**Transcription of Participant Observation notes**

Site: Governmental offices

Type of event: Meeting of neighbours with SACMEX (Mexico City water system) and government staff to review the progress of the well.

Duration: 75 minutes

Date and time: 16 December 2022. From 14:10 to 15:30 hrs

Additional notes (in addition to field notes): Meeting where the near complete progress of the well is discussed. Last meeting I attend before the well is completed and inaugurated.

Observer: A

I arrive at 2:10 pm, walking to the offices, and see Martina and Beni sitting outside the building. I greet them both and sit down next to Martina, with whom I still have an interview pending. She tells me that we could have the interview tomorrow, and I agree, as I won't have a chance to do the interview any other time before the well is inaugurated. I stay talking for a while with Martina, who tells me how she's been doing and how she's been. I also tell her how I'm feeling and how I've been doing in the last few days. Waldo arrives and we go into the meeting, after waiting for him for a few minutes.

The people from SACMEX take a while to arrive, so we wait for them inside the office for a few minutes as well. We are Martina, Waldo, Beni and me. The SACMEX people finally arrive, and they tell us about the progress of the well, which is almost finished. They will notify the members of the Water Defence Committee as soon as the work is finished. Functional tests have to be carried out first, and once these have been completed, the work can be handed over and inaugurated. They are talking about holding a commemorative event, as they have seen that things can be achieved and that is positive. Martina says that the people from the Water Defence Committee are asking for a notice of the inauguration date of the well so that the neighbours can be notified and attend.

After the update on the progress of the construction, SACMEX staff comment on the negotiations with the neighbours who were opposed to the construction of the well. This is a tense issue, and government staff comment that it has been difficult to reach a really meaningful agreement or progress with this group of neighbours.

The Water Defence Committee, although not directly involved with this group of "adjoining neighbours", has had to mediate and even confront the adjoining neighbours. The members of the Water Defence Committee suggest to the SACMEX staff that they have a clearer strategy for reaching these agreements and suggest that they have in writing the commitments that they make with the adjacent neighbours so that progress can be made and there is clarity on what mitigation and support actions will be carried out in which homes. This is because SACMEX personnel say that they have already carried out work, but that there are people who are part of this group of adjacent neighbours who are asking for more and more for themselves. The Water Defence Committee is very clear that they are not supporting this group of neighbours, and that on the contrary, they are very interested as a committee in moving forward with the work on the well, so that it can be completed. They have even had to negotiate with the adjacent neighbours so that the well is not closed, and so that the work can continue. They have had to make a lot of effort and give their time for this, and they point out to the government their inability to get things done, and that because they did not do things right from the beginning, no progress has been made on the issue of the adjacent neighbours. I notice that this is a difficult issue for the people in the Committee, because they don't want to be used by the government to negotiate, and they don't want to take responsibility for the mistakes that the government has made. Moreover, it is very frustrating for them that after so much time invested, the work on the well is still threatened by a group with whom the government has not been able to reach effective agreement.

Both Waldo and Beni were insistent that the government must resolve this, and that it is not the responsibility of the Water Defence Committee to do so. They mentioned that unfortunately there are political interests, especially from groups that are trying to take advantage of the neighbours' achievements. These types of groups have lied saying that the water from the well is for the Azteca Stadium renovation project. I noticed that the three of them were very satisfied with the progress of the well, happy that practically everything is ready and finished. But when the subject of the adjoining neighbours came up, I noticed some pain in the looks and words of the people I was accompanying. I also saw some concern when talking about this issue, as Beni said that they feel that they are trying to set them against the adjoining neighbours. This is a strong concern of the Water Defence Committee, as they don't want to see a conflict with the neighbours when the well is finished. Waldo was emphatic during the meeting in saying that water belongs to everyone, not just a few. That the benefit of the well, and that the water that will come out of the well, will be for all the inhabitants of the central zone of Santo Domingo, and not just for a few people, nor just for those who are on the Committee. For this reason, they are very concerned about the disinformation campaign against the well. Waldo comments that disinformation has been something very negative that has affected this well, and that it has also affected communities such as what has happened in Xochimilco. Disinformation has affected opposition to the well, and the neighbours of the Water Defence Committee have had to do a lot of work and effort to respond to these campaigns that sow false information, such as the rumour that the water was going to be used for the Azteca Stadium project. Waldo says that their explanation and meeting in which they told the neighbours, who were entering the project, what the purpose and meaning of the project was, was important. He says it was important because it dispelled any doubts or rumours about the water connection.

SACMEX commits that they will make a tour and visits with the neighbours, as a work commitment in which they will seek to clearly establish the subsequent commitments of mitigation or repair works in the houses. Waldo and Beni insist that what they told the neighbours is respected and fulfilled, and that no loose ends are left untied to avoid any future problems. An engineer from SACMEX says that he will personally intervene and make sure that what the neighbours are asking for is complied with. But he also says that this will be in addition to everything that has already been given and done for this group of opposing neighbours. Waldo and Beni ask again that there be some written record that these decisions and agreements will be made, so that the "adjoining neighbours" cannot say that they were not complied with, and ask that their demands be met. Waldo says that it is very bad that public works in this case are being mixed with politics. The SACMEX engineer, with a certain cynicism, speaks out against this, and says that his is purely technical, not political. This same engineer responds by challenging Beni's comments when it is suggested that SACMEX has not fulfilled its obligations.

At the conclusion of this meeting, I am left wondering how one of the SACMEX engineers said that theirs is not political but only technical. I think that the activities of the Water Defence Committee prove that it is not only technical, disinterested or separate from politics. On the contrary, infrastructure has clearly become a political issue according to the activities of this Committee, because although they are not supporting any political group, they are looking for the well to help stop water from being used in a political sense or as a political reward for some of the leaders of the local administration.

After the meeting, we walk to the Metro. On the way I talk to Waldo, Beni and Martina about how I am doing with the interviews and the progress of the fieldwork. I tell them that I am making good progress, and that I am satisfied with how the interviews have been progressing so far. I agree again on the date for the interview with Martina, as well as the location.