

always lived." While Indians in Pastaza returned to the lowlands after 5 weeks of negotiation with their territory adjudicated, titles included only surface rights to land and its products. Subterranean rights remain solely in the hands of the state to exploit. For twenty years, petroleum development has indelibly changed the social and ecological reality of the northern portion of the Ecuadorian Amazon through the construction of a network of roads and towns and the contamination of water and soil systems. If petroleum development is not controlled, this is the fate looming on the horizons of Indigenous territory in Pastaza. ARCO, the only oil corporation working in Pastaza, has discovered a sizeable reserve in Indigenous territory and hydrocarbon extraction is imminent, if the local communities and international pressure groups are not mobilized.

The struggle for land and Indigenous rights in Pastaza is not simply the concern of a politicized Indigenous elite. Miquia Abigail and Miquia Leona came to the Bay Area in representation of their communities and OPIP to speak in their own voices about their peoples' historical struggle in defense of their culture, beliefs, language, and way of life in the Ecuadorian rain forest. Standing before the San Francisco audience, Bacha Gualinga spoke on the wisdom of the ages: "I don't know how to read or write. Not even sign my name. Yet, I have here, captured within my head, years and years of history. I am here as a seed, as a root, as a tree. Look at me and learn." Tracing the intimate link between Indigenous peoples and a landscape, she added, "If Indians disappear, if our way of life is destroyed, what will happen to the

world? Then there will not be forest. The jungle will not be green."

In 1989, OPIP established a Women's Committee directed by and for Indigenous Quichua women to strengthen disappearing traditions and address women's needs. Female potters in the province of Pastaza currently sell their artware to OPIP's Cooperative store, Yanapuma (Black Panther), in the provincial capital of Puyo. Now, OPIP's Women's Committee wishes to explore possibilities for expanding the marketing of Indigenous ceramics. The US tour aims to provide Amazonian Quichua potters direct access to international alternative trade markets in the United States. The Women's Committee seeks to develop alternative trade networks as empowering opportunities to re-enforce the cultural tradition of the more than 3,000 women potters in the region and extend needed economic support. An example of grassroots organizing initiated and controlled by Indian women, the marketing of the Quichua ceramic tradition re-affirms the dignity their cultural identity by honoring indigenous female art and strengthening female voices. Organized during International Women's Month, the Quichua Potter's Exchange deepens a commitment for dialogue between women across the globe and expands international networks of mutual support and cooperation. ☺

*For more information, contact: Fundación Jatari, P.O. Box 65195, Tucson, AZ, 85728, Tel / Fax: (520) 577-3642; or the Organization of Indigenous Peoples of Pastaza (OPIP), Casilla 790, Puyo, Pastaza, Tel / Fax: (593-3) 885-461.*

## Indigenous People form an Alliance to counter the Vampire Project

On February 18-19, 1995, a group of 30 Indigenous delegates from the United States, Canada, Panama, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Peru met in Phoenix, Arizona, to discuss an Indigenous response to the Human Genome Project. During the three days of discussion, the delegates decided to form an International Alliance to counter the Human Genome Biodiversity Project. Many Indigenous peoples call this "The Vampire Project" because its goal is to collect blood, tissues, and hair from about 700 Indigenous groups around the world.

The Human Genome Project is a proposal to collect and study the genetic structures of various ethnic groups. They have targeted populations "on the verge of extinction," and refer to Indigenous groups as "Isolates of Historical Interest." SAIIC and many other Indigenous organizations have taken a stand against this project because it is yet another example of research which North American and European scientists carry out on Indigenous peoples without their consent and without all of the relevant information being provided to them. This is a continuation of colonialism of Indigenous peoples which began 500 years ago.

The delegates at the Phoenix conference decided to make a plan of action to stop the Human Genome Project and its attempt against the biological, spiritual, physical, and psychological lives of Indigenous peoples. They formed a coordinating committee comprised of Indigenous people from North, Central, and South America. They are planning another meeting for next fall in northern California in order to continue this campaign.

The En'owkin Centre and Okanagan Indians in British Columbia organized this conference which Tonatierra in Phoenix hosted. Debra Harry, a Paiute Indian from Nevada, is coordinator of this project.

*For more information, contact: Debra, at PO Box 6, Nixon, Nevada 89424, Tel: (702) 574-0309, e-mail dharry@igc.apc.org; or the En'owkin Centre, 257 Brunswick St., Penticton, BC V2R 5P9, Canada, Tel: (604) 493-7181 Fax: (604) 493-5302.*