



photo SAHIC

INDIGENOUS WOMEN IN BOLIVIA SET EXAMPLE FOR ABYA YALA

The Indigenous women of Bolivia have come to occupy an important and influential role in the Indigenous movement after many years of struggling for their rights and those of their peoples. Using Native American women as models of organization and unity, today, Bolivia has the greatest national organization of Indigenous women in the Abya Yala continent.

The Coordinating Commission of Indigenous Women of Bolivia (CCMIB) was created during the First National Gathering of Indigenous Women on July 1993, in Achocalla, La Paz. The Commission's purpose is to strengthen the Indigenous, popular, and campesino (peasant) movements through the active participation of women. By organizing different gatherings and seminars, the Commission seeks to unite all the Indigenous and non-Indigenous women's organizations working throughout the country and promote the formation of leaders in the various member organizations.

The Commission is guided by the fundamental principles of decentralized authority and respect for the autonomy of each member organization. In addition, though it is a women's organization it is not "feminist." Instead, the Commission looks to complement its activities with those of its male counterparts, since, as one participant affirmed, "in original, traditional communities, separate levels of power between a man and woman did not exist. A couple made decisions of mutual accord, because the struggles of both the men and the women were the same." Nevertheless, taking into account the marginalization that the government's exclusion policies makes them face, the Indigenous women have considered unification a priority so that they can begin to devise their own methods to elect representatives of their nationalities to the Bolivian government.

During the Encounter, the unification of 25 women's organizations was consolidated in the CCMIB, and an interim Board of

Directors was elected to organize the Second Encounter, which will take place next year, and where a permanent Board will be elected.



For More Information contact:

Comisión Coordinadora de
Mujeres Indígenas de Bolivia
Casilla 2315
Calle Yanacocha No. 441
Edif. Arco Iris, Piso 13, Oficina 1302
La Paz, Bolivia

Telephone: 369.963