



# II CONTINENTAL ENCOUNTER OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, NATIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS

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## CONIC

**W**ith the participation of more than 300 Indigenous delegates, supporters, and observers, the II Continental Encounter of Indigenous Peoples, Nations, and Organizations took place at the Otomí Ceremonial Center of the Ñathó Ñahñu people, in Temoaya, Mexico, from the 8th through the 13th of October. The Encounter was organized by the Coordinating Commission of Indigenous Nations and Organizations of the Continent (CONIC). This Encounter was a follow up to the First Continental Encounter of Indigenous Peoples, which took place in Quito, Ecuador in July of 1990. Its goal was to consolidate an autonomous and unified Indigenous movement throughout the Abya Yala continent.

A Provisional Council, responsible for putting together the Third Encounter that will take place in Guatemala between the months of September and November of 1994, was formed. During the Third Continental Encounter, CONIC will be formally constituted and regional workshops will be organized around the various issues that Indigenous Peoples are faced with. The first meeting of the Provisional Council will take place in Bolivia in February 1994, organized by the Coordinadora de Mujeres Indígenas de Bolivia.

The following are members of the Provisional Council: Consejo de Todas las Tierras (Mapuche, Chile); Coordinadora de Mujeres Indígenas de Bolivia; Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador-

CONAIE; Consejo de Organizaciones Mayas de Guatemala; Kunas Unidos por Napguana Panama); Frente Independiente de Pueblos Indios, Mexico and Consejo Indígena de Guerrero, Mexico, TONATIERRA and SAIIC of USA.

### CONIC Declaration of Temoaya, 1993

501 years after the European invasion, the Peoples and Original Nations of Abya Yala gather together. Their song has caused the heart of the Earth to vibrate, given strength to our voices and illuminated our thoughts, strengthening the warmth of the sacred fire.



Thus, every morning, we greeted our Father Sun and welcomed the new day. His energy has united us and given us strength to progress in our work. We conclude five days of work towards agreements and consensus of dialogues and debate. With pain and with hope, with joy and with anger, we have reached the following agreements and conclusions for the future:

### I. Spirituality and Tradition

The spirituality of our cultures and the many traditional forms in which that spirituality is expressed, are the deep essence of our identity. The Great Spirit that shelters all of Abya Yala unites us, protects us, and offers us the means to bridge our differences with mutual respect. We conclude that a basic condition for maintaining the spirituality and traditions of our Peoples is the recovery of our territories and the healing and renewal of our Sacred Mother Earth, returning her green cover and nourishing her with organic life rather than with the chemicals that poison and profane her.

We agree that it is vital to foster, develop, and strengthen the roots of our identity; therefore it is of fundamental importance to work for the recovery of our own forms of living with and relating to our Father Sun, our Mother Earth, our Grandfather Fire, and our Grandmother Moon

We demand of the Nation-States the recognition of our religious practices and our use of traditional and ceremonial medicines, as well as the decriminalization of

coca, peyote, mushrooms and other plants of sacred and healing value...

### II. Mother Earth, Territory, and Harmonious Development

One of the principle agreements reached at the Earth Summit that took place in Brazil in 1992, was the warning call that united all of



the countries and social sectors of the world in face of the great dangers that confront our Planet. In addition, full recognition was given to the sustainable and sustaining technologies that have been practiced by the Original Nations for thousands of years. For our Peoples, ecology is not a fashion statement nor a recent development. This is the way our elders taught us:

"If you are going to cut down some trees in order to plant the seeds of your nourishment, you need to ask permission of the spirits of the forest and study the cycles of renewal in order to help regenerate what you have altered. You must ask permission and give offerings to the Earth Mother before opening any wounds in her body with the sharpened steel of your tools. You must study the agricultural calendar for the well-being of the other living beings who accompany you in this life.

In order to eliminate the root of the plunder and genocide suffered by our Peoples, it is necessary to undertake a profound territorial reorganization at a continental level that has as its objective the redefinition and the recognition of autonomous territories.

As Original Peoples, we denounce the neoliberal economic model which continues to generate more poverty, hunger, and environmental degradation. We are convinced of the need to establish alliances with the different sectors of society in order to join our efforts and work together towards the creation of alternative economic models which will not be based upon consumption and continuing ecological degradation.

### Resolutions

A) With the purpose of promoting a harmonious, sustainable, and community-based development, we strongly denounce and oppose GATT and NAFTA for the following reasons:

- 1) Their adverse impact on Nature.
- 2) Their exploitation of the Indigenous work force.
- 3) Their violation of Indigenous intellectual property rights with respect to Indigenous flora and fauna.



*Dagoberto Rojas, representative of the Confederation of Indigenous Peoples of Honduras addressing the plenary*

photo by SAIC

- 4) Their adverse impact on Self-Determination and Indigenous rights.
- 5) Their elimination of small-scale agriculture in favor of multi-national agribusiness.
- 6) Their potential for allowing the exploitation of child labor.
- 7) The lack of access our children have to the basic education that would allow them to compete internationally.

We protest and express our consternation and dismay at the proposal to collect human genes on the part of Project Human Genome Diversity Project. (see article, page 12) We demand that the HGD Project cease and desist in its attempt to collect human genes from Indigenous peoples, and that the United States government withdraw its application to patent the genes of a Guaymi woman, and any other similar applications. We also demand that GATT not approve any Agreement about the Patenting of Human Genes or other forms of life.

### III. Self-Determination, Legislation, and Indigenous Rights

The First Continental Encounter in Quito in 1990 constitutes a significant reference point in the actual struggles waged by the Original Peoples of Abya Yala. In that occasion, we produced the Quito Declaration which in 1993 is still very relevant. We said: "We are now fully aware that our definitive liberation CAN ONLY BE EXPRESSED BY MEANS OF

THE FULL EXERCISE OF OUR SELF-DETERMINATION." This self-determination must "...be expressed as full recognition. TO OUR OWN INDIGENOUS SELF-GOVERNMENT AND CONTROL OF OUR OWN TERRITORIES." In order to make real this objective, we maintained: "IT IS NECESSARY TO HAVE A COMPLETE AND THOROUGH TRANSFORMATION OF THE STATE AND NATIONAL SOCIETY.

We ratify the understanding of ourselves as Peoples, as the Original Peoples and First Inhabitants of this continent. We re vindicate our right to be recognized as such by the international community, and the United Nations.

The opposition of the national States to the acknowledgment of our rights has its principal origin in the very configuration of the Nation-States, which by their very nature exclude our Peoples. It is not enough for them to declare themselves "multi-cultural" or "multi-ethnic", as these declarations do not modify them in the least. It is necessary to BUILD MULTINATIONAL STATES that will recognize the coexistence of multiple Peoples within one State.

CONIC needs to work towards guaranteeing the participation of Indigenous Peoples in the different meetings that the UN carries out in regard to our rights and request that it consider a proposal to re-structure itself in order to include Indigenous Nations as full members.





#### IV. Women, Family and Community

From remote times, our Peoples established the family as the basic unit of social organization. The roles of men and women, of youth and elders, were different in their functions, but equal in their importance. The historic situation of our peoples has laid a great burden of responsibilities on women, but thanks to our strength and conviction much of our traditions and customs were kept alive. Women play an important role as a principle leaders and counselors with spirituality being the source of our strength. The world view of Indigenous women is not one which divides and separates, but is instead a holistic one.

The importance of the role of women in the continuity of our culture was highlighted. The need to educate our children within the family, in our own culture and mother tongue was insisted upon. It is recommended that we build even closer relationships with our children, in order to transmit our spiritual strength to them and prevent alienation and distancing from their original cultures. To this end, it is considered important that in the forthcoming year of 1994, which has been declared by the United Nations as the "Year of the Family", funds be channeled specifically for the purpose of strengthening Indigenous families. We need to promote women's organizations in coordination with family and community.

#### V. Education, Culture and Youth

We consider it necessary to promote the establishment of an educational system in accordance with the philosophy and world view of our Peoples. The formation of one's iden-

determination. However, there have also been aggressions against our people as the voracious neoliberal appetite for our territories and resources continues.

We must make an effort to de-colonize ourselves, to recover our capacity to be indignant over any attack and any injustice com-

mitted against a fellow People. We need to establish more effective lines of communication between the continental Indigenous movement and the grassroots communities and organizations. We also need to be more effective in the handling of national and international laws.

Another of the advances which we have achieved in the last three years as CONIC is the relationship that has grown between the organizations of the North and the South of the continent. This brings us much joy because it also signifies the fulfillment of a prophecy of our ancestors, the re-encounter of the Eagle and the Condor. We are thus

creating the basis for a true continental Indigenous unity.

To this end, we must highlight that this II Encounter has had as a distinctive sign the permanent spiritual presence that accompanied us during all of the days of the Encounter. The presence of many grandparents, elders, and spiritual guides made it possible for us to have great energies to dedicate to our work, and contributed to the successful completion of our task...

A complete Report of the Second Encounter will be published in the next Couple months. If you wish to receive a copy of the Report you can write to SAIIC, also to : TONATIERRA. P O Box 24009. Phoenix, AZ 85074. USA.

#### Letter to the United Nations

To the UN Secretary General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali

We, the members of CONIC are writing to express the following:

At the opening ceremony of the International Year of Indigenous Peoples, at the UN in New York, CONIC made an effort to invite 23 Indigenous delegates from all over the world, in order to support the UN initiative in declaring 1993 the Year of the World's Indigenous Peoples. During the inauguration, government representatives and UN officials expressed their desire for a new partnership with Indigenous Peoples.

Today, ten months later, this new relationship has not yet materialized, regarding participation and dialogue. For this reason, we are requesting to have a meeting between CONIC members and other Indigenous Peoples of the world with the UN...

Written at the Otomi Ceremonial Center, Temoaya, October 12 1993.

ity is a fundamental part of children's and young people's educational process. That identity begins at home, but it must be reinforced and strengthened at school.

#### VI. Organization — CONIC

One of the most important achievements of these three years that have transpired since the First Continental Encounter in Quito in 1990, is the consolidation of the Indigenous struggles in each of our countries.

Currently, the international community has begun to recognize the just nature of our claims, and we can affirm that we have gained important allies in support of our right to self-