

Cultural Indicators for Food Sovereignty, Food Security and Sustainable Development

The **Cultural Indicators for Food Sovereignty, Food Security and Sustainable Development** were developed by Indigenous Peoples in partnership with the UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) at the *2nd Indigenous Peoples' Global Consultation on the Right to Food and Food Sovereignty* in Bilwi Nicaragua (2006). They offer a practical tool for Indigenous communities to assess current strengths, trends and threats, including the traditional cultural practices, knowledge and relationships related to their traditional food systems, and to develop effective strategies to defend, protect and restore their Food Sovereignty. Training workshops on using the Cultural indicators are carried out by IITC in a number of Indigenous communities.



IITC Cultural Indicators workshop, Chimaltenango, Guatemala, June 2008

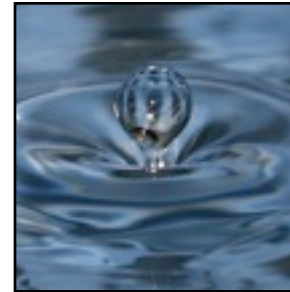


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International Indian Treaty Council

Food Sovereignty and the Rights of Indigenous Peoples



"Our ancestors in some areas have secured our traditional ways and food systems in Treaties. These international agreements were signed for "so long as the sun shines, the river flows and the grass grows."

--- Chief Wilton Littlechild, Ermineskin Cree Nation, Treaty No. 6 Territory, Canada, addressing the United Nations World Food Summit, Rome, November 1996

What is Food Sovereignty?

“**Food sovereignty** is the right of Peoples to define their own policies and strategies for sustainable production, distribution, and consumption of food, with respect for their own cultures and their own systems of managing natural resources and rural areas, and **is considered to be a precondition for Food Security.**”

“The **rights to land, water, and territory, as well as the right to self-determination**, are essential for the full realization of our Food Security and Food Sovereignty.”

--- *The “Declaration of Atitlan”, from the 1st Indigenous Peoples’ Global Consultation on the Right to Food and Food Sovereignty, Guatemala, 2002*

The Right to Food is an Internationally-Recognized Human Right:

“Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself & of his family...including food...” ---*The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*

“...In no case may a people be deprived of its own means of subsistence.” -- *Article 1 in Common, International Covenants on Civil and Political and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*

“...the denial of the Right to Food for Indigenous Peoples not only denies us our physical survival, but also denies us our social organization, our cultures, traditions, languages, spirituality, sovereignty, and total identity; it is a denial of our collective indigenous existence.”

--- The “Declaration of Atitlan”



Photo by Ben Powless

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Affirms many rights that are essential for Food Sovereignty

- Article 3: Right to Self-Determination
- Article 20: Right to be secure in subsistence and development
- Article 24: Right to health and conservation of vital plants and animals
- Article 26: Right to traditional lands, territories and resources
- Article 29: Right to conservation and protection of environment and productive capacity of lands, territories and resources
- Article 31: Right to maintain, control, protect and develop cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and cultural expressions including genetic resources, seeds and medicines
- Article 32: Right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for development including the right to free, prior and informed consent
- Article 37: Treaty Rights

Obstacles to Food Sovereignty and Right to food for Indigenous Peoples include:

- Lack of access to Traditional Lands, Water and Natural Resources
- Imposed development including deforestation, mining, drilling and damming
- Environmental contamination
- “Free Trade Agreements” and food imports
- Introduction of genetically modified food and seeds
- Large-scale industrial agricultural methods
- Loss of language, cultural practices, and ways of transmitting traditional knowledge to new generations
- Impacts of climate change and false “solutions” including bio/agro fuel production