

League of Indigenous Sovereign Nations of the Western Hemisphere

Draft Declaration of Principles

Between May 24 -27, 1991, indigenous people came from across North America to discuss the formation of the League of Indigenous Sovereign Nations of the Western Hemisphere. As a result, the following Declaration of Principles was drafted.

Considering that indigenous sovereignty, self-determination, land rights, and human rights present non-negotiable conflicts which stand in the way of meaningful growth in life and will not be resolved until the demands, needs, and natural rights of indigenous peoples are recognized, addressed, and implemented,

Affirming the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and related covenants, as well as the Declaration of Principles for the Defence of the Indigenous Nations and Peoples of the Western Hemisphere, and the Declaration of Quito,

Recognizing that no proper channels now exist to address the issues of concern to indigenous peoples, and that most of the world has absolutely no knowledge of the forces of genocide we still confront each day,

Acknowledging that the indigenous peoples of the Western Hemisphere have reached a united consciousness in recognition of the need for a concerted course of action to achieve our rights,

Be it affirmed that,

1. The League of Indigenous Sovereign Nations of the Western Hemisphere shall be a representational body of indigenous peoples, groups, and individuals in the Western Hemisphere to be recognized by the following definitions:

a) Nations shall have a permanent population, a defined territory, a traditional government, and the ability to enter into relations with other states.

b) Groups will be identifiable by having bonds of language, heritage, tradition, or other common identity.

c) Individuals will demonstrate verifiable ties to such nations or groups or will present evidence of indigenous identity acceptable to the League.

2. No indigenous nation or group shall be deemed to have fewer rights, or lesser status for the sole reason that the nation or group has not entered into recorded treaties or agreements with any states.

3. The League will strive to work in cooperation with other indigenous organizations in order to strengthen the struggle for our rights.

4. The League will work toward the following goals:

a) Begin the process of uniting all indigenous peoples of the Western Hemisphere together into one great league.

b) Establish world recognition of the League as an instrument that will effect the political empowerment of our nations as one people.

c) Represent our people to the international community.

5. The League will implement the following modified goals put forth by the Declaration of Quito:

a) Ratify our resolute political project of self-determination and our autonomy in the framework of nation states, under a new popular order with respect for whatever forms of organization each nation determines appropriate for their situation.

b) Affirm our decision to defend our culture, education, and spirituality as fundamental to our identity as peoples, reclaiming and maintaining our own forms of spiritual life, communal coexistence, and governance, in an intimate relationship with our Mother Earth.

c) Defend and conserve our land and natural resources, which now are being attacked. Environmental damage inflicted upon any land of the Western Hemisphere may affect the livelihood and personal integrity of indigenous peoples. We are convinced that effective defence will be

realized when it is indigenous peoples who administer and control the territories where we live according to our own principles of organization and communal life.

d) Oppose national judicial structures which are the result of the process of colonization and neo-colonization. We seek a new social order that embraces our traditional exercise of common law and expression of our culture and forms of organization.

e) Assert ourselves as separate and distinct peoples under international law and that this recognition be incorporated into the respective nation states.

f) Work for the elimination of the victimization of indigenous peoples through physical, spiritual, emotional, and intellectual violence and persecution, which constitutes a flagrant violation of human rights. We assert respect for our right to life, to land, to free organization, and expression of our culture. We will work for the release of our people who are held as political prisoners, a return of our children and the bones of our ancestors, an end to repression, and restitution for the harms done to us.

6. Participants in the League will conduct themselves in an ethical manner described in a consensually agreed upon code.

For information contact:
LISN
The Piscataway Indian Nation
P.O.Box 312
Port Tobacco, MD 20677 USA
(301) 932-0808
or Jay Mason
Canadian Alliance in Solidarity
with the Native Peoples
39 Spadina Rd.
Toronto, Ont. M5R 2S9
(416) 972-1573