



PROTECTING KNOWLEDGE

TRADITIONAL RESOURCE RIGHTS IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM



SPIRIT OF THE CONFERENCE

Although we have been subjected to colonial forces for several centuries, we retain and affirm all of our inherent collective rights as sovereign nations. These rights include the right to protect our own survival, in particular, by protecting our cultures, languages, and knowledge systems from expropriation, encroachment, or theft.

1. Indigenous Peoples' own languages, knowledge systems and laws are indispensable to their identity, and are a foundation for self-determination.
 2. Indigenous Peoples' knowledge systems are inextricably and inalienably connected with their ancestry and ancestral territories.
 3. Indigenous Peoples' heritage is not a commodity, nor the property of the nation-state. The material and intellectual heritage of each Indigenous People is a sacred gift and a responsibility that must be honoured and held for the benefit of future generations.
 4. Indigenous rights, individual and collective, are defined by Indigenous laws. The starting-point for any consideration of rights to learn, use or transmit Indigenous knowledge therefore must therefore be the laws of the Indigenous peoples concerned.
 5. The use of Indigenous Peoples' knowledge or resources is unlawful and illegitimate unless it is done in conformity with the laws of the Peoples concerned.
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ACTIONS

1. We will take steps within our own communities to ensure that our people, and in particular our children, learn our own laws concerning the acquisition and use of knowledge and resources, and the credentials of knowledge-keepers, so that they can fully enjoy the right to self-determination.
2. We condemn all trade in unlawfully-obtained resources or knowledge, and we will act jointly at the local, regional, national, and international levels to deprive corporations and governments of any profit from such trade through effective international legal, political and economic actions.
3. We will cooperate to establish an effective international network to monitor the activities of corporations in the ancestral territories of Indigenous Peoples worldwide, and to support Indigenous Peoples everywhere in the full exercise of their rights.
4. We will take steps to prevent any assertion of intellectual property rights to the genetic integrity or genetic potential of biotic systems in our ancestral territories.
5. We will press for the ratification and full implementation of all international conventions in the fields of human rights, Indigenous Peoples, and their ecosystems, which we deem applicable.
6. We will work together for the speedy adoption of the *Draft Principles and Guidelines on the Heritage of Indigenous Peoples* by the United Nations.
7. We will promote the adoption of the *Principles and Guidelines* by our own Nations and Peoples as an international compact among ourselves, and as a basis for dealing with non-indigenous interests, and we will work together to establish a global registry of Indigenous Nations and Peoples who have agreed to implement the *Principles and Guidelines* within their own territories.
8. We support all international standard-setting initiatives by Indigenous Peoples that advance these actions.

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Spirit of the Conference Statement- <http://www.ubcic.bc.ca/spirit.htm>