Declaration of Belém+30

Thirty years after the First International Congress of Ethnobiology was held in 1988, members of numerous indigenous peoples, traditional populations and local communities, scientists and students – particularly ethnobiologists – came together at the XVI Congress of the International Society of Ethnobiology, the XII Brazilian Symposium on Ethnobiology and Ethnoecology, and Indigenous Forum 2018, to discuss common concerns. Nowadays it is established that indigenous peoples and local communities know, use and manage their natural resources with their own technologies.

This knowledge, and these practices and innovations, have been, since 1992, recognized by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Nagoya Protocol, International Labour Organization Convention 169, and other international agreements, as important not only in their own right, but also for what they might contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of global biodiversity. There are some international and national programs to promote the conservation of biological and cultural diversity. Given that advances since the original Declaration of Belém have been below what is necessary, while at present there are tendencies that harm those advances and seek to block others, we hereby declare that we remain alarmed by the fact that:

• Indigenous peoples, traditional populations and local communities around the world continue to suffer genocide, ethnocide and the constant expropriation of their territories and knowledge. Their languages are disappearing and their rights continue to be violated, although most countries are now signatories of the treaties mentioned above that recognize their rights;

• Tropical forests and other fragile ecosystems are disappearing, although most countries are now parties to the treaties mentioned above;

• Many species, both plant and animal, are threatened with extinction, although most countries are now parties to the treaties mentioned above;

And given that:

• 95% of the world's genetic resources are managed by native peoples;

• there exists an inextricable link between cultural diversity and biological diversity;

• the health, agricultural and economic conditions of people around the world are partially or totally dependent on these resources;

We vehemently call for the following actions:

1) The application of measures that guarantee indigenous peoples, traditional populations, and local communities the right to their territories, their management, and the self-determination of ways of life;

2) The recognition and application of all other human rights, both tangible and intangible, including cultural and linguistic identity;

3) Ensure the right of indigenous peoples, traditional populations, and local communities to free, prior and informed consultation, including the right to say no, in relation to public and private projects that may affect their territories, sacred places and ways of life; such consultation to respect their protocols or traditional modes of consultation. It must be ensured that such consultation processes are carried out and financed by nation-states.

4) For nation-states to promote the processes of ratification and implementation of ILO Convention 169 to guarantee the right of indigenous peoples, traditional populations, and local communities to free, prior and informed consultation.

5) The channeling of a substantial proportion of science, technology and innovation resources towards the implementation of inventories, conservation and management of local resources for initiatives of indigenous peoples and traditional populations and local communities, autonomously or in conjunction with the participation of academics;

6) States must ensure the protection and appreciation of traditional culture and knowledge, providing support for the use and the autonomous development that take them as a basis. If access to, and use of, this knowledge, including genetic resources, is made by third parties, free, prior and informed consent and an adequate system of benefit-sharing must be ensured; any inappropriate access and use must be inhibited.

7) Implement differentiated educational programs adapted to local conditions at all levels to raise awareness in the global community about the value of ethnobiological knowledge for human and environmental wellbeing.

8) Promote and institutionalize the philosophy of good living related to ancestral and traditional healing practices through orality and its various expressions, to be preserved, protected, implemented and socialized.

9) Researchers and institutions must guarantee to indigenous peoples, traditional communities, and local communities, the availability to them of, and unrestricted access to, raw data, documentation (videos, images, audios), and reports from research carried out in their territories and sacred places, including the right to the repatriation of objects and artifacts.

10) States must put an end to the criminalization of traditional practices, including the revision of laws and environmental policies that are contrary to these practices.

11) States must guarantee effective punishment for environmental crimes and human rights violations established in international treaties and domestic legislation, especially in cases involving large undertakings.

12) Nation-states must create policies to support production, credit and commercialization of biodiversity products, including access to training and appropriate technologies.

"This charter has our hands and our faces"

-- Vanuza Cardoso, Quilombola (Afro-descendant) of Belém