



## Overview of Hilaria Supa's Life and Career

Hilaria Supa Huamán is an influential Peruvian activist and a member of the Quechua indigenous community who dedicates herself to the protection of the environment and the promotion of women's rights throughout the country and in the international arena. She is an accomplished individual with a powerful voice and a unique perspective. Despite an inconceivable string of impediments—her birth into an impoverished, indigenous family of plantation laborers, the death of her family members and caretakers during childhood, and her economic necessity, which prevented her from receiving formal education, among others-- Hilaria has triumphed against all odds to become a prominent leader in her regional and national community, as well as an internationally renowned author.

### Lifelong Leadership

In the 1960s, after the death of her husband, Hilaria began her career as an activist as President of the Micaela Bastidas Committee, which took part in the fight for indigenous land rights resulting in nationwide agricultural reforms. She then became organization secretary of the newly founded Women's Federation of Anta (Federación de Mujeres de Anta, FEMCA), where she was responsible for Women's reproductive rights and conservation issues relating to the use of pesticides.

Shortly after, Hilaria launched a determined campaign against sterilization of women under ex-president Alberto Fujimori, accusing the former health minister of carrying out an illegal, ethnically targeted population control policy resulting in forced sterilization of 363,000 indigenous women. She continues to lobby for the victims' compensation, together with the Latin American and Caribbean Committee on the Rights of Women (CLADEM) and the Broad-based Women's Movement (MAM Fundacional). In recognition of her dedication, Hilaria was one of 1000 women from around the world nominated in the 1000 Women for the Nobel Peace Prize campaign in 2005.

Hilaria has organized and participated in numerous regional events, including the National Women's Meeting, and the Sixth Regional Conference on the Integration of Women in Social and Economic Development in Latin American and Caribbean. She is also the founder and President of the Peruvian Indigenous Parliament, which serves to advise the government on environmental, civil, and human rights issues affecting Peru's diversity indigenous peoples.

Throughout her career as an activist and a representative of her people Hilaria has organized and participated in many regional events.



Unfortunately, Hilaria's opportunities to participate in international events have been limited because of the expense of international travel and the fact that the Peruvian congress has repeatedly denies her requests for funding, although funding to attend international conferences and events is routinely provided for non-indigenous members of the congress.

## Dedication to Public Service

In 2006, as a result of her lifetime of leadership and dedication, Hilaria was elected to the Peruvian Congress, despite the fact that Hilaria did not campaign for election and has only recently acquired a party association—an extremely rare occurrence in Peru, as in most other countries. As a congresswoman Hilaria is the director of the Commission of Andean, Amazonian, and Afro-Peruvian peoples, Environment and Ecology, as well as an advisor to the energy and Mining Commission. She is also the director of the Women's Issues and social Development Commission, under which banner she leads the Workgroup on Application and Follow-up on the Law of Equal Opportunity.

Her work in defense of human rights and environmental conservation has been featured on CNN, Telemundo, BBC television networks and in several national and international newspapers, including the Miami Herald (USA), el Mainichi Shimbon (Japan), and L'Express (France). Her book, titled Threads of My Life (2001) has been well received in North America, South America, and the European Union and translated into several languages.

Hilaria is a true, democratically affirmed representative of her people. Still, she has maintained her motives pure and renews her promise to sacrifice her own self-interest for the betterment of her people's lives daily. This April, Hilaria Supa Huamán will participate in the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues at the United Nations in New York. She will speak not only on behalf of the indigenous peoples of Peru but, will make a contribution to the international community of indigenous peoples, through the universally relevant initiatives, effective policies, ideas, and experience that she will bring to the table.



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