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RESEAU MONDIAL PUR LES DROITS
WORLD NETWORK ON COLLECTIVE RIGHTS OF PEOPLES
COLLECTIFS DE PEUPLES
FÓRUM SOCIAL MUNDIAL

MUNDIAL PELS DRETS COL·LECTIUS DELS POBLES
XXV

FOUNDATIONAL DECLARATION

INTRODUCTION

The participants in the “Global Forum for the Collective Rights of Peoples” would like this event to be primarily a gathering of the different peoples of the world – peoples that are fully recognised, and peoples that have not yet achieved full recognition. We would also like this event to be a step forward towards human progress, in which all peoples achieve equal respect for the unity and dignity they deserve, without exception.

THE RECOGNITION OF THE COLLECTIVE RIGHTS: AN INCONTESTABLE NOTION

We are aware that these desires are not yet shared by many people. They are not shared by those who do not believe in the true existence of the collective rights of peoples, and who therefore argue that this innovation cannot be a reference objective for everyone. They are not shared by those who believe that defending the collective rights of peoples reduces individual human rights, which, according to them, are the only rights that the most representative international organisations, starting with the UN, recognise and are committed to. Those who oppose the collective rights of peoples include some with a clearly progressive background who have supported human rights.

A LONG WAY TOWARDS THE RECOGNITION OF THE COLLECTIVE RIGHTS OF PEOPLES

Despite these objections, the latter have clearly progressed in their understanding and acceptance of the collective rights of peoples. The UN has supported these rights, having referred to them explicitly in the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, adopted in 2007. This declaration followed so many positions adopted in the past in favour of this area of human rights, such as the economic, social and cultural agreements in the 1960s, even though these agreements did not mention those rights ostensibly. Nevertheless, we are still a long way off a satisfactory definition and formulation of those rights. This can be seen, for instance, in the current arbitrary interpretation of the most fundamental collective right of peoples: the right to self-determination. This right is respected or not respected based on a classification of human communities made by international bodies, and specifically whether each community is considered a “people”, even though no universally accepted definition of a “people” is given.

These deficiencies are a stark reminder of the long hard road ahead to reach the goal of introducing the collective rights of peoples at the top of the scale of human values and establishing them as essential rights to enable us to coexist in a fair, peaceful democracy.

History –even contemporary history and present times– show us that the denial of existence of peoples and their own culture, limitation of their decisions and the discriminatory treatment they have often been victims of, are a source of conflict, violence, infringement of human rights and sometimes, genocide.

Therefore we declare that equality of recognition and rights for all peoples is a fundamental condition for World Peace. We want to be actors in this path to Peace.

We know from the outset that we are most likely to achieve this objective if we, the members of the non-recognised peoples, take a stand in favour of the liberation of the peoples, become pioneers and become bridges and mediators in the weaving together of any network of affinities and of cooperation between

all those with a concern for human rights. Several precedents encourage us and support us in this task. Firstly, we should remember that it was representatives of various stateless nations, particularly aboriginal nations of the Americans, who, at the 2009 World Social Forum in Belém do Pará, where indigenous peoples of Brazil live, introduced onto the agenda the issue of the collective rights of peoples as an essential issue in building another world. This achievement made it possible to attract many people who until then were indifferent or uninterested in a set of rights that at best seemed less important than so many other problems that plague humanity. The proposals made in the session of the World Social Forum, and specifically in the “Space for the Collective Rights of Peoples”, was inspired by the “Universal Declaration of the Collective Rights of Peoples” written by experts from around the world and disseminated by the Conference of Stateless Nations of Europe (CONSEU) in 1990. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was read as authorised confirmation of the proposals.

THE COLLECTIVE RIGHTS OF PEOPLES AS BASIS FOR A FAIRER WORLD

This and other initiatives have given rise to the increasingly widespread conviction that it is necessary to fully respect the collective rights of peoples to ensure that individual human rights are fully respected, rather than the other way round. If a people's rights are not respected, including the right to self-determination and sovereignty enjoyed by other peoples, the members of that people will have their individual rights limited: their language will be relegated, their culture placed on the second tier, their international presence subjugated, etc.

From this perspective, the collective rights of peoples come into the foreground in the commitment that must be undertaken to make the planet more human within the boundaries of alter-globalisation, which is being established in a context of globalisation, a crisis of civilisations, and an affirmation of the values that can convert the utopia that “another world is possible” into a tangible reality.

However clear this evidence is, it is clear that humankind does not have the necessary means to further the cause of the collective rights of peoples, even though those rights are essential in building a democracy, and therefore a co-existence, that has a future for everyone, without any kind of frontiers.

In order to participate in creating these necessary means, a group of people belonging to stateless nations have taken the initiative to establish a “Network for the Collective Rights of Peoples” in Girona, a historic city of the Catalan people, and have committed to working to enable as many persons and peoples as possible to join.

IDENTITY AND OBJECTIVES

The Global Network for the Collective Rights of Peoples is a space for the co-ordination of movements and organisations from around the world that act to defend the collective rights of peoples.

The space is open to the participation of associations, organisations, social movements, unions and political parties whose priorities include democratically promoting and defending the collective rights of peoples and the right to self-determination.

The Network was born out of the World Social Forum (WSF) and the initial support given by the latter at the 2009 Forum in Belém. Consequently, the Global Network for the Collective Rights of Peoples supports and fully adheres to the WSF Charter of Principles, and has incorporated them. The Network will be an active member of the WSF, contributing ideas and proposals in solidarity with other movements and struggles in the WSF.

The Network will take measures and act to further:

- The coordination of social and political actors throughout the world who support the collective rights of peoples.
- The legitimisation of the collective rights of peoples in civil and political society around the world.
- The recognition of the right to self-determination outside the territories recognised as colonies by the UN, including all peoples who democratically wish to exercise that right.
- The promotion and recognition of the collective rights of peoples in international institutions and organisations, especially within the UN system.
- Support for movements and organisations around the world working for the recognition of their collective rights.
- Research into and the application of democratic models and forms of governance and of political organisation of society that go beyond the boundaries of national states, are more inclusive and participative, and have greater respect for diversity and individual and collective human rights, thus building new fairer, more democratic and more sustainable societies.
- The defence of territory, languages and cultures as part of the heritage

IDENTITY AND OBJECTIVES

of all humankind and as basic elements for the existence of any people, defending them against any form of aggression.

- The condemnation of all forms of repression that attack the legitimate defence and promotion of the collective rights of peoples.

ORGANISATION

To achieve these objectives, the Global Network for the Collective Rights of Peoples will be organised as follows:

A General Meeting open to all members will be held every two years, at which members can debate and decide upon the political and organisational agenda of the Network.

Working groups agreed at the General Meeting will be set up to develop debates, initiatives and specific activities. Two kinds of working groups are possible: thematic groups, and groups by type of organisation. The second type of group can be for associations, unions, movements and political parties.

Each working group shall have a coordinating organisation that shall exercise this role for a period of one year, with the possibility of an extension of no more than one month.

There shall be a facilitating group formed by the coordinating organisations of the working groups and by the international secretary.

An international secretary responsible for general coordination and mobilisation.

AGENDA 2010-2011

In 2010/11, the Global Network for the Collective Rights of Peoples shall undertake the following initiatives:

- The holding of the second General Meeting.
- The registration of the Network as an international association.
- An application to join the International Council of the WSF.
- Participation in the “Hegemonic Civilisation Crisis and Alternative Paradigms” process within the WSF.
- Organisation of a space for the Collective Rights of Peoples at the 2011 WSF in Dakar.
- The development of the necessary electronic media for its internal organisation and for external communication.
- The organisation of a decentralised public initiative for the defence of the collective rights of peoples to be held every year on 12 October.
- Participate in meetings to campaign for collective rights of peoples in the United Nations.
- Establish a working group of lawyers with the aim of assisting organisations and stateless nations groups when dealing with international bodies and institutions in charge of watching over peoples rights and their infringement.

Girona, 26 April 2010, Catalan Countries

ENTITATS SIGNANTS

Associació per la Llengua Gal·lesa (País de Gal·les)
Centre Tàmil pels Drets Humans
CIEMEN
CIGA (Galícia)
Congrès Mundial Amazic (Tamazgha)
Convergència Nacional Maya Waqib'Kej (Guatemala)
Coordinadora Andina d'Organitzacions Indígenes (CAOI) [Bolívia-Ecuador-
Argentina-Xile-Colòmbia-Perú]
Cornish Stanniary Parliament (Cornualles)
ERC
Front Polisario (Sàhara Occidental)
Fundació Galiza Sempre
Health Work Committees (Palestina)
Herriak Aske (País Basc)
IAC
Iniciativa Nacional Palestina
Kurdish Network
Oficina de la Llengua Sarda (Sardenya)
Partit Popular del Balutxistan (Balutxistan, Iran)
Partit Quebequès
PDD
Sindicat Autònom de la Vall d'Aosta (Vall d'Aosta)
Sindicat de Treballadors Corsos (Còrsega)
Sindicat de Treballadors de l'Ensenyament del País Valencià-ISPV
Udalbiltza (País Basc)
Unió de Treballadors de Guyana (Guaiana Francesa)
Unió Democràtica Bretona (Bretanya)
Vetevendosje!, moviment per l'autodeterminació de Kosovë
Wallmappuwen (Walmappu, Xile)

GLOBAL NETWORK FOR THE COLLECTIVE RIGHTS OF PEOPLES

Secretaria internacional

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