

3rd Indigenous Conference on Ayahuasca

We, representatives of the Indigenous Peoples of Vale do Juruá — Apolima-Arara, Ashaninka, Huni Kuin, Jaminawa, Jaminawa-Arara, Kuntanawa, Nukini, Puyanawa, Shanenawa, Yawanawá, Shawādawa and Noke Koï — united at the 3rd Indigenous Conference on Ayahuasca, held from October 10 to 13, 2019, at the Yorenka Tasorensi Institute, in the municipality of Marechal Thaumaturgo, Acre, Brazil, under the coordination of the Yorenka Tasorensi Institute and the Indigenous Peoples of Rio Juruá Organization (OPIRJ), with the participation of the other organizations, Indigenous peoples and participants present, after intense debates, by means of this letter:

- * Consider the letters from the first two Indigenous Conferences on Ayahuasca as guiding documents for the use of Indigenous medicines in a wise and responsible manner in the Indigenous communities.
- * Accept the challenge of maintaining Ayahuasca in line with its traditional values, reflecting on the potentials, the risks and the limits of passing the knowledge on to non-Indigenous people.
- * Emphasize the spiritual leaders' responsibility for controlling the correct use of Indigenous medicines within their communities and for the orientation of their people's representatives outside of the villages. We consider the need to train these leaders for political articulation in various forums.
- * Reaffirm the importance of maintaining Indigenous knowledge (music, stories and medicines, among others), stressing that the songs and other ritual elements themselves are the traditional knowledge and cannot be dissociated from the Indigenous peoples' way of life.
- * Teach that the deep knowledge of traditional practices, through living with elders and wise ones, is fundamental so that the youth can reflect on the limits of knowledge sharing, insertion of musical instruments and other types of changes to the rituals.
- * Suggest the production of documentaries, with the spiritual leaders of each people, to register the traditional practices and knowledge for the purpose of internal circulation.
- * Seek to regulate the use of traditional Indigenous medicines in an internal agreement for each Indigenous people, with legitimacy to establish its own rules and institutionalize them, for example, the Yorenka Tasorensi Institute's Letter of Principles.

- * Affirm that it is not possible to dissociate territorial protection from the traditional knowledge, the spirituality and the sacred plants. The protection of the forest and its conservation are central to the maintenance of the Indigenous peoples' culture, just as the deepening of the cultural practice is also a path to environmental protection.
- * Highlight the importance of regenerating the woodlands, reforestation, ecological management of animals and sacred plant cultivation, emphasizing the Indigenous peoples' role in nature conservation.
- * Understand that the cultural and artistic aspects, education, health and territorial management are all integrated with spirituality. Therefore, we consider that the Territorial and Environmental Management Plan (PGTA) for each Indigenous Land should be updated, including the issues discussed at the Indigenous Conferences on Ayahuasca, with support from the National Policy for Territorial and Environmental Management of Indigenous Land.
- * Highlight our concern about the illegal actions of loggers, hunters, fishers, traffickers, farmers and miners, with the impact of infrastructure projects and the political attitude of current executive and legislative powers.
- * Support the strengthening of environmental institutions and bodies that work with the protection of Indigenous lands, and we defend environmental legislation and work that brings awareness to society, as well as conservation to our own territory.
- * Will work towards food sovereignty and traditional Indigenous seed conservation.
- * Ask that the enforcement of environmental laws valorizes the wisdom and practical Indigenous knowledge of natural resource management, with the support of licensing, inspection and control agencies.
- * Consider the 3rd Indigenous Conference on Ayahuasca as a preparation process for relating to those who do not know ayahuasca or who seek ayahuasca and other traditional Indigenous medicines with interests that diverge from ours. We call attention to various levels of necessary partnerships for this, aside from the importance of investing in training/awareness activities for authorities. One example is the magistrate training course done together with the Ashaninka people, in Cruzeiro do Sul, AC, and Apiwtxa Village, on the Kampa Indigenous Land of Rio Amônia.
- * Reaffirm the need to create a judicial body that brings together Indigenous spiritual leaders for exchanges among the Indigenous peoples and conversation with public authorities, the judiciary and others, for the protection of traditional Indigenous medicines, and through which the Indigenous people may express themselves autonomously, without non-Indigenous intermediaries.
- * We consider that the action of the judicial body mentioned in the previous item concerns the recognition of Indigenous rights and responsibilities, proposing restrictions to the commerce of traditional Indigenous medicines and denouncing improper use, charlatanism and the registration of patents. It also refers to setting parameters based on the valorization of the traditional way of life articulated to legislation, and not the other way around, legitimizing traditional uses. This judicial body can propose an orientation document that contemplates the general context of healthy and proper usage of traditional Indigenous medicines, taking all the participating peoples into consideration.

- * Reaffirm the necessity for tools to give us protection and security, respecting the need for consultation and prior authorization from the communities, considering spirituality in a broad manner to include song recordings, graphics, and more.
- * Suggest the analysis of documents such as the Letter of Principles from the Religious Entities that use Ayahuasca (1991) and CONAD Resolution 01/2010 as reference for the creation of a possibly separate regulation that would serve as a basis for agreement with the governments and the creation of exemptions to permit the circulation of traditional Indigenous medicines.
- * Consider that there is an interest in sharing adornments, paintings, songs and other cultural elements, but we see cultural appropriation in a negative and disrespectful way, and we stress that this discussion needs to go further in the communities.
- * Demand the diffusion of information about the acknowledgment of traditional wisdom, as much as for the authors' rights to art and cultural patrimony of the Indigenous peoples as for the distribution of benefits generated by traditional knowledge associated with genetic patrimony and biodiversity, with the support of responsible institutions and agencies such as IBAMA, FUNAI and the UN, among others, considering the legislations related to these issues.
- * Warn that the current moment requires care in approaching the issues and making alliances with the insertion of the peoples into non-Indigenous society. We value the principles of respect, responsibility and wisdom.
- * Consider that the contribution of resources on Indigenous lands may take place through projects, festivals and other services, without the commercialization of Ayahuasca and other traditional Indigenous medicines. We propose a reflection on possible partnerships that see only the commercial side, without considering the sacred.
- * Reaffirm the importance of ritual spaces and exchanges between Indigenous peoples.
- * Will proceed with approaching the Tubú Hummurimasa people, the Shipibo-Conibo people, the Arhuaco people and the Tukano people, among others, for exchanges and the strengthening of the Indigenous peoples in the sierra region as well as the forest.
- * Ask the governments, the UN and the World Health Organization (WHO) to put medical pluralism in the national health systems of each country on their agenda so that traditional Indigenous medicine can be utilized in conjunction with Western medicine.
- * Encourage all relevant agencies of the UN, like the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the WHO, ECOSOC and UNESCO, to adopt an integrative and collaborative approach to the acknowledgment of the traditional medicinal practices of the Indigenous peoples of the Amazon.

- * Recommend that the agencies mentioned in the previous item promote and incentivize the acknowledgment of the Indigenous peoples' rights to their traditional medicines, including the right to develop, practice and teach the practices related to them as established in articles 12, 24 and 31 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- * Manifest our support for Cacique Raoni in all of his struggles in favor of the forest and the Indigenous peoples, recognizing him as a worldwide Indigenous leader.

OBSERVATION: The term **Ayahuasca** does not substitute each people's denominations for this medicine, such as Uni, Huni, Kamarãpi, Hëu, Tsïbu, among others. Nevertheless, it was agreed that this term would be used as a general form that encompasses all the designations.

Yorenka Tasorensi, Marechal Thaumaturgo, AC, Brazil, October 2019.

Organization: | Support: