

## DECLARATION OF MORELIA

In the state of Michoacán, Mexico, ancestral and sacred territory of the Original Peoples of this region, we—Indigenous, Afro-Descendant and Original Peoples' leaders and authorities, academics, and human rights defenders from Chile, Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico and Canada—have gathered to share our visions of the struggles Indigenous, Afro-Descendant and Original Peoples' face to exercise, and obtain recognition and respect for their territorial rights and right to self-determination.

In our meeting, convened by the Centre for Indigenous Conservation and Development Alternatives (CICADA) of McGill University (Montréal, Canada), the project entitled "*CALEIDOSCOPIO – Innovaciones políticas y jurídicas de las comunidades indígenas que ejercen autogobierno para la transformación intercultural del Estado mexicano*" of the *Escuela Nacional de Estudios Superiores, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México* (ENES-UNAM) and the Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas (CIDE) in collaboration with *Colectivo Emancipaciones*, we exchanged perspectives about the complex reality lived by Indigenous, Afro-Descendant and Original Peoples and their communities in the Americas emerging from concrete territorial experiences, and from processes of collaborative action research that we have undertaken in recent years.

We note with enthusiasm the increase in collaborative experiences of this nature that are based on dialogue between the knowledges, cultures and spiritualities of Indigenous, Afro-Descendant and Original Peoples and Western knowledge and cultures. All of this with a view to strengthening Indigenous, Afro-Descendant and Original Peoples' exercise of their fundamental rights and their own law, as well as the construction of new relationships between Peoples and cultures.

We also observe the numerous obstacles Indigenous, Afro-Descendant and Original Peoples face in the states in which they live with regards to the recognition and exercise of their internationally recognized political, territorial, and cultural rights, the development of their own systems of law and justice, and the exercise of their self-determination.

We express concern that the normative frameworks of most states, including their constitutions and laws, often do not recognize these rights. We also see that in those states where some recognition does exist, lack of political will, bureaucratic impediments, and structural racism and discrimination often render these rights a dead letter. All of this has serious impacts on Indigenous, Afro-Descendant and Original Peoples' systems of life, and particularly on the rights of women and children.

We wish to highlight critical realities common to the territories in which we live, and that extend more generally across the Americas, namely:

- The intensification of natural resource extractive investment projects promoted by states and/or private corporations imposed on ancestral territories, in ways that often

rhetorically use language included in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples—or even cite Indigenous, Afro-Descendant and Original Peoples’ own laws—interfering with these Peoples’ efforts to exercise their self-determination, while generating serious environmental impacts, and impacts on their ways of life and organization;

- Often linked to opposition to these projects, or as a consequence of the work they carry out in defence of the rights of their communities and peoples, we see how many Indigenous, Afro-Descendant and Original Peoples’ leaders are stigmatised, persecuted, threatened or assassinated, with states failing to adopt measures to prevent this from happening, or investigating and punishing the agents responsible for these actions;
- The limited willingness or outright refusal of states to accommodate the jurisdictions, legal and justice systems of Indigenous, Afro-Descendant and Original Peoples, often subordinating them to state justice systems and denying or obstructing this essential form of exercising the right to self-determination.

These situations of discrimination and oppression are aggravated by the openly discriminatory treatment that most of the media give to Indigenous, Afro-Descendant and Original Peoples, distorting their struggles for self-determination, invisibilising, manipulating and, stigmatising them to the benefit of the powerful interests they represent, and to the detriment of these Peoples.

Despite these negative tendencies, we observe that forms of self-determination and defence of rights grounded in the laws of Indigenous, Afro-Descendant and Original Peoples have been gaining ground. In many cases this has resulted in the revitalisation of their legal systems, of political institutions rooted in their millenary traditions, as well as constitutional frameworks drawn up by the Peoples themselves. All this determines relationships marked by dynamics of interlegality.

Faced with these common realities and challenges, those of us who participated in this gathering want to strengthen our links in the future through processes of collaborative and intercultural action research and by building a network weaving together reciprocity, solidarity, and accompaniment. We consider that the initiatives shared by the different Peoples and communities who participated in this meeting, based on their own worldviews, spiritualities and legal systems, are examples of courage and political imagination. They should therefore be shared throughout the Americas and internationally as alternatives to overcome the profound social and environmental crises facing humanity as a whole.

We commit to maintaining and strengthening our collaborative work and to opening spaces and visibilizing Indigenous, Afro-Descendant and Original Peoples’ knowledges, cultures and worldviews within universities and other public and private entities involved in education, as well as in the public space more generally. Forging new forms of horizontal relations between Peoples

living in the Americas is the only way to leave behind the denial, racism and injustices that have been characteristic of the region until now.

Morelia, Michoacán, Mexico, June 13, 2023 signed by:

Concejo Autónomo de Gobierno de San Luis Tlaxiátemalco, Xochimilco, México;

Palenke Alto Cauca, Colombia;

Resguardo de Origen Colonial Cañamomo Lomaprieta, Colombia;

Marcela Alvarado Santillán, en Representación de los Bienes Comunes de los Naturales del Pueblo de San Andrés Totoltepec, Tlalpan, CDMX;

Orlando Aragón Andrade, UNAM (ENES Morelia)/Colectivo Emancipaciones

Kirsten Anker, CICADA/McGill Faculty of Law;

José Aylwin, Observatorio Ciudadano de Chile;

Erika Bárcena Arévalo, Instituto de Investigaciones Jurídicas de la UNAM/Colectivo Emancipaciones/Proyecto "Caleidoscopio"/LAJE

Hélène Boivin, Présidente de la Commission Tipelimitishun, Mashteuiatsh;

Ramón Hernández Castillo, Presidente de la Comisión de Ejercicio Directo de la comunidad de Texcadhó, Nicolás Flores, Hidalgo;

Carlos Y. Flores, profesor-investigador, Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Morelos, México;

Lucero Ibarra Rojas, Directora de la División de Estudios Jurídicos, Profesora-Investigadora Titular, Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas (CIDE);

Salvador Millaleo, abogado y sociólogo mapuche, académico de la Facultad de Derecho de la Universidad de Chile;

Geneviève Motard, Professeure titulaire, Faculté de droit, Université Laval;

Lina Mora, Estudiante de doctorado en Antropología, UNAM (ENES Morelia);

Oriana Mora Rodríguez;

Sebastiana Par, Autoridad ancestral - ajq'ijab' - Maya K'iche';

Francisco Javier Ramírez Martínez, Representante Indígena de la comunidad de Texcadhó ante el Ayuntamiento de Nicolás Flores, Hidalgo;

Etienne Roy Grégoire, Professeur régulier, Sciences politiques, Université du Québec à Chicoutimi;

Rachel Sieder, CIESAS-CDMX;

Iván D. Vargas Roncancio, Associate Director, CICADA; Postdoctoral Fellow, Leadership for the Ecozoic;

Fernando Vargas Olvera, Estudiante de doctorado en Antropología, CIESAS-CDMX;

Indira Velasco, Estudiante de doctorado en Antropología, UNAM (ENES Morelia);

Julian Ventura Tiño, Contador del tiempo - ajq'ij - y periodista Maya K'iche;'

Viviane Weitzner, CICADA/Anthropology, McGill University.