ANEXO 10 - STATEMENT OF THE 7TH BIENNIAL CONFERENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL

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IDRC Grant/ Subvention du CRDI:  108653-001-Sustainable Livestock Production, Health, and Environment in the Bolivian Altiplano
THE CALI STATEMENT OF ECOHEALTH 2018
7th BIENNIAL ECOHEALTH CONFERENCE
AND 3rd LATIN AMERICAN MEETING OF PUBLIC HEALTH:
"ENVIRONMENTAL AND HEALTH EQUITY: CONNECTING LOCAL ALTERNATIVES
IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD"

We, researchers of multiple disciplines, educators, students, practitioners, activists and representatives of indigenous and community organizations, providers of hope, knowledge and health in our communities, have come from five continents to the city of Cali, Valle del Cauca, Colombia, where we met from August 14 to 18, 2018, at the 7th Biennial Conference of the International Association of Ecology and Health (IAEH) and the 3rd Latin American Public Health Meeting; and based on our multiple shared experiences, in the unity of talents, spirits and wills in favor of a healthy, free, clean and fair world, we issue the following statement.

CONSIDERING

That our planet and all of its inhabitants, both human and non-human, are subjected to multiple offenses and violence, the consequence of this violence is that the wild ecosystems, the ecological processes essential for the maintenance of life on the planet, water, air, soil and living creatures all face increasing risk of perishing. We’re already suffering the degradation of our intrinsic traits and capabilities, to the point that –by our own hands– entire species are exterminated, forests are cut down, wetlands are dried up, oceans are smothered in waste and the people - whether by disease, deceit, dispossession, marginalization or annihilation - fail to enjoy the full extent of their freedom;

That this planetary condition is expressed in multiple forms, including, among others, global climate change, economic crises, wars, masses of refugees, human catastrophes associated with preventable environmental events and technological accidents, collapse of biological diversity, chronic non-communicable diseases, emerging infections as well as the emergence of multi-resistant virulence to antibiotics and the proliferation of toxic substances in ecosystems, in the water we drink, the air we breathe and in products that we use to feed and groom ourselves;

That in spite of its multiple and complex manifestations, this set of crises and threats responds only to one logic of neoliberal capitalist globalization, which today influences almost every human issue and every earthly process, and which is subordinated to greed, profit and concentration of wealth as an economic yearning, competition over cooperation as a norm of coexistence and the incessant growth of capital as a requirement for the survival of the system;

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1 This statement was prepared by the Latin American Organising Committee of the Conference, informed by the presentations, discussions and processes at EcoHealth 2018, and reviewed by the key contributing presenters and conference advisory committee members.
That, due to the prevailing model of society today, anyone or anything from a human being to a mountain, or a river, or any living being or blade of grass, every bee and even every idea is subjected to continuous acts of underestimation, because we are only recognized some value as resources for exploitation, as merchandise for sale, or as buyers and consumers, thus reducing us to mere profit objects;

That said model, although its validity and globalization are historically very recent, has deep roots in authoritarian and patriarchal world views, adverse to the diversity of human and non-human life, to peaceful coexistence and reciprocity between all beings humans or otherwise; and that, on the contrary, it seeks to subjugate all people, whether by conviction or coercion, to a single profile of human being, isolated and alienated from their community and nature;

That said reduced model of human being, at once consumer and consumed, is propagated as an ideal of "development", through an incessant mass propaganda, disguised as education, communication or entertainment, and through the active marginalization and persecution of different, diverse or critical thought;

That, as a result, girls and boys are discriminated against, blamed and repressed for being girls and boys, young people for being very young, middle-aged people for having reached middle age, elderly people for being old, women for being women, indigenous people for being indigenous, people with darker skin for having darker skin, people whose gender identities do not correspond to the heterosexual canon for having different identities, people whose appearance does not correspond with impossible beauty standards because they are not beautiful enough;

That although the corporate agents of the system are often responsible for producing and marketing the substances that affect us, for promoting massive scale conditions where massive risks are inevitably generated against the health of people, and for denying society the required resources for quality education, preventive health and the disappearance of inequalities, still malnourished people are blamed for being malnourished, sick people for falling ill, drug addicts for their drug addiction, people without education for their lack thereof, poor people for being poor, people who face disabilities for facing disabilities;

That, under our current model, it is deemed correct for all of these people, constituting the vast majority of humanity, to be subjected to ridicule or deemed less deserving of appreciation, affection, respect, care, dignified work, sustenance, love and tenderness throughout the course of their lives;

That health has become a business, as well as food, education and even the provision of clean water, and that in general all the fundamental rights of humanity, which should not
be denied to anyone, are transformed into exclusive privileges, only accessible to those who can pay for them;

That, consequently, the vast majority of human beings have been stripped of control over our learning and our knowledge, over the time and love we give our children, as well as the food we eat and the conditions in which they are produced, sold and consumed, even our social relations and our productive activities. We have lost touch with our own planet in such a way that we can no longer respond to our actions, because it is not possible to choose sensibly when the dominant offer (of materials as well as ideas) is only one and all encompassing, so that - strictly speaking - the range of personal options is closed, resulting in a deep civilizational crisis;

That, human affairs can not be and never have been only human, because human health and well-being depend completely on the health of the Earth. And the Earth has gone ill;

That it is of the greatest relevance and of great symbolic value that we have met in Colombia, a mega-diverse, multicultural country of immense beauty, which - although subject to extreme violence - fights to find the sun and the hope of a just, healthy and peaceful coexistence every day.

That in spite of the overwhelming wake of destruction that surrounds us, we have not lost our joy, our solidarity, or our hope.

WE DECLARE

1. That human beings must regain control over their own lives and get rid of the technocratic mirage according to which we can control this planet, our destinies and the entire Universe, because it is that mirage that has taken us to this precipice.

2. That regaining control over our own lives, our health, as well as restoring the balance to our ecological home, taking back control over what we eat, what we consume, what we create and how we educate and learn, far from being an individual or large-scale undertaking, can only occur within the communities that are physically and socially close to each other, where the social fabric finds sustenance.

3. That the productive use of land and natural resources must respond to the real needs of our shared, biological and social prosperity, so that ecosystems are no longer exploited, destroyed or contaminated all for the sole purpose of making money.

4. That, in that sense, we must promote the survival and well-being of traditional communities, small agricultural producers, agroecological innovators, and - in the same movement - repel land grabbing, proliferation of the agroindustrial monocultures and the obstacles that responsible small producers find when trying to exchange their products at a fair price in manipulated markets.
5. That sustainable and healthy food is a universal right, and that consequently there is no ethical basis for the promotion and commercialization of edible products laden with excessive nutrients or completely devoid of nutrients and contaminated with preservatives, dyes, artificial flavors and others; all for the sole purpose of being more attractive to the consumer or facilitating transport and storage, so that they can be marketed in large quantities and at great distances. These products already prevail in the diet of millions of people, and have been associated with the global epidemic of chronic noncommunicable diseases such as obesity and diabetes.

6. That, in the same sense, the agro-industrial production of animals and vegetables in large intensive production farms and in monocultures has no ethical basis, nor agricultural production based on the pursuit of agricultural diversity, the application of biocides and concentrated fertilizers excessive, and the administration of hormones, antibiotics and other substances adverse to human health. All of these products associated with innumerable acute and massive poisonings, especially among field workers and their families; as well as the concentration of physiologically harmful substances among consumers, especially among the poor.

7. That it is highly desirable to continue and promote alliances between academic communities dedicated to the specialized production of knowledge, be that local communities, traditional peoples or social movements, because in their midst valuable knowledge to rescue our contact with humanity and with the earth is also cultivated, preserved and produced. This meeting, however, requires researchers and academic and scientific staff with an ethical commitment to those allies, contrary to privatization and the selfish use of knowledge shared or obtained jointly.

8. That it is imperative and urgent to transform the ethical, ecological, economic and political foundations of the global society towards versions of human good living based on a longing for shared well-being and the joint health of human beings and nature; inspired by principles of equity, reciprocity and fraternity between human and non-human beings on the planet. No right must become a commodity.

9. That to continue, deepen and disseminate the countless initiatives compatible with humanity and with the earth in an effective and coherent way, which thousands of people already put into practice around the world, we suggest that the guiding principles on which the practice of Ecohealth can be useful and helpful:

- Ecological equity and sustainability as purposes;
- Systemic thinking as a world view;
- Transdisciplinarity and participation as ethical and epistemological choices;
- Practice as the principle and purpose of obtaining knowledge.
FINALLY

We wish to highlight and vindicate the work and courage of the defenders of human health and of the health of our Mother Earth. Never have defenders of justice and nature been at greater risk, since it is no longer enough to marginalize or repress them, but now they are being murdered in a generalized manner. And yet, without them, all hope for humanity will have been lost. As far as we are concerned, we put ourselves at the service of the most damaged and vulnerable people and ecosystems, of those most in need, of those who, despite everything, still continue their struggle. Because, if you get your numbers right, they are the immeasurable majority.

Cali, August 2018