

STATEMENT BY ALVARO VASQUEZ

The processes of communication among the Indian nations of this continent, now called "America," were broken with the European invasion that was initiated almost 500 years ago.

The sacred books (codices), the knowledge of our people, accumulated for thousands of years, were destroyed by fire, and by the incredible capacity for destruction by the colonials. All of those Indians involved in communication: priests, teachers, writers, translators, ambassadors and those in the theater, all were assassinated.

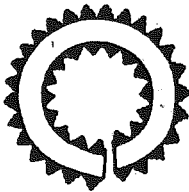
From this time, the destruction of our religion and our books and our writers has denied our existence; our voices have been quieted and are only heard in our communities and dressed as "myths" and "legends."

During the past 500 years, from the beginning of this massive genocide of Indians for the control of the land, this process continued. Our existence continues to be denied and our lands are taken through massive assassinations. This process continues as the order of the day. Nevertheless, almost nothing is mentioned in major communication networks (radio, television, film) nationally or internationally. In the name of the plan of nation states, the aggression and the silence continue. Our Indian nations are alive, although often cut into pieces by the borders of the nations formed by the colonials.

Our goal as Indian people is to break the silence of communication within the countries that our Indian communities have existed since the beginning.

SAIIC and the Comision de Relaciones de Asamblea de Autoridades Zapotecos-Chinontecas de la Sierra consider it necessary to reestablish communication among our Indian people, to know ourselves, and make ourselves known. Therefore, we propose to independent, non-government Indian organizations the following:

- 1) Create diverse means of communication among Indian communities;
- 2) Develop an interchange of information among the organizations that have initiated the process;
- 3) Develop the means of communication that currently exist in order to gain better diffusion among Indian people in sharing our experience;
- 4) Develop our traditional forms of communication and strengthen those that now exist;
- 5) Initiate investigation as to the most effective means of transmitting information that our people need (libraries, film and video archives);
- 6) Move ahead with discussion among non-Indian support organizations and strengthen our relations on a level of mutual and profound respect.



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