



INTERNATIONAL INDIAN TREATY COUNCIL

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY AND THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES



*The 4th International Indigenous Peoples Corn Conference,
March 7 & 8 2019, Vicente Guerrero, Tlaxcala Mexico,
“by our ancestral rights, we protect and guarantee our Food
Sovereignty and that of our future generations.”*

“Our ancestors in some areas have secured our traditional ways and food systems in Treaties. These international agreements were signed for “so long as the sun shines, the river flows and the grass grows.”

**— Chief Wilton Littlechild, Ermineskin Cree Nation, Treaty No. 6 Territory, Canada,
addressing the United Nations World Food Summit, Rome, November 1996**

WHAT IS FOOD SOVEREIGNTY?

“Food sovereignty is the right of Peoples to define their own policies and strategies for sustainable production, distribution, and consumption of food, with respect for their own cultures and their own systems of managing natural resources and rural areas, and **is considered to be a precondition for Food Security.”**

“The rights to land, water, and territory, as well as the right to self-determination, are essential for the full realization of our Food Security and Food Sovereignty.”

— The “Declaration of Atitlan” adopted at the 1st Indigenous Peoples’ Global Consultation on the Right to Food and Food Sovereignty, Guatemala, 2002

THE RIGHT TO FOOD IS A HUMAN RIGHT

“Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family...including food...”

— The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

“...In no case may a people be deprived of its own means of subsistence.”

— Article 1 in Common, International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

“...the denial of the Right to Food for Indigenous Peoples not only denies us our physical survival, but also denies us our social organization, our cultures, traditions, languages, spirituality, sovereignty, and total identity; it is a denial of our collective indigenous existence.”

— The “Declaration of Atitlan”, 2002

THE UN DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AFFIRMS:

- Article 3: The right to Self-Determination
- Article 20: The right to Subsistence and Traditional Economies
- Article 24: The right to Health and conservation of vital plants and animals
- Article 26: The right to traditional lands, territories and resources
- Article 29: The right to conservation and protection of the environment and productive capacity of lands, territories and resources
- Article 31: The right to maintain, control, protect and develop cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and cultural expressions including genetic resources, seeds and medicines
- Article 32: The right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for development and right to free, prior and informed consent
- Article 37: Treaty Rights



OBSTACLES TO INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

- Lack of access to Traditional Lands, Waters and Natural Resources
- Deforestation, mining, drilling, pipelines, damming and other types of imposed development carried out without Indigenous Peoples' Free Prior and Informed Consent
- Environmental contamination and the use of toxic pesticides
- "Free Trade Agreements" and commercial food imports
- Introduction of genetically modified foods and seeds
- Large-scale industrial agriculture
- Loss of language, cultural practices, and ways of transmitting traditional knowledge to new generations
- Violations of Nation-to-Nation Treaties
- Impacts of climate change and false climate "solutions" including bio/agro fuel production and carbon trading

BUILDING ALLIANCES TO RESTORE AND DEFEND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

IITC brings Indigenous food producers and knowledge-holders together to respond to common threats, share methods and seeds, and build alliances to restore and defend traditional food systems. Through the Alliance for Food Sovereignty, Traditional Knowledge and Climate Change, IITC has co-sponsored international gatherings on Corn, Salmon, Tepary beans, as well as Pacific and arctic food systems. IITC also participates in UN bodies including the Committee on Food Security, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), to ensure that Indigenous Peoples' voices are heard and their rights are respected in policy-making impacting their Food Sovereignty.



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