

KUK'A OMAGUA DECLARATION (COCA or ORELLANA)

On behalf of those attending the international workshop on *Ecological Legacies and Ethnotourism: Nexus between Community and Science*, both the members of original communities and tourism operators and the participating national and foreign scientists, after presentations and deliberations for two days (May 19 and 20, 2023) in the tropandean city of Coca, the "gate" to the Amazon, declare:

WHEREAS

- *That the Higher Polytechnic School of Chimborazo (ESPOCH) Orellana Campus, the Pan-American Center for Geographic Studies and Research (CEPEIGE), and the Neotropical Montology Collaboratory of the University of Georgia (UGA) have organized a successful international workshop on **Ecological Legacies and Ethnotourism: Nexus between Community and Science**.*
- *That the participants representing the points of view of Amazonian, national, and foreign universities, and of the original peoples' communities located in the Napo River basin of Western Upper Amazonia, **identified the need to join efforts between scientists and communities**.*
- *That the urgency of finding alternate decolonial models, allowing for transdisciplinary scientific activity, that favors inclusion of ancestral knowledge and ending objectification of local researchers and community scholars as mere informants, which is **imperative in this time of global environmental change**.*
- *That inventories of flora and fauna be complemented with linguistic records of the communities to maintain the lists of species with vernacular names and that new species that are being discovered receive the appropriate binomial nomenclature naming the species with the vernacular territorial name or of the **community that owns that biocultural element**.*
- *That scientific research is segmented by short-term financing, hence when the financing ends, the generated science ends. This hiatus implies the needed activation of museums, herbariums, insectariums, serpentariums, university organizations, and civil society organizations, **supporting long-term scientific activity**.*
- *That the influence of the prevailing religion (i.e., Catholic, Evangelical, etc.) has penetrated ancestral practices and rituals, as a sign of accelerated acculturation tendencies of some groups that assume it to satisfy the visitor curiosity, instead of invigorating shamanism, with local animism and vernacular literacy. In addition, the religious division generated between missionaries of foreign cults **sometimes caused violent crashes in the local communities** (e.g.,*

between the *Enomenga* Waorani in the *Dícaro* community and the *Iromenga* Waorani in the *Toñanpade* community).

- *That the future of tropandean forests in the Andean-Amazonian flanks depends on the sustainability and regeneration of cultural landscapes, considering them from a montological, integrative, and transdisciplinary perspective, for which it is necessary to prioritize geo-ethno-tourism operations over mining exploitation activities. and ecotourism that focus only on the fauna and flora of the Amazon Hylea and not on its custodians, and in many cases its creators of the **domesticated and manufactured “garden jungle” of yesteryears.***

DECLARE

- *To make joint efforts to favor hybridity of Amazonian culture-nature and thus, maintaining the ecological legacy of the original peoples who survived with their traditional knowledge and vernacular descriptors that explain, according to ancestral science and their habitual practices, **the cohabitation of non-human entities with humans.***

- *To advocate for improving the dissemination of traditional and indigenous knowledge in a multicultural way, so that scientists who come to study the jungle put aside elitist feelings and superiority of scientific studies on vernacular literacy, the jungle worldview, and ways of accessing it, to knowledge through **shared methodologies and results**, both in its planning and in its execution and subsequent publication.*

- *To require researchers being able to communicate in the national language (Ecuadorian Spanish) and, preferably, in the local language of native nationalities of these territories (e.g., *a'ingae* –Kofán; *paicoca* –Siona dialect; *sikopai* –Secoya dialect; *waotededo* and *waotidido* - Sabela, Guikita, Tiweno and Aushiri dialects; *Chicham* or *šiwara* - Shwar, Shiwar, Achwar dialects); and *kichwa* -Amazonian (or Eastern) dialect. Whenever possible, have international approval for research on human subjects and sign the ethical code of the International Society for Ethnobiology that requires both prior and informed knowledge and consent of the communities, as well as the equitable distribution of the results of the research, be it **intellectual, academic, professional, or commercial and industrial.***

- *To insist on creating research stations in productive socioecological landscapes in which the communities become custodians of the jungle and administrators of the facilities for long-term research whose financing guarantees continuation of basic and applied research, as well as the monitoring of environmental conditions in socio-environmental aspects of protected cultural landscapes, especially in iconic trees, food supplies, memory reserves, sacred sites, landscape reserves, indigenous territories, literary reserves, or **biocultural reserves and micro-refuges of biodiversity and cultural and linguistic diversity.***

- *To recognize the persistence of knowledge and the will of the people who are in the territory. The country's legal and legislative frameworks must be integrated into the disciplinary curricula of universities so that they have a more authentic interculturality. There must be motivation of*

foreign researchers to expand and facilitate the process of integration of knowledge and the formation of local expert knowledge, be it from grade school to postgraduate degrees, or from the oral history of local scholars who can be **non-western science teachers of researchers who come from abroad**.

- *To demand that Andean-Amazon flank's schools* teach content required by the national curriculum, but in the languages and dialects of the area, with trained presential (face-to-face) instructors who teach *kichwa* of the Amazon –not *kichwa* from the mountains, or who teach radiophonic schools in *kichwa* not only in Shwar– **favoring distance education with online, virtual connections**.

- *To promote the integration of elements of modernity without prejudice* to maintaining the indigenous identity by crafting religious syncretism and strengthening the transmission of ancestral knowledge in a proud revival of interculturality and intergenerational transmission of knowledge from the **elderly and older adults in their non-school special education and vernacular literacy**.

- *To insist on the need for this type of workshops and seminars* that integrate ecological legacies and geoethnotourism to be replicated in many other Amazonian sites, so that the local authorities in charge of managing GADs and government institutions **value and prioritize the integration of communities and scientists**.

RECOMMEND AND COMMIT

- *To promote and demand that the Law of Planning for the Special Circumscription of the Amazon Territory* with respect to gender equality, preferred employment, environmental protection, and wise use of natural resources be observed. Also, that the Fund for Sustainable Development of Amazonia (FDSA) and the Common Fund (FC) coordinated by the Amazonian Technical Secretariat, **serve to augment the collaborative activities of scientific research and ethnotourism** in the Amazonian decentralized, autonomous governments, including administrators, scientists, and community members working on those territories.

- *To prevent economic powers from prevailing over the ecological powers* of the Amazonian cultural landscape by limiting extractives actions (e.g., illegal mining, drilling, and oil exploration activities in protected areas, biopiracy, and abuse of native practices for folklorized tourism purposes, **disguising their authenticity to please ephemeral visitors**.

- *To entering communities with the attitude of peers*, recognizing the collaborative effort between ancestral knowledge and scientific knowledge, and thereby depositing the information and not just extracting it **without local benefit or published record of intellectual authorship** of the research.

- *To confabulate innovation with ancestral practice*, to ponder to the world the beauty of the Amazon generated by the jungle gardeners, the domestication and familiarization of the biota in the **Pan-Amazon ancient and modern cultural landscape and the Andean-Amazon flanks**.
- *To show respect for the ethnic group and the ancestral knowledge* that they still cherish. It is necessary to reclaim and sustain the Amazonian identity, eliminating features that ‘folklorise’ identity markers such as hammocks, necklaces, earrings, ribbons, *chigras*, tattoos of various colors and symmetries that **reflect origin and affiliation instead of a mere ornament** attractive to tourists.
- *To become aware of atrocities of the "conquest"* that must be analyzed not only in their historical but also moral and ethical frameworks. But we must look ahead. We are of original descent and most mestizos and foreigners respect the culture of the jungle, including music, gastronomy, art, and legends. We must weigh the message of our endangered beauties, preventing them from getting lost in the maelstrom of globalization. In doing so, recovering the valuation of characters, geographical landmarks, civic dates of nationalities and **erect monuments to these indicators instead of the "conquerors" or "discoverers"**.
- *To pay for communities’ instruction in their quest to defend their ethnicity* and for financing sustainable and regenerative development of native peoples, since they are a treasured legacy and they do not have access to the available facilities. Therefore, to ask the public powers and the corresponding private, civil groups to then carry out the **diverse, equitable, and inclusive scientific advancement with a pan-Amazonian inspiration**.
- *To eliminate the idea of the community as an "object"* and to integrate it as a "subject" of science with considerations of convergent and integrative montology. To seek that the concept of geoethnotourism has a public policy ordinance. The government and regional development units should benefit from the investment, not as white elephants but as **proactive action-units for the conservation of biocultural heritage**.

Given in the city of Coca, Ecuador, in the auditorium of the Orellana headquarters of ESPOCH campus, on Saturday, May 20th, 2023, on behalf of the workshop participants,

The Organizing Committee,

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