

# 1993 YEAR OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

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## Latin American Governments Establish Indigenous Peoples' Fund



Inspired by an initiative of the government of Bolivia, who met with other Latin American governments and with the government of Spain at the first Ibero-American Summit in Guadalajara, Mexico in July, 1991, an Indigenous Peoples' Fund has been established that expects to provide millions of dollars to Indigenous communities.

The process of developing this fund has taken place over the last two years, and has involved representatives from governments of the region, extra-regional governments, Indigenous peoples' organizations (Inter-American Indian Institute, the presidents of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples, and COICA-the Coordinating Body of Indigenous Peoples' Organizations of the Amazon Basin), non-governmental organizations, and international agencies.

The decision-making structure of the Fund is designed to ensure direct participation of Indigenous peoples. On the General Assembly and the Board of Directors, regional governments, Indigenous peoples of each regional member state, and extra-regional governments will all be equally represented.

The four areas of priority the Fund will consider are:

● **Resources for Sustainable Autonomous Development:** Securing legal recognition of land and territories, promoting natural resource management, restoring degraded

areas and ecosystems, and fostering sustainable productive activities.

● **Indigenous Peoples' Rights:** Promoting and protecting the rights of Indigenous people, reforming legislation and other regulatory codes.

● **Training for Management and Participation:** Strengthening representative organizations, establishing co-operative mechanisms for planning, consultation and action.

● **Identity and Culture:** Protecting the cultural knowledge and technology of Indigenous peoples, promoting recognition of their identity and awareness of Indigenous contributions.

At a Fund meeting on April 13, 1993 in Mexico, an interim committee was formed to preside over the development process. Rodolfo Stavenhagen, a well-known Mexican anthropologist, was chosen as the interim president of the committee which, once the Fund is formally established, will serve as the Board of Directors.

Not all Latin American governments have yet ratified this proposal. To aid in this effort, please send your letters of support for the Indigenous Peoples' Fund to:

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