

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS INTO ACCOUNT IN DECISION-MAKING ON LIVING MODIFIED ORGANISMS

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Indigenous Peoples have our own epistemologies, cosmovisions and systems of knowledge. The core basis for our existence is Mother Earth, *Pachamama*, who is a living and sacred being. She has different ecosystems with seen and unseen elements which are interconnected and interrelated. There are harmonious relationships between men and men with Mother Nature based on the respect and reciprocity.

Indigenous Peoples organized activities around the *wata*, year and the solar and lunar calendars. The cycles of life and agriculture have several activities and ceremonies, facts that support the unity and cultural strength of communities. Our time is circular and cyclical. Traditional knowledge is transmitted orally from one generation to the next by elders and women. Indigenous men and women have defined social roles which at the same time are opposite and complementary. We work collectively towards getting our *Sumak Kawsay*. wellbeing.

To Indigenous Peoples each element of the Mother Earth has spirit. Since early childhood we learn how to speak to plants, animals, rivers, stars, mountains, we distinguish the female and male plants observing deeply their shape, texture, odors and colors. We are taught to respect, care and love the beings of Mother Earth and to use only the necessary amount of them. Our ancestors had scientific knowledge on agriculture and management of different ecological niches. This knowledge was and still is based on natural laws and customary law, which means that we follow our ancestral learnings while working with living organisms. “For us it is imperative to respect these organisms in the way how they are...in our heart and mind it is not possible to understand their modification. In any case, organizations, companies, governments, corporations and universities and research institutions that are dealing with these modifications on Indigenous lands, territories and waters should carry out the process of consultation and obtain the Free, Prior and Informed Consent with culturally appropriate tools and methodologies, and have the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples, including women”.

We need to have a clear understanding of the consequences of these modified organisms on human beings and on Mother Earth. In this regard, we also have the right to veto. There are international instruments in support to our rights and the rights of Pachamama, among which are the ILO Convention, UNDRIP, OAS Declaration and so on.