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Bolivian leader to halve own salary

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29 December, 2005

THE ARTICLE

Bolivian leader to halve own salary

Bolivian president-elect Evo Morales is putting his money where his mouth is regarding fulfilling his election promises of redistributing his impoverished nation's wealth by halving his own salary. He has vowed to take a 50 percent salary cut when he is inaugurated on January 22. He won his country's national election on December 18. He will slash the current presidential salary of 30,000 bolivianos (\$3,750 US) to around 15,000 bolivianos. It is not just the leader's income that will go under the knife - he will halve the wages of his ministers, deputy ministers and lawmakers. "This is a democratic revolution and we will respond from the government because we must share the economic burden among all of us," he told members of his Movement to Socialism (MAS) party.

The MAS leader wants to promote a cultural revolution too to improve the quality of life of his people. He has earmarked plans for a new social welfare system, a more effective security program and a gamut of measures aimed at political and economic decentralization. He is also bent on stamping out corruption, which is responsible for sliding one of the poorest Latin American countries into deeper economic woe. Morales is also keen to shake up his foreign policy. He wants to eliminate any foreign aid that implicates any form of interference in domestic affairs. He said his government would refuse aid from the US to fight drug barons and traffickers if it came with strings attached. He said if the US cut aid to his country, he would look elsewhere for benefactors.

WARM-UPS

1. BOLIVIA SEARCH: Talk to as many other students as you can to find out what they know about Bolivia. After you have talked to lots of students, sit down with your partner(s) and share your information. Tell each other what you thought was interesting or surprising. Would you like to visit or live in Bolivia?

2. ELECTION PROMISES: Which of these election promises would you (a) vote for and (b) expect to see happen? How would your country change if these things were to happen?

- a. The president / prime minister will take a 50% salary cut.
- b. All nuclear programs will end – both military and energy related.
- c. We will totally dismantle our army and spend the money on education.
- d. We will switch to non-fossil fuels within two years.
- e. Everyone will receive the same pay regardless of his or her job.
- f. Fifty percent of all employees in all positions must be women.
- g. We will ban alcohol and cigarettes and reclassify them as illegal drugs.
- h. We will give ten percent of our country's GDP to help fight disease and poverty.

3. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

Money / mouth / election promises / redistributing wealth / salaries / knives / revolutions / economic burdens / cultural revolution / foreign policy / string / aid

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

4. I'M MY LEADER: Imagine you are the (real) leader of your country. Are you satisfied with your record? Do you think most of your people are happy with your record? Talk with other "leaders" in the class about your job, successes, failures and the plans you have for your country's future.

5. LEADER OPINIONS: How far do you agree with these opinions?

- a. The leader of a country should receive no salary from the state.
- b. A country's leader should be the highest paid person in the country.
- c. A country's leader does not have to be a citizen of that country.
- d. Being the leader of your country is the greatest job in the world.
- e. The financial accounts of a nation's leader should be open for all to see.
- f. A nation's leader should lead by example and make many personal sacrifices.
- g. It is important for a president to wear expensive clothes and drive a BMW.
- h. Even leaders of the poorest countries must live in palaces.

6. SALARY: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "salary". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- a. Bolivia's leader is to halve the salary he receives as a cocoa grower. T / F
- b. Evo Morales promised to redistribute wealth in his impoverished land. T / F
- c. Many lawmakers and politicians will be cut with a knife. T / F
- d. He is leading a revolution in which all must share the burden. T / F
- e. Mr. Morales has marks on his ears from working in security programs. T / F
- f. He is also bent on stamping out corruption. T / F
- g. Mr. Morales is not so keen on shaking up his foreign policy. T / F
- h. Mr. Morales wants to receive foreign aid that has no strings attached. T / F

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| a. impoverished | be reduced |
| b. inaugurated | suggests |
| c. slash | penciled in |
| d. go under the knife | responsibility |
| e. burden | plethora |
| f. promote | sworn in |
| g. earmarked | donors |
| h. gamut | poverty-stricken |
| i. implicates | stimulate |
| j. benefactors | cut |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| a. Morales is putting his money | plans for a new social welfare system |
| b. redistributing his impoverished | where his mouth is |
| c. he is inaugurated | attached |
| d. go under | the economic burden |
| e. we must share | out corruption |
| f. He has earmarked | barons and traffickers |
| g. a gamut of | on January 22 |
| h. He is also bent on stamping | the knife |
| i. refuse aid from the US to fight drug | nation's wealth |
| j. ...if it came with strings | measures aimed at... |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words in the column on the right into the gaps in the text.

Bolivian leader to halve own salary

Bolivian president-_____ Evo Morales is putting his money where his mouth is regarding _____ his election promises of redistributing his impoverished nation's wealth by halving his own salary. He has _____ to take a 50 percent salary cut when he is inaugurated on January 22. He won his country's national election on December 18. He will _____ the current presidential salary of 30,000 bolivianos (\$3,750 US) to around 15,000 bolivianos. It is not just the leader's income that will go under the _____ - he will _____ the wages of his ministers, deputy ministers and lawmakers. "This is a democratic revolution and we will _____ from the government because we must share the economic _____ among all of us," he told members of his Movement to Socialism (MAS) party.

respond
fulfilling
slash
elect
burden
knife
vowed
halve

The MAS leader wants to _____ a cultural revolution too to improve the quality of life of his people. He has _____ plans for a new social welfare system, a more effective security program and a _____ of measures aimed at political and economic decentralization. He is also _____ on stamping out corruption, which is responsible for sliding one of the poorest Latin American countries into deeper economic _____. Morales is also keen to shake up his foreign policy. He wants to eliminate any foreign aid that implicates any form of _____ in domestic affairs. He said his government would refuse aid from the US to fight drug _____ and traffickers if it came with strings attached. He said if the US cut aid to his country, he would look elsewhere for _____.

earmarked
benefactors
bent
interference
promote
gamut
barons
woe

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Bolivian leader to halve own salary

Bolivian president-elect Evo Morales is putting his _____ where his _____ is regarding fulfilling his election promises of redistributing his impoverished nation's wealth by _____ his own salary. He has vowed to take a 50 percent salary cut when he is inaugurated on January 22. He won his country's national election on December 18. He will _____ the current presidential salary of 30,000 bolivianos (\$3,750 US) to around 15,000 bolivianos. It is not just the leader's income that will go under the _____ - he will _____ the wages of his ministers, deputy ministers and lawmakers. "This is a democratic revolution and we will _____ from the government because we must share the economic _____ among all of us," he told members of his Movement to Socialism (MAS) party.

The MAS leader wants to _____ a cultural revolution too to improve the quality of life of his people. He has _____ plans for a new social welfare system, a more effective security program and a _____ of measures aimed at political and economic decentralization. He is also _____ on stamping out corruption, which is responsible for _____ one of the poorest Latin American countries into deeper economic _____. Morales is also keen to shake up his foreign policy. He wants to eliminate any foreign aid that implicates any form of _____ in domestic affairs. He said his government would refuse aid from the US to fight drug _____ and traffickers if it came with _____ attached. He said if the US cut aid to his country, he would look elsewhere for benefactors.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words **'money'** and **'mouth'**.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT "SALRIES" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about salaries and how much people in different jobs should receive.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- | | |
|-----------|---------------|
| • mouth | • cultural |
| • own | • earmarked |
| • slash | • stamping |
| • knife | • woe |
| • respond | • barons |
| • burden | • benefactors |

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- b. What do you know about Evo Morales?
- c. What would you like to know about Evo Morales?
- d. Do you believe politicians when they talk about redistributing wealth and stamping out corruption?
- e. Which politicians do you know of that you respect for their honesty?
- f. What do you think of Evo Morales' promise to cut his own salary in half?
- g. What do you think of the term "democratic revolution"?
- h. Would you like to see the foreign policy of your country shaken up?
- i. What kind of strings might come attached with US aid to Bolivia?
- j. What burdens do you share?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. Do you think all of the world's leaders should cut their salaries in half?
- d. What kinds of things would you like your leader to stamp out in your country?
- e. Do you think Mr. Morales will deliver his promises?
- f. What would the world be like if there were more leaders like Evo Morales?
- g. What do you think Bolivia's ministers and lawmakers think about Mr. Morales' plans to slash their salaries?
- h. Have you ever put your money where your mouth is?
- i. Have you ever gone under the knife?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- b. Was there a question you didn't like?
- c. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- d. What did you like talking about?
- e. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

SALARIES: In pairs / groups, decide on the appropriate salaries for the people in the table. Decide also how much of a year-end bonus they should receive and what conditions they need to meet to get the bonus.

PERSON	SALARY	BONUS	BONUS CONDITIONS
U.S President			
Bolivian President			
Heart surgeon			
English teacher			
Soldier			
TV newscaster			
World number-one tennis player			
Refuse collector			

Change partners and tell your new partner(s) the salary, bonus and conditions you decided with your old partner(s).

Combine your salaries, bonuses and conditions to ones you both / all agree on.

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information on Bolivia's president-elect Evo Morales. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson. Did you all find out similar things?

3. MY ELECTION: Write six election promises you would make if you were to become leader of your country. Show what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar promises? Whose "manifesto" looks best?

4. LETTER: Write a letter to Bolivia's president elect about his plans to redistribute wealth in his country. Show your letters to your classmates in the next lesson. Did everyone write about similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F b. T c. F d. T e. F f. T g. F h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| a. impoverished | poverty-stricken |
| b. inaugurated | sworn in |
| c. slash | cut |
| d. go under the knife | be reduced |
| e. burden | responsibility |
| f. promote | stimulate |
| g. earmarked | penciled in |
| h. gamut | plethora |
| i. implicates | suggests |
| j. benefactors | donors |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| a. Morales is putting his money | where his mouth is |
| b. redistributing his impoverished | nation's wealth |
| c. he is inaugurated | on January 22 |
| d. go under | the knife |
| e. we must share | the economic burden |
| f. He has earmarked | plans for a new social welfare system |
| g. a gamut of | measures aimed at... |
| h. He is also bent on stamping | out corruption |
| i. refuse aid from the US to fight drug | barons and traffickers |
| j. ...if it came with strings | attached |

GAP FILL:

Bolivian leader to halve own salary

Bolivian president-**elect** Evo Morales is putting his money where his mouth is regarding **fulfilling** his election promises of redistributing his impoverished nation's wealth by halving his own salary. He has **vowed** to take a 50 percent salary cut when he is inaugurated on January 22. He won his country's national election on December 18. He will **slash** the current presidential salary of 30,000 bolivianos (\$3,750 US) to around 15,000 bolivianos. It is not just the leader's income that will go under the **knife** - he will **halve** the wages of his ministers, deputy ministers and lawmakers. "This is a democratic revolution and we will **respond** from the government because we must share the economic **burden** among all of us," he told members of his Movement to Socialism (MAS) party.

The MAS leader wants to **promote** a cultural revolution too to improve the quality of life of his people. He has **earmarked** plans for a new social welfare system, a more effective security program and a **gamut** of measures aimed at political and economic decentralization. He is also **bent** on stamping out corruption, which is responsible for sliding one of the poorest Latin American countries into deeper economic **woe**. Morales is also keen to shake up his foreign policy. He wants to eliminate any foreign aid that implicates any form of **interference** in domestic affairs. He said his government would refuse aid from the US to fight drug **barons** and traffickers if it came with strings attached. He said if the US cut aid to his country, he would look elsewhere for **benefactors**.