Addressing Inequality and Promoting Inclusive and Sustainable Development

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ABSTRACT

Self-determination continues to gather momentum in New Caledonia. Pursuant to the Noumea Accord, both Congress and the government are increasingly empowered via the gradual implementation of a transfer of power from France to New Caledonia. Key areas such as taxation, labour law, health, foreign trade, secondary school education and many others are already in the hands of the Territorial Congress and government. Further authority will be given to the Congress in the near future, such as civil law, corporate law, university, and radio and television. Ultimately, the French Republic should only remain in charge of “sovereign functions” like foreign affairs, justice, defence, public order, and currency. Pursuant to the Agreement, the Territorial Congress will have the right to call for a referendum on independence at any time of its choosing between 2014 and 2017. Before the vote however, Kanaks and Caledonians have to build together what the Noumea Accord calls “a common destiny”. This includes addressing ethnic inequalities. In June 2012, an important deal was reached in Congress between major political parties and trade unions to promote a large social policy through a consumption tax and an income proportional general taxation. But the so-called “loyalist” parties indefinitely shelved the bill as soon as the employers and the rich resisted. Sooner rather than later, New Caledonia will have to decide on policies to close the gap between the indigenous and the non-indigenous people, especially if a common destiny is to be realised.

Key words: governance; public policies; tax; inequality; Nation-building; decolonisation.