

# The First Gathering of All Indian Nations of El Salvador Held

The *National Association of the Indigenous People of El Salvador (ANIS)* held its first nationwide gathering of Indian Peoples on September 17-22, 1990 in San Salvador. *The National Gathering of Indian People on Culture, Ecology and Justice* was well attended by Maya, Lenca and Nahua Indian representatives from throughout the nation, as well as national and international lawyers, environmentalists and human rights delegates. Despite careful invitations to a broad range of representatives which might truly promote peace in the region, government officials, FMLN and most political party representatives were conspicuously absent from the meeting.

Nevertheless, those present made concrete proposals directed specifically at the Salvadoran Armed Forces and the national government. A summary of the conclusions of the September meeting follows:

1. A policy with respect to the conservation and protection of natural resources which stems from a change in attitude as regards Nature;
2. A policy with respect to the conservation and protection of Indigenous culture and values and strict adherence to Articles 62 and 63 of the Salvadoran Constitution which refer to the preservation, diffusion and respect for native languages, history, artwork and archeology;
3. A fair application of justice;
4. An end to the repression of all peoples;
5. Subscription to, ratification of and application of all UN treaties designed to protect the rights of Indigenous peoples;
6. Dialogue and negotiation with the FMLN as well as a cease-fire;
7. Respect for brothers and sisters practicing traditional medicine;
8. Distribution of all uncultivated state lands to the Indigenous peoples as these lands were wrongfully taken from them;
9. No forced and illegal recruitment of our children into the armed forces;
10. Absolute respect for human rights;
11. The government and the FMLN should request our consent before entering our lands to carry out any operations;

12. The Legislative Assembly should write laws which benefit Indigenous and poor people in general;

13. Humanize the army;

14. Lower the price on basic articles of consumption and distribute articles donated by foreign countries and international organizations rather than selling them;

15. Define a policy which recognizes all peoples right to an adequate diet and implement this policy;

16. Investigate and punish all human rights violations and incidences of corruption;

17. Reject foreign intervention in internal matters and keep government hands out of Indigenous matters;

18. Respect Indigenous autonomy;

19. Implement an integral agrarian reform program which includes a food policy, the redistribution of the land, technical assistance, sufficient administrative assistance, establishment of credit and mechanisms for marketing products which benefit the producer rather than the intermediary;

20. Control and elimination of all drug sales beginning with alcohol producing factories and sales, then on to marijuana, cocaine and other substances damaging to humanity and denigrating to the individual.

As ANIS leader, Adrian Esquino Lisco subsequently noted at an important march in San Salvador on October 12th, "When the Indigenous people become liberated, the land too becomes liberated... For the Indian people of El Salvador, and for Indian people throughout the Americas, October 12th is a 'Day of Disgrace,' because it marks the beginning of an invasion which continues today."

