



**DECLARATION OF THE INDIGENOUS CAUCUS
OF THE WESTERN MINING ACTION NETWORK (WMAN)
WMAN INDIGENOUS CAUCUS MEETING
QUAPAW NATION, OKLAHOMA - SEPTEMBER 19-20, 2019**

Indigenous Peoples from WMAN Indigenous caucus regions met at the **Indigenous Caucus Meeting** from September 19-20, 2019 at the Downstream Casino in Quapaw, Oklahoma.

We thank the Quapaw Nation and the Local Environmental Action Demanded (LEAD) Agency for welcoming us in their homelands and express our solidarity for the struggles against the imposed mining development resulting in the Tar Creek Superfund Site, the largest and most complex site in the United States, which continues to threaten their homeland and ways of life. We also thank those from WMAN in Canada and the United States for their preparatory activities and engagement in this face-to-face meeting.

We continue to affirm, with one voice, that it is a critical time for all of humanity to address centuries of extraction, predation, pollution, colonialism, the violation of rights, and genocide. It is time to assume the responsibilities towards our future generations. It is time to choose life.

Water And Culture As Fundamental Dimensions Of Our Lives

As Indigenous Peoples, our fundamental cultural belief systems and worldviews based on our sacred relationships to each other and Mother Earth have sustained our peoples through time. We recognize the contributions and participation of our traditional knowledge holders, Indigenous women, and youth.

We believe that all societies must uphold cultures of sustainability, and that the work of WMAN should highlight water as the most fundamental dimension of sustainable development.

Full Exercise Of Our Human And Collective Rights

We see that human exploitation of Mother Earth and all life has led us to a serious state of peril.

We see that practices of unsustainable development continue to proceed on the road to destruction. As Indigenous peoples, we have experienced the terrible and negative impacts of the pillaging of Mother Earth and ongoing genocide.

We reaffirm that the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples provide the standards to be applied in the implementation of sustainable development at all levels, including respect for full participation in decision-making and our Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) to policies, programs, and projects affecting us.

Strengthening Diverse Local Economies And Territorial Stewardship

For Indigenous Peoples, self-determination is the basis for living well, and this is realized through secure land rights with sound territorial management and the building of equitable, sustainable, and vibrant healthy communities that are critical components of resilient and sustainable ecosystems.

We will continue to strengthen and defend Mother Earth and her WATER and our roles and responsibilities to our lands, territories, and resources against exploitative extractive industries, predatory investments, land-grabbing, forced relocation, unsustainable development projects, and their cumulative impacts.

From the conference emerged vibrant discussions on the history and future of WMAN and answers to address the climate crises, as diverse as the many cultures present at the meeting. The greatest wealth is nature's diversity and its associated cultural diversity, both of which are intimately connected and must be protected in the same way.

Indigenous peoples continue to call upon the world to return to dialogue and harmony with Mother Earth, and to adopt a new paradigm of civilization based on Indigenous legal traditions for the greater good of all. In the spirit of humanity and our collective survival, dignity, and well-being, we respectfully offer our cultural worldviews as an important foundation to collectively renew our relationships with each other and Mother Earth and to ensure we proceed with integrity.

Based on these affirmations and agreements, we commit to carry out the following actions:

Within And Among Indigenous Peoples

1) As stewards of Mother Earth, we will define and implement our own priorities for economic,

social and cultural development, and environmental protection, based on Indigenous cultural practices and traditional knowledge to be implemented in our own inherent rights to self-determination.

2) We will continue to revitalize, strengthen, and restore our respective institutions and methods for the transmission of our traditional knowledge and practices focusing on transmission by our knowledge keepers to the next seven generations.

3) We will stand in firm solidarity with our struggles to oppose any projects that threaten our water, lands, air, cultural practices and sacred sites, food sovereignty, traditional livelihoods, biodiverse ecosystems, rights, and ways of life.

Regarding Government And Corporate Actions

1) We will continue to reject the concept and practices of development based on colonization, commodification, contamination, and exploitation of the natural world, and policies and projects based on this model.

2) We insist that governmental entities fully implement their commitments under national and international laws and standards which uphold the inherent, inalienable, collective, and inter-generational rights of Indigenous Peoples and rights affirmed in Treaties, Agreements and Constructive Arrangements, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

3) We will reject and firmly oppose government legislation, policies and programs that negatively impact Indigenous Peoples' lands and territories, ecosystems, and livelihoods and that permit corporations and/or any other third parties to do so.

4) Consultation is not free, prior and informed consent.

5) We will encourage and adhere to the ethical principles of Reconciliation, Reparation, and Restorative Justice.

At WMAN Steering Committee Meetings And WMAN Biennial Conferences

1) We insist on having full autonomy as the Indigenous Caucus in designing Indigenous Caucus meetings and programmatic activities for the implementation of WMAN's mission and goals.

2) We insist on acknowledging Indigenous peoples' lands at all WMAN meetings and support

truth telling of the historical trauma of that territory.

3) We support the use of the Jemez Principles (attached) in conversations between the Indigenous Caucus and the WMAN Steering Committee. We encourage WMAN to initiate cultural sensitivity training and recognize it is an ongoing process of great importance.

4) We call upon the WMAN Steering Committee to embrace and engage further in its mission statement, in particular those of: (1) “supporting community-based organizations’ efforts to protect human health and the environment from the negative impacts of mining,” and (2) “linking activists with technical and legal experts,” who could greatly impact and support the work of Indigenous Caucus members.

5) We call for full transparency in the WMAN Steering Committee regarding members and WMAN positions and statements with respect to so-called “responsible mining” and the presence of stake-holders of mining companies in the Steering Committee.

6) We call upon WMAN to support ongoing efforts to address human trafficking and Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, girls, boys, men, and 2SLGBTQQIA people (which stands for Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex and asexual).

We will carry these messages to the WMAN Steering Committee and all other WMAN processes where our livelihood, self-determination, and dignity are affected.

We adopt this Declaration on the 20th of September 2019, in Quapaw, Oklahoma, affirming our rights and reiterating our sacred responsibilities to future generations.

Adopted by networks, organizations, traditional leaders, spiritual leaders, and Indigenous peoples from regions representing the Indigenous Caucus of the Western Mining Action Network. This is a Living Document.

***Jemez Principles* for Democratic Organizing**

Meeting hosted by Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice (SNEEJ), Jemez, New Mexico, Dec. 1996

Activists meet on Globalization

On December 6-8, 1996, forty people of color and European-American representatives met in Jemez, New Mexico, for the "Working Group Meeting on Globalization and Trade." The Jemez meeting was hosted by the Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice with the intention of hammering out common understandings between participants from different cultures, politics and organizations. The following "**Jemez Principles**" for democratic organizing were adopted by the participants.

#1 Be Inclusive

If we hope to achieve just societies that include all people in decision-making and assure that all people have an equitable share of the wealth and the work of this world, then we must work to build that kind of inclusiveness into our own movement in order to develop alternative policies and institutions to the treaties policies under neo-liberalism.

This requires more than tokenism, it cannot be achieved without diversity at the planning table, in staffing, and in coordination. It may delay achievement of other important goals, it will require discussion, hard work, patience, and advance planning. It may involve conflict, but through this conflict, we can learn better ways of working together. It's about building alternative institutions, movement building, and not compromising out in order to be accepted into the anti-globalization club.

#2 Emphasis on Bottom-Up Organizing

To succeed, it is important to reach out into new constituencies, and to reach within all levels of leadership and membership base of the organizations that are already involved in our networks. We must be continually building and strengthening a base which provides our credibility, our strategies, mobilizations, leadership development, and the energy for the work we must do daily.

#3 Let People Speak for Themselves

We must be sure that relevant voices of people directly affected are heard. Ways must be provided for spokespersons to represent and be responsible to the affected constituencies. It is important for organizations to clarify their roles, and who they represent, and to assure accountability within our structures.

#4 Work Together In Solidarity and Mutuality

Groups working on similar issues with compatible visions should consciously act in solidarity, mutuality and support each other's work. In the long run, a more significant step is to incorporate the goals and values of other groups with your own work, in order to build strong relationships. For instance, in the long run, it is more important that labor unions and community economic development projects include the issue of environmental sustainability in their own strategies, rather than just lending support to the environmental organizations. So communications, strategies and resource sharing is critical, to help us see our connections and build on these.

#5 Build Just Relationships Among Ourselves

We need to treat each other with justice and respect, both on an individual and an organizational level, in this country and across borders. Defining and developing "just relationships" will be a process that won't happen overnight. It must include clarity about decision-making, sharing strategies, and resource distribution. There are clearly many skills necessary to succeed, and we need to determine the ways for those with different skills to coordinate and be accountable to one another.

#6 Commitment to Self-Transformation

As we change societies, we must change from operating on the mode of individualism to community-centeredness. We must "walk our talk." We must be the values that we say we're struggling for and we must be justice, be peace, be community.

This and other environmental justice documents can be downloaded from: www.ejnet.org/ej/