



*United Nations Decade on  
Biodiversity  
2011 - 2020*



"The Billion Tree Campaign is delighted to partner with Yachay Wasi. This initiative will assist in conserving the health of vast fresh water lakes which support communities and wildlife alike. The economic and environmental imperative to restore lost and damaged ecosystems from forests and freshwater to mangroves and wetlands can no longer be ignored if we want growth through job generation and poverty alleviation, all of which are so needed to deliver sustainability in the 21st century."

Achim Steiner, United Nations Under-Secretary-General,  
and Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

**Sacred Sites:  
Biodiversity and Andean Spirituality**

*Focus: Climate Change*

25 thru 29 April 2011

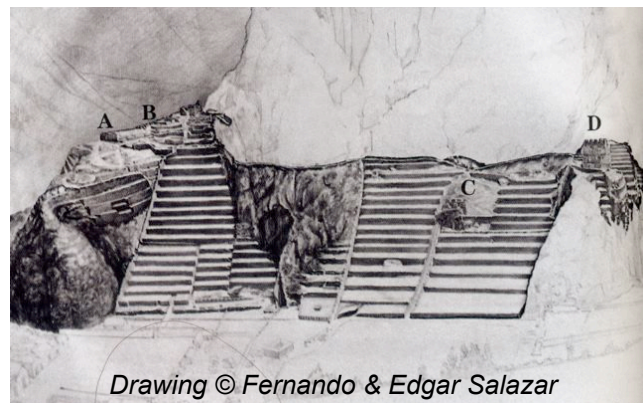
Quechua speaking community of Huilloc  
District of Ollantaytambo, Province of Urubamba  
Department of Cuzco, Peru  
A Conference Organized by Yachay Wasi



**This Third local Conference on SACRED SITES:  
BIODIVERSITY AND ANDEAN SPIRITUALITY is  
dedicated to the Cargadores del Camino Inka, the Porters of  
the Inka Trail.**

Huilloc is located at one half hour drive from the archeological village of Ollantaytambo at an altitude of 2,500 meters (8,202 feet). Conference will be in *Runasimi* (Quechua) and Spanish.

**Ollantaytambo**, named for a local rebellious chieftain Ollanta who had a forbidden love for one daughter of Inka Pachakutic, is the only town in Peru remaining as the Inkas laid it with its street plan in the trapezoid shape, favorite of Inka architecture. Terraces in Ollantaytambo are aligned in such a way that they form shapes of animals, such as the llama. Ollantay men, young and old, wear characteristic white hats and orange/red ponchos.



*Drawing © Fernando & Edgar Salazar*

*Photos © Luis Delgado Hurtado*

## **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE:**

The first local Conference focusing on Sacred Sites: Biodiversity and Andean Spirituality organized by Yachay Wasi took place in the Andean village of Acopia, Province of Acomayo, Dept of Cuzco, Peru in April 2009.

This local Conference aimed to reinforce the importance of Indigenous Sacred sites, symbolic representations of the harmony of spirituality and biodiversity, and their relevance to today's society dilemmas such as climate change and loss of biodiversity.

It also informed remote Quechua speaking Andean communities of the work of the United Nations on their behalf, including the 2007 adoption by the UN General Assembly of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Attending Indigenous representatives from remote Andean villages requested follow-up conferences to be held in their respective villages.

During the International Year of Biodiversity, the second local Conference on Sacred Sites: Biodiversity and Andean Spirituality organized by Yachay Wasi took place in the Andean village of Raqchi, Province of Canchis, Dept of Cuzco, Peru from 9 thru 11 August 2010.

In addition to the issues discussed in 2009, the August 9 International Day of World's Indigenous Peoples was commemorated with a sacred ceremony on the first day of the Conference.

Ongoing Yachay Wasi Water and Sanitation project and Campaign of Planting native trees in Circuit of Four Lakes were discussed. These 2 projects earned a Quote from Mr. Achim Steiner, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme on July 2010 (see First page)

Also in 2010, Yachay Wasi collaborated with the United Nations Environment Programme to organize a side event during the 9<sup>th</sup> session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues at UN Hqrs in NYC.

Event, which reported on Yachay Wasi 2009 Sacred Sites Conference in Acopia, Peru with a DVD showing and a panel, was hosted by UNEP and opened by UNEP NY Office Director.

As an outcome of this side event, the President of Yachay Wasi was invited and funded by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Trust Fund to speak at the Conference on Biological and Cultural Diversity in Montreal, Canada on 8 June 2010. This in turn prompted an invitation and funding by CBD Trust Fund to attend the 2-weeks COP-10 in Nagoya, Japan where he spoke at a Side event on October 25, 2010. These 2 events were organized by CBD and UNESCO.

**The 2011 Conference will focus on Climate Change, but as it is during the Year of the Centennial of Professor Hiram Bingham encounter of Machu Picchu, it will also honor the Porters of the Inka Trail to Machu Picchu. Traditionally, they are from Ollantaytambo, carrying heavy loads for international tourists with small pay. The concept of Sustainable Tourism, introduced by the UN Commission on Sustainable Development 7th Session in 1999, will be discussed.**

**These Conferences involve remote High Andean Quechua speaking communities in the work done on their behalf by the United Nations, including information and access to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, giving them an opportunity to voice their concerns on issues which affect them.**

Yachay Wasi is a Non-Governmental Organization in Consultative Status with the UN Economic and Social Council (Roster 2001, Reclassified Special 2008), associated with the UN Department of Public Information (1997) and in Operational Relations with UNESCO (2007).

Yachay Wasi (Quechua: House of Learning) is based in New York, USA and in Cuzco, Peru.

*Organizer: Luis Delgado Hurtado, President, Yachay Wasi, in Cuzco, Peru  
Contact: Marie-Danielle Samuel, Main Rep. to UN, at [yachaywasi@nyc.rr.com](mailto:yachaywasi@nyc.rr.com)*

## **RELATED PAST EVENTS BY YACHAY WASI:**

22 April 2010: Panel Discussion entitled: “*During the INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF BIODIVERSITY: Biodiversity and Spirituality in the High Andes*”, hosted by UN Environment Programme at UN Hqrs, with the participation of a UNEP NY Office Director.

9 thru 11 August 2010: Second Local Conference entitled *During the International Year of Biodiversity: Sacred Sites: Biodiversity and Andean Spirituality* in the Andean village of Raqchi, Province of Canchis, Dept of Cuzco, Peru, organized by Yachay Wasi

22 May 2009: Panel Discussion entitled “Indigenous Sacred Sites: Biodiversity and Spirituality”, hosted by UN Environment Programme at UN Hqrs, with the participation of a UNEP officer and Indigenous representatives.

5 – 11 April 2009: First Local Conference entitled **SACRED SITES: BIODIVERSITY AND ANDEAN SPIRITUALITY** in the Andean village of Acopia, province of Acomayo, Department of Cuzco, Peru, organized by Yachay Wasi.

19 May 2006: Panel Discussion entitled “Cultural Heritage and Sacred Sites: World Heritage from an Indigenous perspective”, hosted by UN Environment Programme at UN Hqrs, with the participation of Indigenous representatives, a member of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and an officer of the Secretariat for the Convention on Biodiversity.

5 - 9 November 2003: Second “Encounter of Indigenous communities in the High Andes and Amazon” in the Andean village of Mosoqllacta, Peru. Main speaker for the event was Mr. Ole Henrik Magga, Sami from Norway, Chair of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

15 May 2002: Panel Discussion entitled “Cultural Heritage and Sacred Sites: World Heritage from an Indigenous perspective” at New York University School of Law, with the participation of Indigenous representatives and officers of UNESCO NY office and World Heritage Centre, OHCHR and the Secretariat for the Convention on Biodiversity.

17-21 June 2001: First Encounter of Indigenous Communities in the High Andes in the Andean village of Acopia near Cuzco in collaboration with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights which sent a representative.

During this First Encounter, Yachay Wasi faxed a letter signed by Andean participants to UNESCO World Heritage Centre protesting the September 2000 chipping of the *Intiwatana* (sundial) by a falling crane during the filming of a beer commercial in Machu Picchu. As a result, Yachay Wasi was invited to participate in the UNESCO WHIPCOE Workshop in Winnipeg, Canada (5 - 8 November 2001)

Prompted by a NY Times article May 8, 1996 Archeologists in Peru oppose loan of Inca Mummy to USA announcing the May 21- June 19, 1996 exhibit of a 500 years old Inca young girl’s remains at Washington DC headquarters of National Geographic Society, Yachay Wasi started its Inka Challenge Campaign with a petition against the exhibit and a media campaign. This continued during other USA exhibits featuring pre-Columbian human remains such as the 1998 Florida Museum exhibit.