Ancestral Wisdom and COVID-19

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This document contains an innovative proposal for the health of Mother Earth and Biocultural Ecosystems, one which is based on ancestral community wisdom and constant dialogue with Indigenous Peoples in order to have public health policies for indigenous communities during this COVID-19 Pandemic.⁴

For our peoples, health, life and Good Living are a complex interdependent whole that is part of interconnected relational networks, of human communities, social relations and relations with Mother Earth.

Indigenous Peoples have kept an institutional framework and a social fabric that is highly specific to them, in addition to possessing traditional knowledge known as Traditional Ancestral Medicine, which was developed within the framework of their respective cosmovisions. Their Health Systems are an intrinsic part of the Good Living paradigm and are oriented to the care of diverse ecosystems that coexist in balance, in relation to the community territorial context and the coexistence that involves both the relations with the community and with nature. Therefore, this proposal raises the need for Intercultural and Inter-scientific Dialogue, in order to face the COVID-19 pandemic.

Some brief definitions of concepts in the proposal:

1. Good Living. Understanding that "The Earth does not belong to us, we belong to the Earth," therefore, this is about coexisting in harmony and balance among the beings that inhabit Mother Earth.

2. Health of Mother Earth. To take care of her, we have Traditional Ancestral Medicine, which takes care of human beings, plants and animals, even taking care of sacred places that coincide with water sources and places with great biodiversity. Its methodology

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³ Image Source: Own Photography "Pachamama Samaq Jampeq Usta" (Mother Earth the Great Healer)
varies according to each ecological floor and according to each specialty. The spirituality of the healings reconnects us with the force of life that makes the seeds sprout and causes the movement of the stars and the birth of all beings. It is from this way of relating to a living universe that the ancestral doctors, with their ritual practices, can predict the time of rain or drought, favor a good harvest and a healthy life in harmony with the natural cycles.\(^5\)

3. Biocultural Ecosystems Health. Health is built within the land, which is why water sources are sacred, as are the places we inhabit. It is urgent to promote Agroecology, Solidarity Economy and Reciprocity, as part of a model that protects the social coexistence of the community, respecting the natural environment and cultural identity. We consider this a biocultural heritage. We are living territories in dialogue with our environment, we take care of the seeds, the water, the land and the land and our sacred places.

Also important is the constant and permanent promotion of intercultural and inter-scientific dialogues between governments and Indigenous Peoples, as a measure to confront the Covid-19 pandemic, based on the proposals and contributions of indigenous organizations to confront the pandemic.

The expansion of the pandemic in the indigenous territories must be informed and prevented, and this information requires an adequate cultural context as well as appropriate translations of the different messages that are being developed by the member countries. Other measures for the implementation of the proposal are:

- Characterizing the main vulnerabilities of the various Indigenous Peoples and prioritizing their attention.
- Carrying out a massive media campaign through radio, television and social networks, with accurate information, translated into the local indigenous language which is widely disseminated.
- Reinforcing the health fence in communities with voluntary isolation.
- Establishing mechanisms for participation with indigenous peoples in urban areas, involving community health leaders and agents from traditional ancestral medicine, for the prevention and treatment of patients with COVID-19.
- Promoting methods and treatments from local Traditional Ancestral Medicine, within each territory, together with their medicinal plants, ancestral food and rituals for Mother Earth and for the well-being of the community.
- Caring for the sources of healthy and clean water for consumption by the communities, as part of the strategy of prevention and treatment of COVID-19.
- Promoting solidarity and complementarity as a deep ancestral value of Indigenous Peoples.
- Promoting the recovery of community values of coexistence and harmony with Mother Earth.

\(^5\) Climate Change and Traditional Ancient Medicine / ORAS-CONHU Andean Health Agency Convention
Hippolyte Unanue/Vivian Camacho 2020
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