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World people's summit on climate change takes place this week in Bolivia

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NCR Today

The search for common ground on climate change between the United States and nations like China at the Major Economies Forum last weekend focused on industrial needs ? but a totally different conversation is getting underway in Cochabamba, Bolivia, at the World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth.

Following the perceived failure of the COP15 climate change talks in Copenhagen last year, Bolivian President Eva Morales called an alternative civil-society conference. It is taking place this week in the Bolivian city of Cochabamba, bringing together indigenous groups, NGOs, scientists, activists as well as government delegations. More than 15,000 people have gathered in the small Bolivian town of Cochabamba from April 19 to 22. Morales expects the conference to give a voice to the poorest people of the world and to encourage governments to be far more ambitious following the failure of the Copenhagen summit.

Those who can't make the trip to Cochabamba can participate via the Internet with participants in the Bolivian conference on climate change at an event hosted by the Brecht Forum on Tuesday night.

Through a multi-city live web stream, a discussion will take place about what's going on in Cochabamba, the issues being raised, the concerns attendees have. "We expect that the meeting will begin with some footage of at least some of the events there. We'll then begin the conversation. A group of people in Bolivia ? from the U.S. delegation and as well as other countries? will then make a short report about what's going on. We will then begin a conversation about the ongoing conference among the US-based and Bolivian participants," said a spokesperson for the Brecht Forum.

At least two other websites have plans to begin live streaming the People's Summit on Tuesday ? OneClimate.net and Abya Yala ? a non-profit indigenous organization.

Mr Morales hopes activists will lobby for the creation of an international environmental court where people from small towns and villages that are feeling the adverse economic effects of climate change can fight for compensation.

The idea is to present a draft proposal to the next climate change meeting, COP16, that will be held in Mexico late this year.

?What we want to achieve is justice,? Pablo Solon, Bolivia?s ambassador to the United Nations, told the BBC.

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