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## [The patenting of Ayahuasca: IAF breaks with COICA](#)

### **MESSAGE FROM COICA**

Dear brothers and friends:

Many thanks to all for the dozens of expressions of solidarity that we have received, especially those from the United States. The day before yesterday we received a new letter from the IAF that, as you can read, ratifies to terminate and break all relations with COICA and their organizations. We have also received the view of the members from the North American embassy in Ecuador with the same objective of OUR RETRACTION OF THE RESOLUTION OF THE CONGRESS, not only of the assumed threats against Miller that do not appear in that resolution. It is evident their interest is that we abandon our campaign against the patenting of Ayahuasca.

We are continuing with this campaign and would ask that you send letters to:

Sirs  
George Evans, President of the Inter-American Foundation  
Adolfo Franco, Vice-President

Many thanks!

### **LETTER FROM IAF TO COICA**

Inter-American Foundation, an independant Agency of the US Government

March 8th, 1998.

Sirs,  
Antonio Jacanamijoy, General Coordinator  
José Luis Jimbiquiti, Economic Coordinator  
The Coordinating Body for Indigenous Organizations of the Amazon Basin  
Joaquín Pinto 240 y Reina Victoria  
Quito, Ecuador

Of our consideration:

We acknowledge receipt of your letter on the 3rd of March 1998 in response to our letter on the 23rd of February 1998. We ratify the position of the resolution adopted by the Coordinating Body for Indigenous Organizations of the Amazon Basin (COICA) in May of 1996. The stated resolution declared Mr. Loren Miller, a citizen of the United States, "an enemy of indigenous peoples in the Amazon Basin" and prohibited his entrance into any indigenous territory of the Amazon Basin. This resolution also declared that COICA "is not responsible for the consequences of the physical security of Mr. Miller and the officials of his company if they enter into indigenous territory of the Amazon

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Basin."

By means of the present, we also reaffirm the declarations made by Mr. Antonio Jacanamijoy and Mr. Ramón Torres in Quito, Ecuador, on the 3rd of February 1998 to Mr. Adolf Franco and Mr. Robert Shikiar about the "inappropriate", "excessive" and threat declaration of COICA against Mr. Miller.

As explained by the officials of the Inter-American Foundation various times during the meeting with you in Quito the 3rd of February 1998, the Inter-American Foundation does not represent the private interests of Mr. Miller in relation to his United States patent for the development and commercialization of the plant Ayahuasca.

The policy of the Inter-American Foundation is, and always has been, to condemn threats and excessive measures. To remain clear, the Inter-American Foundation has based its decisions exclusively on this case as a consequence of excessive measures and inappropriate conduct of organizations receiving donations from the Inter-American Foundation. We reiterate that the Inter-American Foundation does not have an opinion about the claims of Mr. Miller or COICA on the events that provided the patent to commercialize the medicinal use of the plant Ayahuasca.

For your better information, the Inter-American Foundation, an organization of the United States Government of North America, that has contributed to COICA and their affiliated organizations in excess of US\$1,115,025, does not consider that their concern for the inappropriate resolutions of COICA constitute "interference" within the internal matters of receiving organizations. To the contrary, the obligation of the Inter-American Foundation is to promote legitimate processes accepted universally by civil society. Therefore, the resolutions adopted by COICA in May 1996 at Georgetown, Guyana, are reprehensible and unacceptable and are completely rejected by the Inter-American Foundation.

The Inter-American Foundation will not have any financial relation, nor "solidarity" with COICA or any other organization that maintains as legitimate political resolutions those that were adopted at Georgetown, Guyana, in May 1996. We ratify and exposed this in our letter of the 20th of February 1998, that the Inter-American Foundation considers the resolution adopted by COICA in respect to Mr. Miller as a threat against the security and well-being of Mr. Miller and officials of his company and that the same is completely contrary to the values of the Inter-American Foundation and the Government of the United States of North America.

The position of our institution has remained clear and, consequently, the Inter-American Foundation gives termination to any relation with COICA and their affiliates that subscribe to the threat declarations of COICA.

Without other particulars,  
George A. Evans Adolfo A. Franco  
President Primer Vice-President and  
Legal Advisor

## **RESPONSE FROM COICA TO IAF**

Sirs,  
George Evans, President  
Adolfo Franco, Vice-President  
Inter-American Foundation

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Sirs:

The drastic resolution adopted by the Inter-American Foundation to break relations with COICA and their member organizations does no more than confirm our suspicions that your organization unconditionally defends the economic interests of Mr. Miller (and therefore the prevailing systems of intellectual property), without listening to our reasons and against the opinion of many north american citizens.

Now knowing the double face of the IAF, it is our greatest pride to make this known, in spite of the pressures that come to be exercised on our organization, we will follow ahead with our autonomous policy in defense of our rights as we have always done.

You know sirs that the dignity of our peoples is highly valued, much more than your US\$1,115,025.

Antonio Jacanamijoy  
General Coordinator

Washington Bolivar  
Environmental Coordinator

The Coalition for Amazonian Peoples and Their Environment  
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USA