

Statement of Commitment: Supporting Endogenous Development and Bio-cultural Diversity

Preamble

We speak as one, guided by the sacred teachings and spiritual traditions of the Four Directions that uplift, guide, protect, warn, inspire and challenge the entire human family to live in ways that sustain and enhance human life and the life of all who dwell on Mother Earth. We dedicate our lives and energies to healing and developing ourselves, the web of relationships that make our world, and the way we live with Mother Earth.

We, the participants of the Conference on Endogenous Development and Bio-cultural Diversity, who are the representatives of different community based organisations, NGOs, universities and peoples, with different cultural backgrounds from Latin America, Africa, Asia and Europe, gathered in Geneva from 3-6 October 2006, have agreed on the following:

We are concerned about the global environmental, social, economic and cultural crises as well as the way biological and cultural diversity is being eroded and destroyed by human activities. We recognise that there are important and valuable initiatives for bio-cultural diversity: national and international policies and conventions, initiatives by grass root organisations and social movements. Yet, not enough is being done to prevent further erosion and destruction of bio-cultural diversity.

We support and encourage Endogenous Development as an approach that aims at bio-cultural diversity. Endogenous Development is gender sensitive and respectful of cultures and differences; it is about empowering and enhancing the capacities of peoples to make their own informed decisions. Endogenous Development offers alternatives to the prevailing development and conservation paradigms.

We are committed to continuing our efforts to enhance Endogenous Development and bio-cultural diversity.

We have decided to establish an Alliance for Endogenous Development and Bio-cultural Diversity.

The Alliance functions as a platform for collaboration, for exchanging experiences and for taking further initiatives on Endogenous Development and bio-cultural diversity. It will focus on policies, research, education, and action.

The Alliance will take initiatives concerning, among others, the following:

1. Code of Conduct
 - Formulating a Code of Conduct for research, education and fieldwork in Endogenous Development.
2. Gender
 - Ensuring gender equality in addressing Endogenous Development and bio-cultural diversity, including balanced representation of women in leadership, staffing and publications.

3. Nature conservation
 - Building strategies for bio-resource and biodiversity conservation that include people and respect their worldviews, values and practices.
4. Agriculture and food sovereignty
 - Stimulating, revitalising and improving farmers' traditional knowledge.
 - Supporting and establishing activities to conserve the agricultural resource base.
 - Acknowledging the diverse functions of food, including its nutritional, health and spiritual values, and the impact of all these aspects on the diversity of food systems.
5. Local economies
 - Understanding and addressing the political economy of poverty.
 - Strengthening local markets, while acknowledging reciprocity, solidarity, complementarity, respect for life, equity and non-discrimination on the basis of ethnicity or gender.
 - Redefining the concept of poverty to include social and spiritual dimensions, so that they complement the material aspects.
6. Spirituality and religion
 - Making spirituality an integral part of Endogenous Development.
 - Enhancing respect and diminishing tensions between religious and spiritual groups.
 - Supporting spiritual leaders and practices.
 - Respecting and protecting sacred sites and places.
7. Intra- and inter-cultural dialogue and mutual learning
 - Revitalising local cultures and enhancing traditional values, social cohesion, cultural identity and respect for nature.
 - Developing methods for intra- and inter-cultural learning and understanding.
 - Articulating worldviews, ways of learning and knowledge in different cultures.
 - Advocating a fair allocation of resources for marginalised cultures and ways of knowing.
8. Reshaping the development agenda
 - Strengthening policy dialogue with national and international development agencies, in order to enhance Endogenous Development and bio-cultural diversity in policies, funding and implementation.
 - Reshaping the concepts and approaches of conventional development, giving place to holistic perspectives.
9. Health
 - Reviewing legal and institutional frameworks for traditional health practices.
 - Building on and strengthening existing partnerships between mainstream and traditional health systems.
10. Territory and traditional institutions
 - Respecting the indigenous concepts of territory as co-existent with the ideas of lands, gifts of nature, spiritual terrain and cultural source. Land and resource alienation from ancestral and indigenous territories must be halted and wherever possible, reversed.

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- Strengthening and supporting revival and renewal of indigenous institutions which have endured and are still vibrant.
 - Studying and including the ideas of the international and national policies, programmes and international human rights standards as the Kari Oka Declaration, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the ILO Convention 169 and the Rio Declaration and other relevant documents.
11. Education and research
- Developing curricula on Endogenous Development for all levels of education.
 - Exchanging curricula and learning materials within and between cultures.
 - Supporting research by local experts.
 - Facilitating the sharing of local innovations and experiences.
 - Reorganising training institutions to allow for incorporation of local experts.
 - Collaborating in research across different continents.
12. Legislation
- Reviewing national and international legislation on community rights and patenting and its relation to customary rights and law.
13. Regional networks on Endogenous Development
- Starting a network on Endogenous Development in Europe and other regions and sub regions on the globe.

We recognise and affirm the value of and the need for commitment to these ideas in our own lives and professional capacities.

Geneva, 5 October 2006.