

# **UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF THE RIGHTS OF MOTHER EARTH**

**April 22, 2010**

## **World People's Conference on Climate Change** **and the Rights of Mother Earth** **Cochabamba, Bolivia**

### **Preamble**

We, the peoples and nations of Earth:

considering that we are all part of Mother Earth, an indivisible, living community of interrelated and interdependent beings with a common destiny;

gratefully acknowledging that Mother Earth is the source of life, nourishment and learning and provides everything we need to live well;

recognizing that the capitalist system and all forms of depredation, exploitation, abuse and contamination have caused great destruction, degradation and disruption of Mother Earth, putting life as we know it today at risk through phenomena such as climate change;

convinced that in an interdependent living community it is not possible to recognize the rights of only human beings without causing an imbalance within Mother Earth;

affirming that to guarantee human rights it is necessary to recognize and defend the rights of Mother Earth and all beings in her and that there are existing cultures, practices and laws that do so;

conscious of the urgency of taking decisive, collective action to transform structures and systems that cause climate change and other threats to Mother Earth;

proclaim this Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth, and call on the General Assembly of the United Nation to adopt it, as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations of the world, and to the end that every individual and institution takes responsibility for promoting through teaching, education, and consciousness raising, respect for the rights recognized in this Declaration and ensure through prompt and progressive measures and mechanisms, national and international, their universal and effective recognition and observance among all peoples and States in the world.

**Article 1. Mother Earth**

- (1) Mother Earth is a living being.
- (2) Mother Earth is a unique, indivisible, self-regulating community of interrelated beings that sustains, contains and reproduces all beings.
- (3) Each being is defined by its relationships as an integral part of Mother Earth.
- (4) The inherent rights of Mother Earth are inalienable in that they arise from the same source as existence.
- (5) Mother Earth and all beings are entitled to all the inherent rights recognized in this Declaration without distinction of any kind, such as may be made between organic and inorganic beings, species, origin, use to human beings, or any other status.
- (6) Just as human beings have human rights, all other beings also have rights which are specific to their species or kind and appropriate for their role and function within the communities within which they exist.
- (7) The rights of each being are limited by the rights of other beings and any conflict between their rights must be resolved in a way that maintains the integrity, balance and health of Mother Earth.

**Article 2. Inherent Rights of Mother Earth**

- (1) Mother Earth and all beings of which she is composed have the following inherent rights:
  - (a) the right to life and to exist;
  - (b) the right to be respected;
  - (c) the right to continue their vital cycles and processes free from human disruptions;
  - (d) the right to maintain its identity and integrity as a distinct, self-regulating and interrelated being;
  - (e) the right to water as a source of life;
  - (f) the right to clean air;
  - (g) the right to integral health;

- (h) the right to be free from contamination, pollution and toxic or radioactive waste;
  - (i) the right to not have its genetic structure modified or disrupted in a manner that threatens its integrity or vital and healthy functioning;
  - (j) the right to full and prompt restoration of the violation of the rights recognized in this Declaration caused by human activities;
- (2) Each being has the right to a place and to play its role in Mother Earth for her harmonious functioning.
- (3) Every being has the right to wellbeing and to live free from torture or cruel treatment by human beings.

### **Article 3. Obligations of human beings to Mother Earth**

- (1) Every human being is responsible for respecting and living in harmony with Mother Earth.
- (2) Human beings, all States, and all public and private institutions must:
- (a) act in accordance with the rights and obligations recognized in this Declaration;
  - (b) recognize and promote the full implementation and enforcement of the rights and obligations recognized in this Declaration;
  - (c) promote and participate in learning, analysis, interpretation and communication about how to live in harmony with Mother Earth in accordance with this Declaration;
  - (d) ensure that the pursuit of human wellbeing contributes to the wellbeing of Mother Earth, now and in the future;
  - (e) establish and apply effective norms and laws for the defence, protection and conservation of the rights of Mother Earth;
  - (f) respect, protect, conserve and where necessary, restore the integrity, of the vital ecological cycles, processes and balances of Mother Earth;
  - (g) guarantee that the damages caused by human violations of the inherent rights recognized in this Declaration are rectified and that those responsible are held accountable for restoring the integrity and health of Mother Earth;

- (h) empower human beings and institutions to defend the rights of Mother Earth and of all beings;
- (i) establish precautionary and restrictive measures to prevent human activities from causing species extinction, the destruction of ecosystems or the disruption of ecological cycles;
- (j) guarantee peace and eliminate nuclear, chemical and biological weapons;
- (k) promote and support practices of respect for Mother Earth and all beings, in accordance with their own cultures, traditions and customs;
- (l) promote economic systems that are in harmony with Mother Earth and in accordance with the rights recognized in this Declaration.

#### **Article 4. Definitions**

- (1) The term "being" includes ecosystems, natural communities, species and all other natural entities which exist as part of Mother Earth.
- (2) Nothing in this Declaration restricts the recognition of other inherent rights of all beings or specified beings.