

## **Declaration of Indigenous Peoples for Food Sovereignty**

Representatives of Indigenous Peoples from the regions of Asia, the Pacific, Latin America, North America, Africa and Northern Europe, gathered at the Global Forum for Peoples' Food Sovereignty in Rome from the 13th to the 17th of November 2009.

Reaffirming our right to Food sovereignty, which is intrinsically linked to our historical, cultural and spiritual relations with our Mother Earth, our lands and territories,

Upholding our right to communal self-determination, as enshrined in Article 1 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,

Ratifying our rights, as established in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples,

Concerned by the most recent reports issued by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) which indicate that over a billion people in the world are going hungry, over 80% of whom are food producers and the majority of which live on the territories of Indigenous Peoples,

We convened at a Forum of Indigenous Peoples for Food Sovereignty and we agreed upon the following:

### **DECLARATION OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES**

1. - Indigenous Peoples came from places as diverse as the Amazon rainforest to the Arctic homeland of the Saami to the Sahara of Africa, the islands of the Pacific and the mountains of the Himalayas to sound the alarm on the dire effects suffered by their communities from the food crisis. Their communities are the most impacted by hunger and malnutrition, constituting a violation of their right to food, and our self-determination.

Remembering that the World Summit on Sustainable Development reaffirmed “the vital role of Indigenous Peoples in sustainable development” and called upon the states and United Nations organisations to “Promote the effective participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in decision-making processes and the implementation of policies relating to the use of traditional knowledge and biodiversity, amongst many other issues including agriculture, poverty and development.”

2. - Aware that the States and their governments are supporting the large transnational companies to the detriment of the Indigenous Peoples' traditional food production, through the appropriation of our lands, territories and resources.

3. - We have decided to continue using our indigenous seeds and our traditional products, and to continue our struggle against the capitalist market of food production, as well as against genetically modified products, because they weaken and exterminate traditional seeds.

4. - Indigenous Peoples have the right to possess, control, protect and pass on the traditional knowledge originating from our lands, territories and resources which we have possessed, used and occupied, respecting the relationship we have with Mother Earth and looking after the environment. In this sense, we are the alternative model of sustainable food production and protection of biodiversity.

5. - Therefore, we as Indigenous Peoples reject farming practices that use inorganic chemical substances and genetically modified seeds, also because their use aggravates global warming and climate change, affecting our Mother Earth. To this end, we demand that the FAO and all UN agencies also recognise the farming practices carried out by nomadic pastoralists.

6. - Remembering a number of UN bodies have adopted resolutions and agreements which state the fundamental importance of participation of Indigenous Peoples and the fact that governments must collaborate to facilitate it. In the same manner, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the former Human Rights Commission, the World Health Organisation, the World Intellectual Property Organisation, the Stockholm Convention, the current Human Rights Council, together with the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, amongst others, have created mechanisms which promote full and effective participation of representatives of indigenous communities in their meetings. These mechanisms range from the financial support established by the Voluntary Fund in order to facilitate participation for indigenous and local community representatives in meetings, to logistical support, as well as allowing participation in formal and informal groups, thereby stressing good practices for the entire UN system.

7. - The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, adopted by the UN General Assembly, in Article 41 and 42 states that the UN must establish ways of guaranteeing indigenous participation in matters that affect them.

Therefore:

8. - We call on the FAO to approve and establish a Relationship Policy with Indigenous Peoples based on the progress made on the draft of this policy and on issues related to the recognition of territorial rights of Indigenous Peoples.

9. - In this regard the FAO and IFAD must create a Working Group with Indigenous Peoples in the Committee on Food Security as well as in the specialised agencies and bodies of the FAO and IFAD.

10.- Beginning in this Indigenous Peoples' Forum on Food Sovereignty we have come together as an Indigenous Peoples' Caucus to facilitate dialogue, to foster communication, participation and following-up with the FAO and other bodies related to agriculture, food and food sovereignty and security.

11.- We, Indigenous Peoples, reaffirm the alliances we have with Social Movements, Nomadic Pastoralists, Artisanal Fisherfolk, Peasants, Small-scale Producers, Universities in solidarity with our cause, Women and Youth.

12. - We will also promote strategic and respectful alliances between diverse social movements, Indigenous Peoples, rural populations and urban groups. .

13. - We call on the Indigenous Peoples of the world to put forward as part of Food Sovereignty the concept of "Buen Vivir" (Living Well) which is practiced by the Original Peoples of the Andes and other peoples.

14. - We call on the states and on the governments to recognise the different the cosmovisions of Indigenous Peoples, whilst respecting the autonomous processes of Indigenous Peoples and to adopt

the concept of “Buen Vivir” in their national legislations.

15. - We, Indigenous Peoples, demand the right to define what our diet is and what it means to us, as part of our cultural identity. We cannot speak of food without speaking of water and the right to water as well as the protection and definition of our relationship to water. It also implies talking about our right to our territories and resources.

16.- In this manner, we urge the FAO and governments to develop policies for the decolonization of our lands, territories and natural resources as well as the re-education of states and governments on the vision of the Indigenous Peoples.

17. - However, we will promote the establishment of local markets which benefit our peoples, in the face of the monopoly of large companies which commercialize and hoard food products.

18. - We, Indigenous Peoples, reject the use of Intellectual property rights which contribute to the appropriation, monopoly and alienation of genetic resources protected by indigenous knowledge.

19. - We, the Indigenous Peoples will continue to consume our traditional foods. Seeds are what we find along the way, wild animals are our siblings, our myths and our history are linked to the way we eat.

20. - Food is not just agriculture or what men and women produce, but it also includes wild plants and animals, and the relationship between these and Mother Earth. We, as Indigenous Peoples will continue to put our traditional methods of food producing in practice as an act of self-determination.

21.- We, the Indigenous Peoples, demand the right to enjoy what we produce and improve our livelihoods, as well as to continue to use our traditional ancient seeds.

22. - We, the Indigenous Peoples, and Indigenous women in particular, should have the right to participate in the definition of specific policies that affect our right to food. This includes the right to use methods like crop rotation; the recognition of nomadic pastoralism, traditional hunting and gathering; and creating policies to guarantee our systems of land and resource tenure.

*"One does not sell the land that one's people walk upon" Tashuhka Witko "Caballo Loco/Crazy Horse" 1840 – 1877*