The Sarayaku Statement on Sacha Kawsak, or Living Jungle, shared by the Sitio Oficial del Pueblo Originario Kichwa de Sarayaku-TAYJASARUTA (Ecuador):

Nuestra Propuesta de Vida: Our Proposal for Life

Declaración de Kawsak Sacha

Sacha Kawsak Statement – Living Jungle

I. The declaration consists in indigenous nationalities and peoples retaking awareness of our true identity that has historically characterized us, the thought of Kausak Sacha, Living Jungle and our global appropriation of this proposal as the base platform for our socio-cultural and economic organization. This proposal of indigenous nationalities and peoples should be assumed within the national agendas of Confeniae, CONAIE and the Ecuadorean State.

The concept of “Kawsak Sacha” (living jungle) the jungle of beings, is a transcendental territorial space destined to elevate different emotional, psychological, physical and spiritual facets vital to the energy and health of indigenous peoples. It is also an area of knowledge transmission of the Yachay (science and wisdom) where the Yachak (shaman) and the elders – upon entering into contact with the world of the masters of living places – enter the world of wisdom and the sublime worldview for methodical learning. These are areas where the wise beings interact with the protectors so that animals don’t flee and the natural balance is maintained.

II. The collective territories of the indigenous nationalities not yet affected by industrial projects should be declared and considered exclusion zones from oil, mining and forestry. This declaration consists of recognition of the “LIVING JUNGLE,” (As a Sacred Territory, Heritage of Biodiversity and Culture of the Indigenous Peoples and Nationalities in Ecuador).

This declaration has three essential foundations.

(1) The recognition and adoption of the exclusion zone from oil, mining and forestry: An exclusion zone considers the development of industrial projects as incompatible with in sacred territories and that oil and minerals should stay underground. These collective territories will be destined to projects that will respect our self-organization, in social, cultural, environmental, and economic terms. State institutions and international organizations should make an effort to recognize and embrace this act in an efficient, effective and organized way.

(2) A symbolic, geographic demarcation developed through the Jatun Kausak Sisa Ñampi, the Living Way of Flowers or Life Frontier. The Sisa Ñampi will represent a perimeter of flowering trees, a sacred space. It will be a living way to manifest the thought and life of the peoples of the Amazon jungle, where their life and cultures begin.
In its physical context, this project consists of the construction of a geographic and symbolic demarcation of the boundaries of ancestral territories of indigenous Amazonian peoples. The spaces of the Life Frontier are circular areas of ± 2000 m², planted every 4 km in length over 500 km (according to land area) on the boundaries of the territories of peoples in resistance and in accordance with this proposal.

The spaces in the form of gardens will be located after a thorough site selection, i.e. where there is not much vegetation, where the impact of the hurricane has caused deforestation. In these spaces we will plant food crops and fruit / flowering trees. This proposal represents our work over the course of 20 to 30 years. At its matured state this will be a testimony to Amazon beauty with a colorful blanket visible from the air, to beautify Pachamama (Mother Earth) and protect our territorial space.

These rings of the Life Border will also be niches of biological wealth, home and regeneration of species, where they will reproduce and be conserved. These areas will be centers of biodiversity since the flowers of these trees attract a variety of species of insects, bees, birds, butterflies, parrots, etc. Fruits will also serve as food for a variety of Woolly monkeys, Capuchin, Baris, spider monkeys, birds, like toucans and turkeys. Land animals such as tapirs, peccaries, deer, agoutis, partridges, rodents will benefit from the fallen fruit. In practice, this will be the modern type of refuge for wildlife species.

(3) The implementation and enforcement of Sumak Kawsay through life action plans: To demonstrate a new economic model based on the real “Sumak Kawsay” – life in harmony – is an urgent and concrete proposal presented by Sarayaku to change the extraction and sale of fossil energy development model in favor of a harmonious development system that is respectful of life and the well-being of nature, the planet and human beings.

The Sumak Kawsay means having a healthy territory without contamination, productive land and abundant natural resources that ensures food sovereignty. It is having a sustainable and free organizational system in harmony with development concepts and of the Peoples and Nationalities. Sumak Kawsay also knowing out to practice our ancient knowledge, maintaining our traditional customs practice and strengthening our identity.

The objective of our plan is to implement a different and solidarious economic model, to improve the quality and way of life, through sustainable management plans and the sustainable management of natural resources of flora and fauna, as well as taking advantage of their cultural, scientific, technological and artistic potentials, through the implementation of alternative programs and projects, ecologically sustainable, economically supportive and culturally compatible with indigenous philosophy.

The objective is also to implement a new model of with different values of “richness” offered by Sumak Kawsay, allowing the prevalence of a preserved ecosystem without pollution. It will have healthy rivers and lakes with a robust aquatic wildlife. It will maintain the abundance of jungle fauna and flora in good health. It will preserve and respect sacred areas. It will conserve the integrity of the territory where rules governing use and management will be based on
conservation laws of the indigenous people. It will respect the territorial zoning established by the indigenous people.

Through this plan we will carry out sustained actions, projects and proposals related to each other, to support and strengthen the ancient knowledge of Sacha Runa Yachay (knowledge of the jungle people), to develop in peace and freedom the Runakuna Kawsay (life of the jungle people) and ensure Sumak Allpa (fertile land) to achieve the Sumak Kawsay (harmonious life).

III. Properly optimize areas that are currently under oil exploitation through environmental, economic, social, and cultural reparations and compensation. Review existing agreements and arrangements between the communities to establish labor and economic justice and social security.

Comparte!