of very high marginalization (in fact, it occupies the first place on the State Marginal Index), while the rest of the most benefitted municipalities, both by the state government and by Pemex, are of medium marginalization, and in the case of the Central one, even extremely low. In such way, the allocation dynamics in the state of Pemex's resources for social development, instead of contributing to the diminishment of structural inequalities, allows their reproduction.

It is necessary to mention that the lack of information from CIMADES to Pemex, on the use of resources, is reproduced by municipalities with the CIMADES, since even though for the delivery of resources a document called "Coordination agreement for the supply of resources" is signed, in goods or in cash, in which the municipality commits itself to account for the use of the resources, as well as to grant all facilities to the state and to the federation to verify the use and destination of the latter, this does not happen in practice. In 2007, CIMADES requested several municipalities to prove or return the resources given between 2005 and 2006, since they had not proven their expense.

It is possible to conclude that the transfer of resources from Pemex to the state and municipal governments, is more related to political pressures from the latter than to agreed policies between such actors and Tabasco's society in order to promote the social development of the communities affected by oil activities.

Finally, no information was found which says that CIMADES has rules and criteria for transferring funds to the municipalities, provided that the zone which is most affected by the transfer of money is where the capital is located. In contrast, municipalities with a wide economic and social linger have received less funds.

The municipalities reproduce biases from the state government since they do not inform of the use of resources to the CIMADES. It is important that the governments begin to:

- Disseminate information on public infrastructure and social programs that are financed with Pemex's resources; and
- To involve communities affected by prioritization of actions to be carried out with the resources that they receive from the company, directly or indirectly, as well as in their follow-up.