

Rio Branco, Brazil, to be transformed into the global epicenter of ayahuasca culture and debate for 2016 World Ayahuasca Conference

From October 17-22, more than 100 international expert speakers and 60 Amazonian indigenous participants representing more than 17 indigenous cultures, will gather in Rio Branco, Brazil, for the second World Ayahuasca Conference. The event will celebrate ayahuasca culture and be host to dialogues on some of the most pressing issues related to the globalization of this traditional plant medicine, from the impacts of ayahuasca tourism on local communities, to ecological sustainability and the ways in which traditional knowledge and science can work together.

The event is being organized by the ICEERS Foundation, a non-profit, charitable, NGO with ECOSOC (United Nations) consultative status, that focuses on the study of traditional psychoactive plants and the preservation of associated rituals. The first World Ayahuasca Conference was held in Ibiza, Spain, in 2014. The state of Acre is one of the places in the world with the greatest diversity exists regarding the ritual use of ayahuasca, which is why the region has been chosen to celebrate the II World Ayahuasca Conference.

This 6-day conference, hosted at the University of Rio Branco, will transform the city into the global epicentre of ayahuasca – creating space for debates, interaction and the exchange of knowledge among hundreds of participants from around the world. This unique event will bring together leaders of ayahuasca communities and religions, drug policy and legal experts, shamans, healers, conservationists, anthropologists, physicians, psychologists, musicians, and artists.

“The goal of the conference is to add momentum to the struggle for the recognition of ayahuasca and its ritual practices as a cultural heritage to be protected, not exploited, and more specifically, to honour traditional cultures and the tremendous legacy they have contributed to humanity,” said Ben De Loenen, ICEERS founder and Executive Director. “As more and more people from around the world participate in ayahuasca ceremonies for healing, self-exploration and personal development, it is necessary to address the challenges that arise.”

Panel presentations will cover a diversity of topics, including on policy and sustainability, social sciences, religion, science and Indigenous knowledge. Two parallel tracks, one academic and one community, will be held in the main hall. Notable presenters include internationally recognized ayahuasca experts Dennis McKenna, Glenn Shepard, Jonathan Ott, Edward MacRae and Jacques Mabit, and traditional leaders Siã Kaxinawá and Biraci Brasil, as well as religious leaders Edson Lodi and Ana Maria De Lima Souza.

In addition to discussions and presentations, the conference will be the site of the first ever ayahuasca film festival, at which more than 30 films and documentaries will be screened and introduced by special guests, such as Ciro Guerra, director of the award-winning *Embrace of the Serpent*.

The event is co-organized by the ICEERS Foundation and various organizations within the State of Acre: the Federal University of Acre, the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Culture, the Offices of the Governor and the Federal Senator, Câmara Temática de Culturas

Ayahuasqueras, la Asesoría de Asuntos Indígenas and other organizations of indigenous representatives (SITOAKORE, OPIARA).

Event details:

Dates: October 17-22, 2016

Location: Federal University of Acre (UFAC), Rio Branco.

Event website: <http://www.ayaconference.com>

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