



IV INDIGENOUS AYAHUASCA CONFERENCE

The IV Indigenous Ayahuasca Conference took place between September 25th and 29th, 2022, hosted by the Yorenka Tasorentsi Institute (IYT), in its headquarters located in the city of Marechal Thaumaturgo, Acre, Brazil, on the banks of the Juruá River. It was carried out by IYT and the Organization of the Indigenous Peoples of the Juruá River (OPIRJ), and was self-financed with resources raised by the institute itself, together with partners who collaborate with the agendas raised by the indigenous peoples.

Between the third and fourth conference there has been a strong articulation between peoples and partners, which contributed to the remarkable participation of representatives of 35 indigenous peoples from Brazil and other countries such as Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Mexico and Canada, indigenous organizations, institutional partners, researchers and other non-indigenous guests. The peoples present were: Apolima-Arara, Huni Kuĩ, Jaminawa-Arara, Kuntanawa, Nawa, Noke Koi, Nukini, Puyanawa, Shanenawa, Shawãdawa, Yawanawá, Apurinã (Pupykary), Manchineri, Ashaninka, Ashaninka del Alto Perene, Yanesha del Puerto Yunnako, Nomatsiguenka, Ashaninka y Machiguenga del Rio Apurimac-Cusco, Yaminawa, Marubo, Yepá Mahsã-Tukano, Anishinaabe, Arhuaco, Tubú Hम्ममरrimasa, Inga/Union de Médicos Indígenas Yageceros de la Amazonia Colombiana (UMIYAC), Kichwa de Sarayaku, Kofan, Jiaki, Wixárika, Potiguara, Omágua Kambeba, Shipibo-Konibo, Yanomami, Guarani Mbyá, Siona. There were about 389 participants, including 244 indigenous and 145 non-indigenous people.

The themes that were discussed deepened issues that have been debated since the first conference, as well as other issues that added value to the excellent reflections made throughout the event. Among the main themes addressed were: the protection of territories of life in the Amazon and its relationship with the world; the challenges faced by current generations to maintain the culture of their peoples; the ethics that legitimize or not the ways of sharing indigenous medicines; the legal aspects and the responsibility of care regarding commercialization and the granting of patents; the new fronts of action that demand an articulation between spiritual leaders; the importance of sacred spaces for spiritual practices; the valorization of exchanges and sharing of experiences, among others.

The experiences presented by each indigenous people pointed to a variety of ways to deal with diverse and often common issues, which demonstrates the importance of this space for dialogue and exchange.

As a result of the intense debates and reflections, the "Letter of the IV Indigenous Ayahuasca Conference" presents positionings and warnings, indicates concerns and priorities and, above all, calls for a dialogue with respect.

In addition to written material, visual and audiovisual records were also made, with the aim of creating reference materials for study and dissemination of this theme as one of the fundamental points on the indigenous rights agenda.

The V Indigenous Ayahuasca Conference is scheduled to take place in 2024.

We invite you to read the "Letter of the IV Indigenous Ayahuasca Conference", approved by the final plenary session held on September 29th, 2022.



Letter from the IV Indigenous Ayahuasca Conference

We, Indigenous Peoples of the Apolima-Arara, Huni Kuĩ, Jaminawa-Arara, Kuntanawa, Nawa, Noke Koi, Nukini, Puyanawa, Shanenawa, Shawãdawa, Yawanawá, Apurinã (Pupykary), Manchineri, Ashaninka, Ashaninka del Alto Perene, Yanesha del Puerto Yunnako, Nomatsiguenka, Ashaninka y Machiguenga del Rio Apurimac-Cusco, Yaminawa, Marubo, Yepá Mahsã-Tukano, Anishinaabe, Arhuaco, Tubú Hãmmurimasa, Inga/Union of Yageceros Indigenous Doctors of the Colombian Amazon (UMIYAC), Kichwa of Sarayaku, Kofan, Jiaki, Wixárika, Potiguara, Omágua Kambeba, Shipibo-Konibo, Yanomami, Guarani Mbyá, Siona gathered at the IV Indigenous Ayahuasca Conference, held from September 25 to 29, 2022, at the Yorenka Tasorensi Institute in the municipality of Marechal Thaumaturgo, Acre, Brazil, under the coordination of the Yorenka Tasorensi Institute (IYT) and the Organization of the Indigenous Peoples of the Juruá River (OPIRJ), after intense debates, hereby:

- *We affirm that Ayahuasca is the connecting thread of life, an ancestral knowledge that has resisted colonization and remains alive in the culture of various indigenous peoples, its guardians since time immemorial. We emphasize that the indigenous teachings are an inspiration for the changes needed to protect life on the planet and to revise the very idea of humanity.
- *We call for the recognition and respect of all our territories: physical, material and immaterial, the demarcation of indigenous lands, and respect for the knowledge that sustains them.
- *We emphasize that the spirituality of indigenous peoples is not limited to healing the body and mind of individuals, but is a vehicle for healing, protection, and communication with the territories and all the beings that inhabit them, our ancestors, their stories, chants, and dreams. Thus, we care for beings in all their life forms.
- *We questioned ourselves about the challenges and opportunities of the present moment in the world. We call attention to the role of youth in strengthening their knowledge of indigenous medicines with responsibility and creativity. We regret that young people cannot have the same intimate relationship that our grandparents had, we know that we have deep pains to heal collectively, and we pay homage to our ancestral medicines for their power of healing, teaching, and communication with the territory.
- *Violence against women is a symptom of the colonial disease in our territories. In this meeting, marked by the strength of their presence, we made a commitment to care with love and defend the integrity of our children, youth, mothers, and grandmothers, taking a stand against any kind of violation of their rights. We also commit to caring for our elders.



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- *We assessed the impacts on the cultural, political and ecological dynamics of our communities that come from the commercialization of biodiversity and the expansion of ayahuasca and associated medicines among non-Indigenous people, now and in the future. We are mindful of the importance of reforestation and the conservation of indigenous medicines.
- *We will promote exchanges between indigenous peoples with the aim of sharing experiences and guidance on the ethics of care and diets, food, respect for principles, conservation of our different ways of life, management of ecosystems, strengthening of collective rights and the fight to end violence against our cultures.
- *We will promote exchanges with indigenous peoples who seek ayahuasca as a means to reconnect with their own spiritualities and medicines, with guidance and teaching from experienced indigenous spiritual leaders. Despite territorial differences and distance, ayahuasca speaks the language of each people and revitalizes each culture.
- *We will promote exchanges between the indigenous spaces and organizations that were present at this conference, to learn more about each experience and articulate joint actions. We will bring together the experiences of institutes and indigenous centers that have already been created to discuss our practices and challenges, aligned with the internal reflections of each people or community on the forms of use of medicines.
- *We will promote new meetings about the use of indigenous medicines.
- *We are concerned about the misuse of our names, our words, and our traditional vestments. Faced with these cases, we demand compliance with the legislation on cultural appropriation and the development of new instruments for intellectual protection and image rights.
- *We reflect on the construction of a code of ethics that can suggest legitimate ways to share indigenous medicines with the non-indigenous world, in accordance with the teachings of the elders, coupled with diplomatic work in the name of justice and well-being for all humanity.
- *We affirm that the spirituality of the indigenous peoples is not for sale, but can be shared with a profound ethic aligned to coexistence, to the teachings, to the ways of relating to the territories from which our knowledge is born. And if this happens, the legislation in force must be respected.
- *We will continue the process of creating the Council of Indigenous Spiritual Leaders, to improve upon the work that we have already undertaken. The council will have as one of its premises to be a guiding and mediating instance with the non-indigenous world, capable of aggregating and spreading the message of peace and protection of life, with a commitment to guaranteeing respect for indigenous knowledge, sciences, and medicines.
- *We identified the need for clear contracts and attention to commercial activities involving traditional indigenous medicines.



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- *We note the importance of incorporating new social technologies for project management to qualify the effective use of resources and financing processes in the communities.
- *We emphasize the importance of having specific sacred spaces to perform ceremonies, where spiritual cleansing is previously performed, to strengthen the cultural and spiritual practices in harmony with the beings of the location, both in the villages and in urban indigenous communities.
- *We are inspired by experiences of creating spaces for the integral formation of young people who can act in cultural, economic, political, and spiritual processes, as well as learn about medicines. We will prepare the children to defend the territories and encourage the learning of native languages and other cultural elements of our peoples, in order to think critically and creatively about their connection to their ancestry.
- *We believe that the protection of plants and animals is linked to the food sovereignty of our peoples, always in an integrated way with the school and other community actions, according to the reflections of each community.
- *We will seek to approach a dialogue between traditional indigenous medicines and non-indigenous medicine, so that they are recognized and valued, with the indication of integrating them into public systems of physical, emotional, and mental health.
- *We will seek ways to protect the abundant riches of our territories, uniting as brotherly/sisterly peoples with security and autonomy, allying ourselves with non-indigenous partners who work in true dialogue with our thoughts of living well. We see this union as a way to overcome crimes against the memory and cultures of our peoples.
- *We are attentive to the context of the borders between different countries that involve our territories in the continental Amazon, to the challenges posed to our articulation as brotherly/sisterly peoples, because for us our territories have no borders. The rainforests are life systems that also extend to other territories, and the commitment to their balance involves making our native knowledge visible. We will confront local situations of diverse threats to protect the land and the forest, and we need support to access the necessary technologies to register and monitor invasions in our territories.
- *We emphasize the need to weave alliances between the peoples on this border strip and conduct ethnozoning of all indigenous lands.
- *We affirm that the separation of knowledge into areas and the differentiation between molecules, substances, plants and products does not correspond to indigenous thinking about the spirit and life of the beings that heal us. We warn about the dangers and serious consequences of the death of our territories, the misuse of our medicines, and cultural appropriation. We highlight the importance of prior and informed consultation, the violence of the extraction of our knowledge, of biopiracy, and we stand against the threats of exploitation and exclusion of our peoples.



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- *We warn that threats to life and territories do not only come from logging companies, gold miners, and drug traffickers, but can also be camouflaged in the beautiful narratives of non-governmental organizations, companies, and missionaries. Therefore, our leaders and wise men and women must be protected.
- *We call upon indigenous and non-indigenous technicians and academics to combat misinformation and lack of awareness in institutions, cultural appropriation and appropriation of our medicines. We call upon them to be bridges for the revision of old paradigms, the creation of new models, legal advice, development of instruments, public policies and institutional dialogue, based on our demands, with respect for cultural identities, indigenous sciences and respect for their research and teaching methods.
- *We will confront the criminalization of ayahuasca in its use by indigenous spiritual leaders outside their home territories, because we are all one family.
- *We demand the immediate release of people arrested for transporting and using ayahuasca in countries like Mexico and Spain, in cases where our leaders are being denounced as criminals and traffickers of illicit substances. We stand for the autonomy of indigenous peoples to handle their traditional medicines.
- *We do not accept patents on ayahuasca and other indigenous medicines, and we disallow any appropriation for the purpose of developing commercial products that disregard our rights related to the associated traditional knowledge. We pledge to fight to break these illegitimate patents.

Note: The term Ayahuasca does not replace the terminologies presented by each participating people, such as Kamarãpi, Uni, Huni, Dispãñi hew, Tsĩbu, Yage, Gaapi, Caapi, Hayakwaska, among others. However, since the first Conference it was agreed to use this term generically, comprising all other nomenclatures.

Yorenka Tasorensi Institute, Marechal Thaumaturgo-AC, Brazil, September 29, 2022.