
From Mexico to Ecuador – twinned in history, memory and resistance

Many letters have been sent from abroad to the Government of Ecuador in the framework of the campaign to support Ecuadorian social and indigenous organizations that are endeavouring to avoid the adoption in that country of a legislation that will imply the expansion of large scale monoculture tree plantations (see the article on Ecuador in this bulletin). But we want to publish the full version of the letter sent by the Council of Traditional Indigenous Doctors and Midwives of Chiapas (the Compitch) because it reflects the feeling of many and is dictated by the heart of a Latin American people that at this time beats in unison with the Ecuadorian people.

“Dr. Ana Alban Mora, Minister of the Environment of Ecuador and... the others

We are grass-roots Mexicans, indigenous Mayas, inhabitants of the forests of Chiapas, all equally Latin American.

We are members of the largest (but not necessarily most important) organization of traditional doctors of Chiapas, a Mexican South-Eastern Federal State. We come from different political affiliations, from all religious creeds and all the indigenous tongues still spoken in this State.

There are not many of us, but believe it or not, in 2001, after two years of resistance, we got the IBCG United States bio-prospecting project cancelled. One year ago, 24 hours after a lightening march, we also managed the cancellation of the State bill to define (corporatively) the biological wealth of the State. A few months ago we were able to neutralize the bill on a federal law for access to genetic resources. The reason for our nonconformity and mobilization has always been the same: the lack of consultation with the interested parties, in this case us, and others like us, the social majorities.

They tell us that the same is happening in Ecuador, that they are not convening the grass roots organizations to participate in a process of public discussion affecting their natural resources - in this case forests - but they do convene the business class, the moneyed class.

We will not make a formal, administrative petition, asking for the bill to be suspended or modified. But just take a mirror, look at it and look well at what it reflects, towards the past and towards the future, as we should always see in a mirror. If this mirror only reflects the present, that is to say, permanence of the same, then you loose and our grass-roots Ecuadorian companions win, because you know, our mirrors from the grass roots reflect memory and times to come, that is to say, where the face they are looking at comes from and what is waiting for it on the basis of the face that is looking at it. But they also win, we win because with us, the difference is, madam Minister, that nobody pays us to defend the wealth of our homelands that we safeguard for everyone's happiness and because, contrary to you, by doing this we multiply ourselves.

For IUCN, FAO, World Bank, Tropenbos International, Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, and annexes, we add some respectful prayers because, in view of their common track record, we conclude that the above reflection will not be enough..

From the faithful mirror of history with time, ours and that of your peoples:

The Board of Directors of the Council of Traditional Indigenous Doctors and Midwives of Chiapas (the Compitch).

President: Manuel Pérez Jiménez, Secretary: Domingo López Sántiz, Treasurer: Francisca Pérez Pérez

Palenque, Chiapas, Mexico, this 20th day of June, 2006"