

AGREEMENT OF THE ORGANIZATIONS OF PEOPLES AND NATIONS OF THE AMAZON BASIN FOR COVID-19 PANDEMIC RESPONSE

COORDINATOR OF INDIGENOUS ORGANIZATIONS OF THE AMAZON BASIN (COICA) PAN AMERICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION/WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (PAHO/WHO)

Meeting on 29 May 2020, in light of the impact of COVID-19 on the peoples and nationalities of the Amazon region, the representatives of the national Amazon indigenous organizations Asociación Interétnica de Desarrollo de la Selva Peruana [Inter-ethnic Association for Development of the Peruvian Jungle] (AIDSESP), Confederación de Pueblos Indígenas del Oriente Boliviano [Confederation of Indigenous Peoples of East Bolivia] (CIDOB), Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas de la Amazonía Ecuatoriana [Confederation of Indigenous Nations of the Ecuadoran Amazon] (CONFENIAE), Coordenação das Organizações Indígenas da Amazônia Brasileira [Coordinator of the Indigenous Organizations of the Brazilian Amazon] (COIAB), Organización Nacional de los Pueblos Indígenas de la Amazonía Colombiana [National Organization of Indigenous Peoples of the Colombian Amazon] (OPIAC), and Coordinator of the Indigenous Organizations of the Amazon Basin (COICA); the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO); and the WHO Special Envoy for COVID-19 in Latin America;

WHEREAS:

- For more than 500 years, indigenous populations have contributed to the protection and conservation of their ancestral territories, heart of the Americas and of the world;
- The daily rise in COVID-19 cases and deaths has struck a harsh blow to the indigenous peoples and nations of the Amazon, whose communities are in a critical situation;
- Outbreaks have already been detected among indigenous groups, and the eventual spread of the virus into the territories of uncontacted peoples and those in initial contact exposes these populations to a serious risk of extinction;
- High rates of chronic diseases, such as diabetes and hypertension, increase the risk of contracting severe cases of COVID-19;

- Such conditions as chronic child malnutrition, high maternal mortality rates, malaria, and dengue are compounded by the COVID-19 emergency;
- The indigenous organizations of the Amazon have prepared protocols and are using ancestral medicine to address COVID-19;
- The floods and oil spills that have occurred in recent months in the Amazon deepen the vulnerability of these peoples and nations;
- The Amazon populations' history of difficulty in accessing services, added to the current health emergency, demands a decisive response, coordinated among States, indigenous organizations, agencies of the United Nations system, and other international cooperation partners;
- Indigenous health is a priority for PAHO and the Organization has been providing technical support for these populations through different projects;

THE PARTIES AGREE TO:

- Call upon the international community, United Nations, Organization of American States (OAS), Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO), and all of the institutions working in the Amazon to urgently coordinate actions to facilitate COVID-19 response among the indigenous peoples and nations of the Amazon, with differentiated actions and taking into account their social and cultural situation;
- Support building opportunities for networking among regional, national, and local actors, in close coordination with the indigenous organizations in these areas;
- Promote a mechanism to provide care and assistance to indigenous peoples and nations of the Amazon that includes mechanisms to mobilize resources for its indigenous populations;
- Work jointly and in a coordinated manner to prepare technical documents, protocols, press releases, and contingency plans adapted to the realities of indigenous peoples;
- Hold a regional Forum, at the highest level, to raise awareness of the situation of the indigenous peoples and nations of the Amazon, inviting other agencies of the United Nations system, OAS, International Red Cross, Doctors Without Borders, World Bank, Corporación Andina de Fomento (CAF), United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), ACTO, and other international cooperation organizations active in the Amazon;

- Form a joint technical team involving COICA and PAHO/WHO to implement the points addressed herein and to promote coordinated efforts in border areas;
- Create a platform or repository to document and monitor this process.

AND URGE GOVERNMENTS TO:

- Implement urgently, and in coordination with the indigenous organizations of the Amazon, plans and protocols for COVID-19 response appropriate to the different geographical and cultural contexts and with the participation of indigenous communities, enabling them to support the design of the most appropriate and effective methods to protect themselves and reduce the pandemic's impact on the lives of individuals and communities;
- Coordinate the COVID-19 response protocols of indigenous organizations and those of the governments of countries in the Amazon, to achieve a joint response adapted to the social and cultural situations and specific needs of these localities;
- Set up forums for dialogue on knowledge and coordination with the indigenous organizations of the Amazon—at the regional, national, and local levels—to achieve synergies between traditional medicine and Western medicine;
- Strengthen care provision in the health services of the Amazon with human resources, supplies, and medical devices, including COVID-19 tests and treatments, and vaccines, when these become available;
- Work with special emphasis on peoples in voluntary isolation;
- Develop a risk communication strategy with culturally appropriate materials in the languages of indigenous peoples and nations of the Amazon;
- Emphasize actions in border areas, coordinating efforts between the governments of neighboring countries and indigenous organizations;
- Strengthen the social protection network for the indigenous peoples and nations of the Amazon, enabling effective actions to prevent the disease and reduce its speed of transmission;
- Strengthen programs and strategies addressing other public health problems that affect the indigenous peoples and nations of the Amazon, such as chronic child malnutrition, maternal mortality, malaria, dengue, tuberculosis, and HIV.