

**THE DECADE OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES:
LOOKING BACK AND LOOKING FORWARD**
Tepoztlán, Morelos, Mexico, October 12th of 2004

From the sacred place of Tepoztlán, joining together our hearts, thoughts, dreams, experiences and struggles; with a commitment rooted in the strength and wisdom of our ancestors, women and men of the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas, gathered at the invitation of the Rigoberta Menchú Tum Foundation and the National Autonomous University of Mexico, we state:

Implementing the sovereignty and self-determination of our peoples, within the context of 500 years of resistance, and determined to bring about profound structural transformations, in 1993 we declared the Decade of Indigenous Peoples, which was adopted by States, Governments and the United Nation System in 1994.

We affirm that despite our awareness that one decade was insufficient to change the historic relationships of colonization and oppression or to eradicate the racist, exclusionary practices to which our Peoples have been subjected, we consider it a significant first step towards establishing a new relationship among Indigenous Peoples, States, and national societies.

The Decade was conceived as an opportunity to generate and put into practice new and equitable social, economic, political and cultural relationships among States, Indigenous Peoples and society in general. Nonetheless, the greatest obstacle, reflected in conceptual disagreements over poverty, democracy, citizenship, power, governance, development, and security, has been the colonial subordination that continues to characterize the States.

Ten years later, we recognize that the full recognition and exercise of our rights within the United Nation system remains an unfinished task, as the States and Governments have failed to assume their commitment. Furthermore, multinational corporate monopolies, far from strengthening their social commitment, threaten the lives and the collective rights of our peoples, while disproportionately advancing their own interests, legitimated through the negotiation of trade agreements that even subordinate the sovereignty of those very States.

In response to persistent proposals from Indigenous Peoples, the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues was established during the Decade, with equal representation for Indigenous Peoples and States. In addition, a Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of Indigenous Peoples was designated, to work in the future on efforts that will incorporate the perspectives and strengths of the Indigenous Peoples.

Despite these initial advances, a series of obstacles have regrettably limited the attainment of other objectives established in the Decade Declaration. Indigenous Peoples have accepted that the United Nations Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which has been approved by the Sub-Commission on Prevention of discrimination and Protection of Minorities, constitutes the minimum standard to defend the lives of our

peoples. Among those fundamental collective rights are the right to self-determination, territorial rights, the right to collective knowledge and natural resources, and the recognition of treaties and agreements signed between Indigenous Peoples and States, among others. Failure to adopt the Declaration during the first Decade demonstrates the lack of political will on the part of the States to continue developing international human rights standards in relation to Indigenous Peoples. The absence of such a fundamental international instrument encourages a thinly spread implementation of policies within United Nations agencies, States and Governments, which has been a constant throughout the Decade.

Certain legal and constitutional advances have been achieved in many Latin American countries, yet have not taken shape in the form of public policies, much less State policies. As a result, in some cases, there have been setbacks in the implementation of rights, with a revival of forced assimilation, racist practices and new forms of exclusion.

At the end of the Decade, we still face the challenge of building democratic, inclusive, intercultural, equitable States, based on a genuine social pact that recognizes the right of self-determination of Indigenous Peoples, expressed through various forms of autonomy and self-government as promoted by the Indigenous Peoples within the framework of new models of the State. These transformations require political will on the part of the States, expressed through a redistribution of political power and government funding, to allow for the full development and exercise of Indigenous Peoples' collective rights, especially the right to self-determination.

The process of struggle and the establishment of the Decade has provided Indigenous Peoples with lessons learned and new perspectives. The new international scenario demands that Indigenous Peoples reinforce our strategies, re-coordinate avenues for consensus-building, and develop new paradigms, at the communal-local, national, and global levels, to ensure the establishment and exercise of our authority, territorial cohesion, resurgence as peoples, which, taken together, constitute the strength of self-governments. Also essential are the role of indigenous women and a commitment to the integral spiritual and political development of the new generations.

Affirming that the advances of the Decade are the result of the struggle waged and pressure exerted to attain participation, and the propositive capacities of the Indigenous Peoples, the leadership of our peoples, from the community to the international level, places its expectations upon the continuation of the struggle. Based on that strength, we propose the following recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

1. That the United Nations General Assembly ratify the **2ND DECADE OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES**, recommended by ECOSOC.
2. That the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, with the full participation of the Indigenous Peoples, contribute to the oversight and monitoring of compliance with the goals of the Decade.

3. That the Universal Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples be adopted by the United Nations General Assembly during the first years of the Second Decade, taking into account that the Draft Declaration approved by the **UNITED NATIONS SUB-COMMISSION ON PREVENTION OF DISCRIMINATION AND PROTECTION OF MINORITIES** and accepted by thousands of Indigenous Peoples throughout the world, constitutes the minimum acceptable standards for the life, dignity, and well being of the Indigenous Peoples of the world.
4. We consider the following to be minimum, central goals for the 2ND Decade:
 - To strengthen mechanisms for the protection and promotion of the human rights of Indigenous Peoples.
 - Follow-up and monitoring of the advances of the first Decade.
 - That in the process of fulfilling the Millennium Development Goals, the States, UN agencies and specialized entities assume and incorporate the Indigenous Peoples' own criteria and definitions, assuring the full participation of our peoples.
5. The United Nation System and States must make sure that the necessary resources are provided for the effective functionality of the avenues for participation of Indigenous Peoples, and for effective participation of Indigenous Peoples in the activities delineated in the Action Plan for the Decade.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE IBERO-AMERICAN SUMMIT

1. To call upon Heads of States and Governments at the next Ibero-American Summit, which will take place in Costa Rica, to report on the fulfillment of commitments and goals within the framework of the International Decade on Indigenous Peoples.
2. That Heads of States and Governments promptly honor their word regarding the capitalization of the Indigenous Development Fund for Latin America and the Caribbean.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM

1. That the Organization of American States, OAS, at its next Assembly, declare the Decade on the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas.
2. To demand the creation of a Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples within the Inter American System as an avenue for debate, dialogue, negotiations, consensus building, and mediation on a continental scale.
3. To take immediate measures for the definitive closing of the Inter-American Indigenous Institute and the repeal of the Pátzcuaro Convention.
4. That in the discussion and approval process for the American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples is assured, on a basis of equality and dignity. We note that we, the Indigenous Peoples, will not accept a Declaration that reduces our rights beyond the minimum standard agreed upon by the Indigenous Peoples and approved by the Sub-Commission in the UN Draft Declaration.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO STATES

1. That the States, with the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples, adopt Action Plans for the Decade, establishing joint mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation.
2. That the States, agencies and specialized entities jointly, with the Indigenous Peoples, define procedures and technical improvements of criteria and census forms to collect disaggregated statistical data on Indigenous Peoples (based on identity, language, and self-inclusion) for the effective monitoring of the programs carried out during the Decade.
3. To form tripartite committees (with Indigenous Peoples, States and agencies of the United Nations System) for the development, monitoring, and evaluation of plans for the Decade, respecting the specific diversity of each of the peoples.
4. The States must implement and report on the degree of fulfillment of the recommendations, observations, and plans of action in reference to Indigenous Peoples established in:
 - The Ibero-American Summits
 - The World Conference against Racism
 - The World Summit on Sustainable Development
 - The World Summit on the Information Society
 - The World Conference on Women
 - The World Conference on Population and Development
 - Other conferences
5. It is demanded that Governments disseminate and comply with the recommendations issued by the UN Special Rapporteurs as the result of their visits, on issues related to Indigenous Peoples. We therefore call upon the governments of Colombia, Mexico, Guatemala, and Chile to comply with the recommendations issued by the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of Indigenous Peoples.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION OF THE AMERICAS

1. We call on Universities and Academic Institutions to develop programs and projects for education, research, and dissemination that contribute to the transformation of our societies into equitable, intercultural nations, founded on the furtherance of collective rights and indigenous knowledge.
2. That the Universities and Academic Institutions establish a dynamic scholarship program for young indigenous men and women to ensure their full development, accompanied by curriculum reforms that ensure an intercultural approach, incorporate the knowledge of indigenous people, and recognize indigenous peoples' rights.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

1. To strengthen and reinforce avenues for communication and solidarity among Indigenous Peoples in order to develop and implement common strategies as a function of the political horizons, making it possible for us to fully exercise our collective rights.
2. To take advantage of the Decade tasks in order to fortify and consolidate the participation of Indigenous Peoples in the various international venues, such as the UN and the OAS, assuming responsibilities with honesty and transparency, sharing the information through a variety of media with the communities, and applying the indigenous principles of solidarity, ethics, and loyalty.
3. To strengthen indigenous international leadership through an indigenous leadership training and development program, and to define strategies, methodologies and forms of communication, making use of our own media and access to the mass media.
4. To define strategies for reviving and systematizing the wisdom of the elders and for the transfer of knowledge, culture, and spirituality to the new generations, through our own educational and training programs.
5. To invite representatives and institutions of other sectors of civil society; professionals; intellectuals; and artists to join in the process of raising awareness on Indigenous Peoples and the construction of equitable, intercultural societies.
6. Organizations must exercise their rights, occupying their rightful place at all levels of society and redoubling their diverse forms of struggle for the defense and protection of their rights.
7. In the participation of Indigenous Peoples, we must respect the principles of gender equality, esteeming the struggle and wisdom of indigenous women.
8. That we intensify work with youth and children to strengthen their identity and their participation and involvement in the defense of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the Indigenous Peoples.
9. That we develop evaluation processes on the impact of the Decade and formulate comprehensive plans of action for the 2ND Decade.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FOLLOW-UP

1. We invite all organizations, entities, networks, and institutions of Indigenous Peoples at the local, national and continental levels to promote initiatives that contribute to achieving the objectives of the 2ND Decade on Indigenous Peoples.
2. That the Indigenous Initiative for Peace, the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), the International Indian Treaty Council (IITC), the Rigoberta Menchú Tum Foundation (RMTF), the Indigenous Fund and the Continental Network of Indigenous Women of the Americas collaborate in a broad call to develop the Indigenous Plan of Action for the decade of 2005 - 2015.
3. To work for the establishment of an International Observation Entity comprised of distinguished indigenous and non-indigenous persons, to ensure respect for Indigenous Peoples' rights.

4. To reactivate and strengthen the scope of the Indigenous Initiative for Peace, with the mandate for which it was originally created, to follow up on Indigenous Peoples in zones of conflict.
5. To jointly design an Evaluation System for the Decade, through UNAM, RMTF, the Indigenous Fund, and other universities, from the point of view of the indigenous peoples, that allows for a comparison of national, regional, and continental evaluations, which shall be implemented in the Meso-American, Andean, and Amazonian areas.

On this 12TH day of October, the Continental Indigenous Peoples' Day of Mobilization and Resistance, we assume the responsibility of providing an example of unity, building cohesion, and consolidating our own institutions, while developing consensus on our political horizons, defining, identifying, and creating new levels of strategic alliances that contribute to the process of transformation and allow us to advance towards a new Decade of Indigenous Peoples.

Granted in the name of our heroic ancestors and our future generations.

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