



CUSCO DECLARATION

Participants in the International Seminar on Cultural Diversity, Food Systems and Traditional Livelihoods organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), representatives of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and Peoples, Nations and indigenous organizations, including farmers, hunters, gatherers, fisherpeople, pastoralists and representatives of other peoples and traditional and local communities from all over the world, met in Cusco Peru, the ancestral land of the Quechuas, from 4 to 6 November 2014, with government representatives, members of FAO and other cooperation agencies, academic and civil society organizations of the region.

We welcome the opportunity to exchange experiences concerning our food systems in compliance with Recommendation No. 111 of the twelfth session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues that requests FAO to organize in 2014, the International Year of Family Farming, and an expert seminar on culture, food sovereignty and traditional livelihoods in order to contribute to the post-2015 process.

We emphasize our commitment to build a better world for all generations to come and endorse the wise words that "nature is not ours, it belongs to future generations, we borrow it only for a while."

We thank our ancestors for making possible, often in unimaginable conditions, the domestication, production and preservation of our traditional foods, seeds, plants, animals, practices, knowledge, languages and ways of life that make up our worldviews, which we have managed to maintain and practice to the present as the basis of the cultural and agri-food systems we intend to bequeath to our future generations.

In this regard, the growing concern for food and nutrition insecurity of much of the world population has determined the inclusion of this subject among the most worrying issues of international policy agenda and the debate on the new Sustainable Development Goals and *Living Well*, seeking to establish commitments and goals to ensure the sustainability of the results of the efforts of the international community in this subject.

We reiterate the relevance of the Declaration of Atitlán¹ (2002) which states that: "*Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to define their own policies and strategies for the production, distribution and consumption of food, respecting their own cultures and their own natural resource and rural areas management systems. Food sovereignty is seen as a precondition for Food Security*".

¹ First Global Consultation on the Right to Food for Indigenous Peoples (Solola, Guatemala, 2002), reiterated in the Second Consultation (Bilwi, Nicaragua, 2006), and the Statements of Santo Domingo de Tolmaltepec, 2012 and Okmulgee Oklahoma, 2014, as well as in the two Conferences of Indigenous Peoples on Corn, the International Indigenous Peoples' Conference on Sustainable Development and Self-Determination held in the framework of the International Conference Rio + 20.



We came here to share our traditional food practices and their associated knowledge, their viability and the essential role they play in the preservation of our cultural, economic and environmental health; as well as the free and full exercise of our human rights and food sovereignty. In indigenous communities family and community agriculture have always been practiced. The land belongs to the community and serves to meet the material and spiritual needs of each family. For this, they have combined various regenerative and productive activities such as hunting and fishing, collecting, use, conservation, exchange and reproduction of seeds and fruits, rotational farming and shifting cultivation, grazing and pastoralism, use of medicinal species and ritual items that have been part of our identity, contributing to the health, culture and social and spiritual life of our communities.

We heard the concerns and challenges expressed by indigenous and other traditional and local communities' representatives of various regions of the world gathered here. These include: the impacts of climate variability and change; the increasing scarcity of water; the imposition of genetically modified seeds; commodification of food production which violates the right to food, increased agribusiness and policies that promote and subsidize them at the expense of small and medium producers; asymmetric international free trade policies; appropriation of natural species through patent registration; unsustainable development projects affecting land, water and food sources; the lack of implementation of the right to prior, free and informed consent of indigenous peoples; national laws that limit the access of indigenous peoples to land, water, grazing and other resources; the use of agrototoxic pesticides and other agrochemicals; declining biodiversity and habitats; marginalization of traditional food products within increasingly concentrated markets; restricted movement of indigenous people, their animals, plants and seeds across borders; the increasing pressures of extractive industries on our territories and natural resources; relocation and forced migration of indigenous peoples away from their traditional lands; lack of respect and recognition by governments, development agencies and society concerning our pastoralist and agriculture sustainable food practices; growing urbanization of indigenous population –especially among the youth– while other indigenous peoples struggle to maintain their isolation; and erosion of the traditional processes of preservation and transmission of our knowledge and practices related to our food systems, along with the loss of our language and other expressions of our cultures.

We appreciate the progress in raising awareness and exercise of our rights that have made the International Years of the Potato and Quinoa, and the International Year of Family Farming, and hope that the International Year of Soil (2015) contributes to the advancement of recognition and respect for our land rights.

We praise the first international binding agreement of the third millennium, the Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) adopted by the Conference (FAO, 2001). The Treaty makes an important recognition of the contribution of indigenous and traditional peoples in the domestication of the diversity of cultivated plants, particularly in the regions of origin, and in the conservation and development of plant genetic resources which constitute the basis of food and agriculture production throughout the world.

We also appreciate the relevance for indigenous peoples of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests, as well as the Voluntary Guidelines on Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries and the Policy on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples adopted by FAO, which have provided important opportunities to enhance traditional food systems of indigenous

peoples and their associated knowledge systems, thus contributing to the recognition of their contribution to global food needs.

In particular, we appreciate the outstanding recognition given by the Declaration of the Governments of Latin America and the Caribbean, gathered at the recent Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC, Havana, January 2014), which states:

"We recognize that indigenous peoples and local communities play an important role in the economic, social and environmental development, and the importance of sustainable traditional farming practices related to biodiversity and the use of their resources, their right of access to water ... the communal land tenure systems, the traditional seed supply systems, and the access to finance and markets.

We decide to strengthen, in a comprehensive manner, the production base with an emphasis on local and sustainable cultural practices of indigenous peoples and local communities, throughout an integrated management that optimizes the use and access to water for irrigation, ... the recovery of soil fertility ... and the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity through the recovery and native seed breeding and production of improved seeds."

We reaffirm that the indigenous peoples of the world are the expression of the culturally diverse development of mankind and preserve the knowledge and ethical values that have sustained local economies for millennia, food security and sustainable development which now are threatened by the dominant paradigm of excessive and unnecessary consumption.

II

After intensive dialogues, we call upon the world's attention on the following points that concern us:

- a) The variety of fundamental roles of women in farming systems and the perpetuation of associated traditional knowledge. These roles must be recognized, valued and promoted by public policies in all countries of the world under a differential vision that respects the cultural specificity of each context.
- b) The threat to the harmony of natural systems and life expressed in our cultures and inherent values, the diversity of our production systems and land management, the agricultural biodiversity and related knowledge associated with sustainable management. The securing of staple foods, the expansion of monocultures, indiscriminate expansion of the use of GMOs, food speculation, and the homogenization of the human diet, are threatening the food and nutrition security of most of the world population. This hegemonic dynamic prevents routing independent public policies that can mobilize the capacities of countries towards ensuring the human right to food and the interests of small farmers.
- c) The integrated management of food production, including community articulation, water management, the relationship with nature and the preservation of the diversity of our seeds; all in the context of a special bio-centric worldview. Thousands of years of linguistic construction, linking the natural and cosmic processes that govern the development of agriculture, the survival of social and political institutions; the practice of a spirituality that transcends religion; all of these being threatened by the imposition of the interests of small and insatiable powerful groups guided by a desire to build that knows no boundaries.

III

In the conviction to meet goodwill for a better world, we make the following recommendations:

a. To the States of the World

- Prioritize domestic food economies under sustainable systems that include traditional food systems of indigenous peoples and their cosmogonist and ethical foundations.
- Ratify existing international instruments, enact legislation and enforce mechanisms that protect native seeds and genetic sources of indigenous peoples and their associated knowledge systems, and measures to attain equitable sharing of benefits arising from their use. Every action in this regard should be consulted and executed in close cooperation with indigenous peoples.
- Adopt harmonic and balanced binding instruments to protect the rights of indigenous peoples to their lands, territories and resources, including soil and subsoil, and their ability to continue to manage their own food systems in their territories, as defined in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples², respecting the right to free, prior and informed consent.
- Recognize, in the official educational systems, contents enabling empowerment of the indigenous peoples' mechanisms on food sovereignty, as a national value that will benefit future generations.
- Consider in national legislation the creation and/or updating of standards for allocating and conserving water which indigenous peoples have safeguarded for centuries and in whose management they should have an active part through a free, prior and informed consent.
- Advance on the executive compliance mechanisms for the Convention for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW) and the creation of specific mechanisms for rural women's empowerment.
- Establish concrete steps to implement the commitments established in paragraph 25 of the Final Document of the High-Level Plenary Meeting of the UN General Assembly, known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples which states: "*We commit to develop, in conjunction with indigenous peoples concerned, and where appropriate, policies, programs and resources to support crafts, traditional subsistence activities, economies, livelihoods, food security and nutrition of indigenous peoples.*"
- Respect and uphold the principle of free, prior and informed consent before any legislative or administrative decision affecting the lives, knowledge, lands, territories and resources of indigenous peoples.
- We call for establishing an International Year of Corn and request the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues to convene an expert seminar on the topic related to food security of indigenous peoples.
- We call the Fund for the Development of Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean to strengthen its engagement with indigenous peoples in compliance with the substantive aspects of its mandate, and its member States to ensure compliance with their commitments and contributions, starting from an assessment of its performance in order to improve its management and technical skills.

² Article 26, paragraph 3. "States shall give legal recognition and protection to these lands, territories and resources. Such recognition shall be conducted with due respect to the customs, traditions and land tenure systems of the indigenous peoples concerned."

b. To the United Nations System

- The Permanent Forum should follow up the conclusions arising from this Seminar and take its recommendations in its Report to the 14th Session, for which it is proposed to convene a workshop of experts and indigenous representatives, taking an active role in coordination with FAO.
- The Forum will seek institutional representation on the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) and other FAO technical committees such as the Committees for Fisheries, Forestry, Agriculture and the Commission on Genetic Resources.
- The Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples should consider this Declaration in its current study on the cultural rights of indigenous peoples, based on Article 31 of the UN Declaration, and to consider its recommendations at its 8th Session (2015). For this, it shall coordinate its presentation with the Permanent Forum and FAO.
- Ask FAO and other agencies involved to promote the ratification and comprehensive inclusion of indigenous peoples in all activities relating to the implementation of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, the Voluntary Guidelines for Governance Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests, the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries, and related instruments.
- Request the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Parties the adoption of binding instruments that lead to the recognition of the contribution of traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples and local communities to the conservation of biological diversity (Article 8j) and establish specific arrangements for equitable sharing of benefits with indigenous peoples and other traditional communities. In addition, under the provisions of Article 10c of the Convention, we urge the adoption of measures to protect agrobiological resources that make up our varied food heritage, respecting our cultural practices.
- Request UNESCO to establish mechanisms for indigenous peoples and their organizations participate in implementing the provisions of the Conventions on Intangible Heritage (2003) and Cultural Diversity (2005) and the implementation of their safeguards, particularly with regard to the preservation of their cultural and agri-food heritage.
- We demand the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), the prompt adoption of a *sui generis* system to protect the collective intellectual property of indigenous peoples over their material and immaterial heritage related to their agri-food systems; and reiterate our total rejection to any attempt to patent life under the World Trade Organization (WTO).
- Ask FAO protect and promote traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples in sustainable agriculture and biodiversity conservation, including rotational farming and shifting cultivation, pastoralist systems, artisanal fisheries and other forms of access to natural sources, in the framework of its Policy on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples.
- Request the FAO to establish a platform for dialogue and exchange of experiences that contribute to the enhancement and dignifying of knowledge systems and science of indigenous peoples and local communities, promoting the articulation of a comprehensive inter-scientific learning community and dialogue on traditional food systems.
- Ask the next FAO World Conference to adopt the Initiative on Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) within its strategic program framework, providing a regulatory, institutional and policy framework that promotes the recognition, identification, protection and promotion of traditional agricultural systems, both at global (GIAHS) and national (NIAHS) levels. These systems should include exceptional bio-cultural landscapes, threatened sacred sites, indigenous hunting, fishing and gathering corridors, traditional trade and barter routes, and

other relevant aspects for the cultural reproduction of indigenous and traditional peoples, their production systems and livelihoods.

- Recommend that FAO promotes the development of participatory strategies for the conservation of genetic resources, traditional knowledge and adaptation to climate change, *sui generis* certification of our native seeds and our livestock improvement techniques, facilitating access of our production to local and international markets, as well as strengthening our traditional processes of exchange of seeds and genetic material; the recognition of the role of women and youth in traditional farming systems and the development of their capacities; all with the active participation of indigenous peoples and their organizations.

c. To Indigenous Peoples

- Be active and open in the transmission of ancestral food knowledge and practices to new generations; this includes the appreciation of this knowledge, both in their own educational systems and the regular State-driven services.
- Declare our agriculture free of agrottoxics and GMO, so that our own agro-food systems are safeguarded from the local level.
- Increase our awareness on our rights and capacity building, especially among women and youth, improving their skills and developing innovations in traditional agriculture and its adaptation.
- Keep our coordination networks, mutual work and mutual support as an indigenous food sovereignty network, sharing our struggles, progress and achievements against the prevailing development model and vindicating philosophy of *Living Well* in the interest of humanity.

Seminar participants, we thank FAO, IFAD, the Peruvian government and all the institutions that made the realization of this event possible.

From the city of Cusco, our voice to the world.

Cusco, November 6, 2014.