

62nd session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women

New York, 12th to 23rd of March 2018

SIDE EVENT

Indigenous women rights: a vital tool to ensure gender equality and economic and social empowerment

Background:

Because of their multidimensional identity, indigenous women are exposed to intersecting forms of discrimination related to cultural identity, sex, and gender, among other factors, both outside and within their own communities, or as a result of historical and structural remnants of colonialism. The intersection of these sources of discrimination creates superposed layers of mutually reinforcing human rights violations.

This discrimination creates obstacles to indigenous women's ability to exercise their civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights, and to their access to justice. They still face limited opportunities to enter the labor market; unique geographic and economic challenges in access to health or educational services; limited access to social programs and services; and little opportunity to participate in the political process. Indigenous women who want to practice traditional forms of subsistence often face great obstacles in access to traditional lands and resources. In terms of indigenous women's access to justice, the main obstacles are geographical, socioeconomic, cultural, and linguistic, and are related to the failure of States to address the situation. This political, social, and economic marginalization of indigenous women contributes to a permanent situation of structural discrimination that makes them especially susceptible to various acts of violence.

Indigenous women face diverse forms of violence—not just physical, psychological, and sexual violence but also obstetric and spiritual violence—which are prohibited by inter-American human rights treaties, including the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women. Indigenous women and girls tend to suffer more acts of violence in specific contexts: in the context of armed conflicts; during the implementation of development, investment, and extraction projects; when their territories are militarized; in the domestic sphere; when they act as human rights defenders; during processes of migration and displacement; among other contexts.

However, Indigenous women must be understood as holders of rights and not simply as victims or targets of violations of their human rights. Despite their enduring history of being subjected to violence and discrimination, indigenous women have played and continue to play a consequential role in the history of the struggle for the protection and respect of indigenous peoples collective and individual rights, and their rights as women. This principle has been one of the key messages that indigenous women have presented in previous session of the CSW, as well as in reports produced by the UN Special Rapporteur and the Inter-American Commission.

The side event to be organized during the CSW62, intends to build on the momentum created during the 61 CSW regarding the discussion on empowerment of indigenous women. It is envisaged as a contribution to priority this year. The parallel event will provide an opportunity to share lessons and experiences of indigenous women in their struggle to achieve social and economic empowerment, combat violence and discrimination and achieve participation in decision-making. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) will present the findings and recommendations of their newly published report on the human rights of indigenous women in the Americas.

Title(s): *Indigenous women rights: a vital tool to ensure gender equality and economic and social empowerment*

What: 90 minutes parallel event during the CSW62 (12- 23 March 2018)

Where: UNHQ -New York /

When: Tuesday 20th of March – 1:15 pm – 2:45pm (Conference Room D)

Organisers IWGIA, FIMI, AIPP, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, Secretariat of the UNPFII and IFAD

Objective(s): Share lessons and experiences of indigenous women in their struggle to achieve social and economic empowerment, combat violence and discrimination and promote political participation in decision-making.

Launch the report published by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and IWGIA about Indigenous Women and their Rights IN the Americas.

Identify concrete policy ideas and measures to advance implementation of indigenous women rights and support their empowerment.

Strengthen alliances and partnerships among indigenous women organisations about the promotion of their issues and demands in the context of the CSW.

To advocate for the inclusion of indigenous women recommendations in the report resulting from the 62 CSW and follow up on previous resolutions adopted by CSW on indigenous women.

Outcomes: Indigenous Women advocacy efforts toward the CSW have been strengthened.

The Commission on the Status of Women continues paying particular attention to improve the situation of Indigenous Women and follow up on previous recommendations.

Partnership with UN Women, UNICEF and IFAD has been strengthened.

An oral statement including specific recommendations to States, UN Agencies submitted during the CSW plenary session.

A bilateral meeting during the UNPFII session in April to further discuss specific programs and measures to be taken by relevant UN agencies and other relevant instructions has been agreed.

Moderator and speakers:

MODERATOR: Lola García-Alix (Senior Adviser IWGIA)

KEY NOTE SPEAKER: Gladys Acosta (Member of CEDAW)

Interactive discussion of the panelists with the moderator

- Jane Meriwas (Samburu Women's Trust, Kenya)

CSW 62 Side Event

- Elina Horo (Adivasi Women's Forum India - Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact)
- Tarcila Rivera (Member of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Peru)

INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE

It includes questions and presentations from the floor by Member States, UN Agencies, indigenous women attending the CSW62 and other participants.

CLOSING REMARKS

UN women

IFAD