



"Women from different regions will be meeting and working together to solve our common problems"

Indigenous Women Organizing National Encounter

The First National Encounter of Indigenous Women of Bolivia will be held from June 21-23, 1993 in the historical Tiwanaku. This encounter is the culmination of two years of grass roots community organizing by Bolivian women.

The encounter is being organized by the Coordinating Commission of Indigenous Women of Bolivia which is made up of the following organizations: Centro de Discusión Ideológica de la Mujer Aymara (CDIMA), Organización de Mujeres Aymaras del Kollasuyu (OMAK), Coordinadora de Mujeres Indígenas del Beni (CMIB), Federación Nacional Campesina Bartolina Sisa (FNMCBS), Mujeres Pastoras de la Asociación de Criadores de Camelida and Asociación Nacional de Mujeres Radialistas (ANRCINB).

The Coordinating Commission of Indigenous Women of Bolivia is a member of the Coordinating Commission of Women of South and Meso America and of CONIC. More than 600 delegates are expected to participate. Two representatives from SAIIC will be attending the encounter as observers.

"The strength of this encounter is that women from different regions will be meeting and working together to solve our common problems," said Alicia Canaviri (Aymara), President of the Coordinating Commission of Indigenous Women of Bolivia.

Financial support is needed.

Curacas and Jilakatas Recover their Authority



On December 7, 1992, the first Assembly of Indigenous Authorities of the Southern Altiplano was held to define the function of Indigenous communal authorities.

This assembly, organized by the Regional Federation of Southern Altiplano Farmers (FRUTCAS), took place in Tomave, in the Potosí region of Bolivia.

The attendees emphasized the necessity for Curacas (primary traditional leaders) and Jilakatas (those in secondary positions) to regain the authority they had years ago. "With the traditional leaders in place we did not have as many problems. But since the government imposed political authorities (Corregidores) and agents in charge of the Cantons, problems multiplied, resulting in conflict among brothers," the attendees stated.

The regional delegates noted that traditionally the Indigenous authorities had maintained a harmonious relationship between nature and the local populations. They concerned themselves with such issues as assuring that everyone within their jurisdiction maintain orderly and dignified life. However, in recent times the role of these leaders has been reduced to organizing community festivals and carnivals.

The local attendees explained that traditional authorities distinguished themselves in their own communities by their attire. Curacas and Jilakatas wore a poncho, a *luch'u* (hat) and a ceremonial cane. These leaders were the only ones who could dress in this manner, thus commanding respect.

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