

STATEMENT OF FORTALEZA

August 30th – September 4th, 2004

Delegates from the grass-root community organizations, national coordinator units and non governmental organizations of Latin-America, North-America and Europe, that attended the II General Assembly of Redmanglar Internacional, address the international community to state the following:

1. **We reaffirm** all the issues contended in the Choluteca Statement from 2001.
2. **We reiterate** that, despite the enormous efforts from our communities to bring to an end the destruction of the costal ecosystems, this has not stopped rather it has grown as well as the systematic violation of the human rights of our communities.
3. In particular, the activity of shrimp aquaculture –although it has demonstrated a history of social and environmental destruction– continues its relentless and impunity expansion.
4. **We denounce** that our countries' legislation has been revised to allow the expansion of the destructive activities over new coastal ecosystems. **We reject** any modification to our legal systems with the aim to diminish the protection and allow the appropriation of the marine and coastal zones and their influence areas.
5. The International treaties of free commerce (TLC, ALCA, NAFTA, ...) and their associated plans and mega-projects (such as Plan Puebla Panama, Plan Colombia or Polo Siderurgico de Maranhao) comprise the sovereignty and the autodetermination of our people and threat to seize our legal systems into the private interests of international and national investors.
6. International Financial Institutions (World Bank, International Monetary Fund, BCIE, IDB, ...) that have actively participated in the achievement of these international strategies, have played –and are still playing– a determinant role, in the expansion of the shrimp culture and other impacting activities, such as harbour building, hydrocarbons extraction and construction of tourism infrastructure, among others, over our marine and coastal zones.
7. **We denounce** that after decades in which our economies have been engaged towards the production of export commodities (such as shrimp aquaculture), our communities are poorer. We demand politics that satisfy the local requirements which shall be sustainable in the long term.
8. **We affirm** that the community ecotourism has a good potential, if it is managed directly by the community and respond to their own interests turning into an economic alternative together with other ancestral activities.
9. **We denounce**, however, that in the name of "ecotourism", activities of great impact have developed. These activities don't cover the needs of our people, their quality of life or the health of the ecosystems.
10. **We denounce**, that ancestral activities are being substituted by new economic activities imposed by our governments as an alternative to the actual financial crisis. These alternatives still concentrate richness in few people and diminish the quality of live of the

great majority of the local population. **We request** the elaboration of politics that will strengthen the communities' ancestral productive activities in our coastal zones. These politics shall guarantee sovereignty and citizen rights.

11. **We note** that a great deal of the research and management activities in our ecosystem is still directed to satisfy needs that are in opposition to our communities. These are setting bases for the destruction of the livelihoods and the culture of our communities, through the expansion of destructive and unsustainable activities.
12. **We express** our concern for the increase of the shrimp ponds that are obtaining "organic" certifications and ratify, as General Assembly, the Declaration on Certification approved in the past meeting of Redmanglar's Council.
13. **We express** our concern for the increase in the consumption of shrimps in the Northern countries, which is encouraging the expansion of the industry, as well as we express our concern about the absence of information for the consumers about the criminal impacts of this industry.
14. **We state** the urgency to build bridges and to work together with international networks, universities and institutions that are concerned about the defense of the marine and coastal ecosystems in other regions that are suffering the same problems resulting of this destructive development pattern.
15. **We reiterate** our disposition and determination to resist the privatizing and destruction processes of the natural resources in the marine and coastal zones of our countries.
16. **We declare** the 26th of July as the national and international day of the mangroves. The local communities will commemorate this day annually with activities in defense of the coastal ecosystems.

Finally we demand:

1. **A global and immediate moratorium to the expansion of shrimp farming.**
2. **We claim, furthermore, urgent politics that can guarantee that the leaders of these destructions (International Financial Institutions, Governments, States and Industries) will recover the ecosystems that predatory industries have destroyed during the last decades.**
3. **We urge the national governments to abstain from ratifying the international free trade treaties promoted by the United States of America and the international financing organisms, their plans and associated mega-projects, since those seriously threat the sovereignty of our people, the livelihoods of the local communities and the natural environment.**