

SEEKING UNITY IN GUERRERO

Representatives from Nahuatl, Mixteco Tlapaneco and Amuzgo communities attended the First Congress of Indigenous representatives of Guerrero from September 23 to 26 1993. This conference was a big step forward in the unification of Indigenous Communities of Guerrero and their struggle to establish autonomy.

The rights of Indigenous communities, including land rights and perspectives regarding culture and development, were among the themes addressed during the conference.

In terms of Indigenous rights, the need for the recognition of individual rights as well as traditional forms of enforcing justice was expressed. The election of commissioners within municipalities and the partitioning of Indigenous land by the Department of Agriculture was denounced as going against the traditional communal land structure. Proposals in relation to these issues were taken to the National Consultation Forum of Indigenous Nations, where land issues and the enforcement of Article 169 are dealt with. In addition, a proposal for the passage of a law entitled Indigenous Electoral of the Sixth District, which would allow for Indigenous representation



Mixteco, Tlapaneco, Nahuatl, and Amuzgo leaders at the closing of the conference

photo by SAIC

within the Chamber of Deputies, was put forth.

The need for direct participation in development programs taking place throughout the region was discussed. In this context, a format for devising solutions to problems of education, unwieldy infrastructure of services, the sustainable use of natural resources and the financing of agricultural production was designed. In order to implement the solutions and projects, the creation of a government fund for the economic development of Guerrero's Indigenous communities, to be managed by the communities themselves, was suggested.

In order to preserve their traditional cultures, the representatives proposed the creation of educational programs in which children could learn the music, dance and language of their people.

The Second Conference will be taking place March 15, 1994.



INTERAMERICAN ENCOUNTER ON INDIGENOUS RIGHTS AND COMMON LAW

The Interamerican Encounter on Indigenous Rights and Common Law took place from June 16-19 at the headquarters of the Alliance for Development in Guatemala. The event was organized by Maya Culture Center (CECMA). Representatives from different Indigenous organizations from throughout the continent participated, including: National Indigenous Organization

of Colombia (ONIC), The Honduran Federation of the Xicaque of Yoro Tribes (FETRIXI), the General Guayami Congress and Kunas United for Nappguana both from Panama, Sejekto of Costa Rica, the Council of Mayan Organizations of Guatemala, representatives of the Autonomous University of Mexico as well as representatives from SAIC in the United States.