

Young people's invitation to vote and participate in politics

By Luisa F. Rodríguez

The Youth campaign “Let’s Transform Guatemala” started yesterday. With the message: “Do you think politics is ailing? Participate and show that you love Guatemala”, it is seeking to motivate young people to participate in politics and to vote in the coming elections on September 9.

Wearing their parties’ distinctive T-shirts, but sitting at the same table, representatives from 10 political parties invited young people to look for a political space and “make their voices heard” by means of their votes.

A New Generation

Rita Pellecer, a candidate to Congress for the Acción Social (CASA) party, explained that by way of the Permanent Forum of Political Parties, they decided to join efforts in order to motivate individuals of their own age.

In their television and radio advertising campaign they are inviting new generations to become involved in political organizations and to cast their vote. Additionally, they will promote meetings in several departments in order to stimulate dialogue and strengthen youth organizations.

“Don’t just look on. My friends, we have to vote”, they state in the campaign advertisements.

“We are conscious that there is apathy, disinformation and lack of credibility, not only toward political parties, but also toward many leaders. That is why we are joining together to bring about changes”, said Pellecer.

Rubén Mendoza from Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca; Giovanni Tobar, from Unidad Nacional de la Esperanza; Fernando Ávila, from Partido Patriota, and Carlos Alonzo, from Partido de Avanzada Nacional, participated in the event.

Also participating were Juan Pablo Rodas, from the Frente Republicano Guatemalteco; Carlos Cabrera from El Frente; Jorge Raúl Cruz, from Democracia Cristiana; Rita Pellecer, from CASA, and Valentín Wortelboer.

Convergence

Alonzo assured that work has not been easy because *“obstacles had to be surmounted”* within the parties themselves, since most of them are led by individuals with several decades’ experience.

Mendoza stated: *“Establishing a multiparty space in which each one can set aside his/her ideology and seek common ground has been an achievement”* in order to inspire young people to promote changes.

Youngsters between 18 and 25 years old constitute 20 percent of the voter registration lists, which show 1.268.900 registered voters according to the Supreme Electoral Tribunal. 13 percent of registered voters, about 795.000, are between 26 and 30 years old.

IN DETAIL

Opportunity

Party representatives commented:

- **Giovanni Tobar**, from UNE: *“Political parties are full of adults who want to live from their past glory, while we, the young people, wish to achieve it.”*
- **Fernando Ávila**, from PP: *“There are many adults who think that young people cannot do some things; that we are not able to do them well. However, when they see our energy, they no longer have any doubts about letting us participate.”*
- **Jorge Raúl Cruz**, from DC: *“Age should not be an obstacle; we should be judged by our actions.”*