

Declaration of Lima

On the 18th, 19th and 20th of July 2005, civil society organizations from diverse countries in South America and Europe, as well as the United States met in Lima, Peru to assess the current status of the South American Regional Infrastructure Initiative (IIRSA) and to develop common strategies regarding the initiative's most controversial projects.

IIRSA was launched in the year 2000, in Brasilia, Brazil, by the twelve South American presidents with the stated objective of developing the region's transportation, energy, and telecommunications sectors. From the beginning, the initiative has had the formal support of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the Andean Development Corporation (CAF), and the La Plata Basin Development Fund (Fonplata). Besides these institutions, the National Bank for Economic and Social Development (BNDES), a Brazilian public bank, also considers the initiative a priority, and is earmarking significant resources for projects which are part of IIRSA.

Following our analysis of IIRSA's objectives and implications, the organizations present in Lima wish to emphasize the following:

Integration is a fundamental theme in the economic, social, and cultural development of our peoples. Nevertheless, we believe that a process of this magnitude and importance should begin with an understanding of the problems that plague our continent, through the more active participation of its citizens, especially with regards to choosing the type of development that we want.

We agree with the need to develop and unite our peoples, but we find in IIRSA elements that make us doubtful of this initiative for the following reasons:

- The type of development being proposed is of questionable sustainability. For example, there is the threat that some of IIRSA's projects will promote the advance of the agribusiness frontier, thereby accelerating the destruction of the Amazon rainforest
- There is no policy for transparency in the proposed integration process, and there has been practically no dialogue with civil society in the different countries, so that their demands and suggestions may be heard.
- Many of IIRSA's 390 infrastructure projects are conspicuously located in areas of great natural wealth and high biological and cultural diversity, and rather than integrating our peoples, will adversely affect them by impacting the ecosystems on which their survival depends, as well as, indirectly, the survival of all humanity.
- A great part of these projects have no economic, social and environmental feasibility studies. There also should be prior debate about what projects are necessary. For example, some of the proposed road

projects are unnecessary and could instead be replaced by other transport alternatives that are more sustainable, such as railways.

- Projects such as the Madeira-Mamore-Beni-Madre de Dios Hydroelectric-Industrial Waterway Complex (Directly impacting Brazil, Bolivia, and Peru) could cause the expulsion of thousands of families from their territories, and the destruction of millions of hectares of the Amazon with serious negative impacts on biodiversity. We are aware that this mega-project is being pushed forward in a process that does not adequately consider the cumulative and interactive impacts of its components and associated projects, which are also part of IIRSA.
- The bi-national hydroelectric Project Garaby-Roncador (Uruguay River between Argentina and Brazil) will generate up to 2,400 MW, but will also cause irreversible social and environmental impacts in the region. This, too, is the case with the Paraguay-Paraná Industrial Waterway (Hidrovia), which will affect ecosystems of global importance, such as the Pantanal and other wetlands of the Paraguay-Paraná system.

In the face of these threats, and in light of a shared analysis, the IIRSA Articulation Group was created, with the objective of: *Unmasking and halting the IIRSA initiative in the way it is currently being implemented, thus contributing to the political and social construction of a critical consciousness concerning IIRSA, and building society's capacity for intervention, and to generate alternative sustainable processes in order to achieve another possible form of integration.*

For these reasons, our organizations propose a broad set of common actions including information sharing and dissemination, and capacity building in order to gather, organize, analyze, and share information, experiences, and knowledge regarding the projects and policies of IIRSA, in this way promoting informed intervention by the indigenous and non-indigenous peoples of South American civil society.

We support South American integration within a concept that respects our peoples, their cultures, and the environment, and that at the same time promotes locally supported development. A priority should be placed on repairing infrastructure that is already in place, before new large-scale projects are implemented.

We reiterate that government actions should support truly sustainable development and should seek to improve the living conditions of the populations living in those ecosystems, which for centuries have conserved and managed their natural resources in a sustainable manner.

Our territories, with their rivers and forests, are a vital part of the complexity of life on our planet, which is being profoundly threatened by the large dams, industrial waterways, and inter-oceanic corridors that are part of IIRSA.

A different form of integration is possible, but only through a broad, informed debate, with the full participation of all of our peoples.

Signatories