

# DECLARATION



February 20, 2026.  
Montes de María, Colombia.

The 12th Youth exchange of the International Youth Network in Community Agroecology (RIAC-joven), took place in the territory of Montes de María, Colombia 14-21 of February 2026. We—youth from the RIAC and allied youth networks in agroecology represent diverse countries, cultures, territories, Indigenous nations, and Afro-descendant communities—have gathered to exchange ideas and formulate proposals regarding the role of agroecology in achieving food sovereignty, grounded in the worldviews of our many distinct peoples and communities.

Representatives of various cultures participated, sharing our knowledge, practices, and work experiences—particularly those intertwined with ancestral wisdom and agroecological methods—while also engaging in debates concerning the challenges currently facing our communities. Within these discussions, we addressed topics ranging from public policy and community resilience to the preservation of traditional knowledge. All of this was undertaken with the aim of strengthening and safeguarding our decision-making processes, thereby enabling us to foster solidarity economies, advance agroecology, cultivate youth leadership, ensure food sovereignty, and defend our territories.

Each community we visited in the Montes de María region—through their traditional knowledge, songs, dances, art, and handicrafts—shared their stories of resistance, struggle, and deep-seated sentiments. These shared moments serve as a powerful medium for conveying the lived experiences of our peoples. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to every community we visited for opening the doors to their homes, their wisdom, and their agroecological practices.

It is no secret that violence is being perpetrated by the owners of capital—and the governments that serve them—against our campesino, Indigenous, migrant, and Afro-descendant communities. We have not come to ask for permission to exist; rather, we have come to demand respect to our civilizations—civilizations that have nourished the world while simultaneously acting as stewards of the Earth. We, the youth of Indigenous nations, are not products of external development projects; we are the inheritors of a millennia-old cultural science. While academia today attempts to reduce this legacy to the mere concept of "agroecology," for us, it represents nothing less than the continued reproduction of life itself.



We are weary of researchers who descend upon our communities solely to extract our knowledge for use in their academic theses and laboratories, without ever giving anything back to Mother Earth. We hereby declare that our youth are taking the lead in harnessing our own indigenous technologies—ranging from bio-cultural mapping to climate monitoring—in order to safeguard our precious biodiversity.



## We demand:

- An end to all forms of persecution and violence against migrants, Indigenous peoples, and campesinos throughout the Americas, as they constitute the pillars of global food sovereignty.
- We issue an urgent call for societal rationality—urging us to envision ourselves as collective projects of humanity and to collectively overcome every form of adversity and conflict within our environment.
- We call upon states and governments to implement public policies—developed in conjunction with their peoples—aimed at repairing past harms and steering society toward a path of “Good Living” (\*Buen Vivir\*), in balance with nature and our fellow human beings.
- An immediate halt to land grabbing, industrial agriculture, mining, and patent laws that seek to privatize the gifts that nature provides to us freely.
- Legal security regarding our communal territories, and agrarian reform for all campesinos—men and women alike—as the only genuine means of safeguarding ancestral, campesino-led agroecology for future generations.
- That international climate funds reach communities and their youth directly, thereby eliminating the bureaucratic intermediaries—namely, NGOs—that fail to grasp the realities of our lives.



# A Call to Our Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and Campesino Peoples:



In the face of the threats posed by empires seeking to subjugate all things and all people—and confronted by the tentacles of transnational corporations that systematically destroy nature through their industries, monocultures, and extractivist projects—we call for the construction of a common front to globalize the defense of life, while respecting the myriad cultural expressions of the peoples of the Americas and the world.

In these times—and within this context of violence, war, and persecution waged to dismantle Indigenous and campesino identities—we, the youth of the RIAC, issue a call to wear our traditional attire with pride, to speak our native languages, and to cultivate the land without poisoning it or one another. We call upon you to honor the memory of our ancestors and to share with the world a message of hope and life—a life lived in deep connection and reciprocity with the land, nature, and the planet we inhabit. For us, planting our native crops is an act of rebellion against a global food system that sickens and impoverishes us. Our message to the world is that our agroecology is not merely an alternative technique; it is a political proposition for sovereignty. We do not wish to be part of a green economy that commodifies nature; rather, we seek to strengthen our own economies—those based on reciprocity and barter.

**Our call to action for the youth of the Americas:  
We urge our Indigenous, campesino, and  
Afro-descendant brothers and sisters across the entire  
continent to decolonize their minds. Do not seek  
validation in urban centers or in universities that disdain  
rural regions. Look toward your roots. The answer to the  
climate crisis does not lie in a laboratory in the North; it  
lies in the hands of those who sow  
in the mountains.**





# Our Challenges and Commitments:

- Identifying and documenting native seeds for their conservation and reproduction within every community, in order to coordinate and establish the first native seed house of the Americas.
- Strengthening schools dedicated to community-based campesino knowledge.
- Putting our ancestral wisdom into practice and—as youth—remaining rooted in the fields.
- Regenerating the soils and territories destroyed by the Green Revolution.
- Let us continue to pursue our development from within our communities—as human beings and as sons and daughters of Mother Earth—while remaining vigilant regarding artificial intelligence, which seeks to replace our histories, songs, and wisdom; we recognize technology controlled by elites as a threat to our future. True intelligence is biological, not artificial.

**“for life, for our seeds,  
and for the territory.”**



**SEMILLAS DEL BUEN VIVIR**

