DECLARATION OF IXTLÁN

Meeting in Ixtlán de Juárez, Oaxaca, Mexico, on November 11 and 12, 2017, the participants to the Multi-actor dialogue on Bio cultural diversity and resilience, belonging to different indigenous organizations, communities, organizations of civil society, academic and governmental institutions, as well as students, artists and communicators from Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Bolivia, Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico, Canada and Germany, after discussing and exchanging experiences and reflecting collectively, we present the following:

Recognizing that biological diversity and cultural diversity are interdependent, and that they evolved together, interaction that is made explicit in the concept of biocultural diversity,

Considering that human beings and societies are an integral part of nature, and not separate entities, which is expressed in the notion of socio-ecological system,

Knowing that biocultural diversity is key to the resilience of our present and future socio-ecological systems,

Recognizing that our collective way of life and human and non-human lives are threatened in this era called Anthropocene, characterized by a profound crisis in all aspects of life and manifested in various ways, such as poverty and exclusion of peoples and communities, extinction of species, climate change, and erosion of biocultural diversity,

Recognizing that peace can only be achieved by stopping the cultural violence that we are suffering and that a possible path is the wellbeing as suggested by the indigenous peoples and traditional communities of the world,

Recognizing also the need to adopt ethical values such as solidarity, reciprocity, shared enjoyment and equity in social coexistence,

Considering that the peace we work for calls us to revalue and reuse the knowledge inherited from our ancestors and the collective forms of organization and work as fundamental elements to face these changes, carefully manage our lands and waters and develop productive activities that are respectful of life cycles,

Recognizing furthermore that human rights, and in particular those of Indigenous Peoples, can contribute to peace and good living, and that they should include content and forms of cultural diversity,

Considering that agrobiodiversity and biological diversity in general are of great importance for the satisfaction of diverse human rights: cultural identity, territory, traditionally managed natural resources, food, water, healthy environment and many others,

Assuming the importance of native languages and traditional practices for the reproduction and fulfillment of peoples,

Recognizing that some progress has been made at an international level in the protection of the human rights of Indigenous Peoples and Communities, such as the Convention 169 of the International Labor Organization (ILO), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and its protocol, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, as well as the various General Observations and the reports of the Rapporteurs of the United Nations Organization;
In view of the above, we conclude and present the following:

DECLARATION

FIRST

We are committed to protecting the agrarian, economic, cultural, linguistic and political rights of Indigenous Peoples and communities in the countryside and the cities, including traditional and communal systems of land and water tenure, peasant agriculture, native seeds, food sovereignty, traditional gastronomy, communal forestry, artisanal fishing, tourism in the hands of communities, customary laws (provided they do not contravene human rights), traditional forms of government and sacred places.

SECOND

We will continue making efforts so that the learning processes, inside and outside the academic institutions, are nurtured with the traditional knowledge that we have inherited from previous generations, so that they are linked with concrete actions directed towards the common good, the resilience of the socio-ecological systems and the protection of the territory and the biocultural heritage of the peoples. It is also necessary to position the importance of cultural diversity and the dialogue of knowledge before all groups of society, particularly those dominating economic and political systems.

THIRD

We urge academics, students, educational institutions and civil society organizations to promote horizontal processes of participatory collaboration and research and joint construction of knowledge, based on ethical agreements around shared objectives and applying transdisciplinary and intercultural approaches.

FOURTH

We strive for a greater presence of Indigenous Peoples, traditional and peasant communities in policy-making regarding their territories and ways of life; this implies creating changes in legislation and public policies to move towards more equitable and co-responsible relationships between human beings and between the different countries. Peasant peoples and communities should participate in national and international processes related to biocultural diversity and the protection of socio-ecological systems.

FIFTH

It is up to our governments to respect the Indigenous, Traditional and Peasant communal institutions, preventing or reversing the processes of land, water, biological diversity and associated traditional knowledge privatization for which we claim the full application of the principle of multiculturalism in our States.

SIXTH

We insist on the need for our governments to sign the voluntary Protocol of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).

SEVENTH
We urge our governments to cancel any initiative that puts at risk the resilience of our socio-ecological systems, in particular megaprojects such as hydroelectric dams, toxic mining, hydraulic fracturing and transgenic crops, as well as the wind farms that are implanted without guaranteeing the right to consultation, nor respect the other indigenous peoples’ rights. We demand that the criminalization stops and that the safety of those who rally to defend the territories and human rights of Indigenous Peoples and of communities threatened or affected by said endeavors be guaranteed.

EIGHTH

We also urge them to modify their laws and public policies in order to guarantee Indigenous Peoples, traditional and peasant communities their rights, as well as the conservation and promotion of biocultural heritage.

We subscribe to this declaration,

The participants to the Multi-actor dialogues

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Assembly of Initiatives and Environmental Defense of Veracruz (LAVIDA), Mexico
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