

## **Declaration of La Paz**

### **Continental Encounter of Indigenous Pueblos and Nations of Abya Yala**

La Paz , Bolivia Tawatinsuyo October 12th , 2006

From the heart of what is known as South America, from the territory of Bartolina Sisa and Tupaj Kartari, on the 12th of October of 2006 the delegates of the original Pueblos and Nations of the Indigenous Peoples of Abya Yala, upon gathering at the Continental Encounter of Indigenous Pueblos and Nations of Abya Yala, emit the following message:

Upon this new dawn of the Pachacuti, in these times of the culmination of the Fifth Sun, soon will end the world of fear in which we live, the world of hate and materialism that we suffer. When that sun rises humanity will have disappeared as a species that threatens to destroy the planet, evolving towards integration and harmony with the universe in its totality, with the understanding that all things are alive and conscious, understanding that we are all part of the whole, emerging to live in a new era of enlightenment.

In spite of 514 years of oppression and domination, we have not been eliminated: we are still here. We have resisted invasion, destruction and pillage, and now neoliberalism which imposes the exploitation of our natural resources for the benefit of the multinational corporations, causing grave social, economic, and cultural impact upon our Pueblos of Indigenous Peoples. These same negative effects extend also to the rest of humanity and the natural world.

Yet now we begin a new era for the original Indigenous Pueblos and Nations, for the times of change are upon us.

The Declaration of the United Nations on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples has been achieved as the result of constant efforts by the Indigenous Peoples of the entire world over the past 20 years, and although it does reflect many of our aspirations, the Declaration does not completely capture the Right of Indigenous Peoples of Self Determination, subordinating this under the individual which replaces our vision. In spite of this, we exhort the governments to approve the declaration and accept it as a base document for legislation in protection of the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The transnational corporate investments in our respective countries have produced poverty, migration, and contamination of our natural resources of land, water, seed stock, genetic material, and biodiversity. To confront this situation our Pueblos have had to construct mechanisms of resistance in order that we may survive with dignity. The nation States must recognize the existence of our Pueblos and Nations, which have developed within and preserved the biodiversity of our territories, along with the traditional knowledge derived from this millennial relationship. For this reason it is imperative that the government States guarantee the continued existence of our Pueblos and Nations,

extending resources for their autonomous management and refrain from imposing mechanisms that lead to the privatization of our natural resources, our traditional knowledge, and forms of spirituality.

The Nation States must recognize that the countries where we reside are not monolithic uninational entities, but Plurinational in a reality that must be recognized with respect and recognition for our own forms of self-governance as Indigenous Peoples. We urge the refoundation of the States in order to achieve coexistence among our Pueblos , in order to put an end to social exclusion and marginalization. The struggle of resistance of the Indigenous Peoples, along with other sectors of the society today has produced the triumph of Evo Morales, a victory that calls upon us to strengthen and consolidate our organizations in the process of constructing a true power that emerges from the experiences of our Pueblos and Nations.

Our proposal is one of integrity: a Culture of Life, which constructs sovereignty as embedded within our cultural identity and cosmovision, and with democratic participation we shall emerge to construct new nation states oriented by our indigenous thought and with the participation of the majority of the peoples. We shall continue the process of strengthening our organizational processes and our struggles until we achieve the construction of the unity of the Pueblos and Nations of Abya Yala. We shall reconstruct the principle “to live well” which for us means to live in harmony with our fellow human beings and the world of nature, and at the same time we offer to the world to accept and benefit from the values of our cultures.

From our families, our homes, our communities, Pueblos and Nations, whether we are or are not present within the systems of government of our respective countries, we ourselves shall decide and define our own destiny. We shall assume the responsibility and the will “to live well” in accord to the teachings of our ancestors and so to radiate from the most simple to the most great and complex in order to construct in a just and plural manner the diversity of the culture of life, and so exercise our right of self determination, even though it may come without the recognition of the States.

We reject with all our might the criminalization of the struggles of the Indigenous peoples and other movement for social justice.

Our struggle cannot be held back, we no longer resist only to resist: our time has come. Our path calls for coordination, articulation, and to be in communication on a permanent basis taking into account all of our problems, needs, and proposals. From this Continental Indigenous Encounter we issue the convocation to the Indigenous Pueblos and Nations of Abya Yala to participate in the III Summit of Indigenous Pueblos and Nations of Abya Yala which shall be realized from the 26th to the 30th of March of 2007 in the Maya Territories of Guatemala.

Our path is laid clearly before us, yet we need support from the other sectors of the society which are also oppressed in order to realize the transformations to which we

aspire; for this reason we call to participate actively in the Social Forum for the Integration of the Pueblos, to be held in Cochabamba Bolivia from the 6th to the 9th of December of 2006.

We condemn the acts of terrorism and intervention which the government of the United States is conducting in many countries of the world and of the Americas in order to protect their interests. At the same time we stand in solidarity with the struggles of all of Peoples and governments that defend their right of self-determination, such as Cuba and Venezuela .

We are direct witnesses to the serious problems which presently befall the Bolivian people and government, brought about by the oligarchies that count on the support of the United States . We also are witness to the efforts of the Bolivian people and the government of President Evo Morales in order to build a new country, and we commit our solidarity to this heroic effort. We shall remain permanently vigilant regarding what occurs in Bolivia and we ask that all of the Peoples of the world offer their support and solidarity to this process as well.

We send our greetings to all of the indigenous movements of resistance and restoration of our rights that are active across the entirety of our continent. We hereby ratify this 12th of December as Day of Indigenous Resistance. We invoke the memory of the millions of our martyrs that have been massacred from 1492 to the present time: The invading countries have a historic debt with our Pueblos and Nations.