

**UN Women statement on the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples
9 August , 2021**

Today, on the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, we join the call for a new social contract that will let us rebuild our world in a way that is forward-looking, equitable and targeted to the most marginalized.

An ongoing legacy of exclusionary policies, underrepresentation in decision-making and corruption in land and natural resource management in many countries means that indigenous peoples often face a lifetime of poverty, exclusion and discrimination. For indigenous women and girls experiencing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, the effects can span generations and be exacerbated by the COVID-19 crisis. For example, the fact that indigenous women and girls are less likely to be medically insured makes them more susceptible to pre-existing conditions that aggravate the impact of COVID-19. Women who face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination are also at greater risk of violence, and it is estimated that more than one in three indigenous women are raped during their lifetimes. Indigenous women also face what they describe as “environmental violence”: environmental degradation and extractive industries that pollute water resources and ancestral agricultural lands, with fatal health impacts.

Despite these challenges, indigenous women are leading efforts to preserve their distinct cultures and traditions and to build awareness of women's human rights among their own communities. We saw this firsthand at UN Women's Generation Equality Forum, where indigenous women offered blessings and brought unique expertise, energy and power to the discussions. The Generation Equality [Global Acceleration Plan](#), centred on six Action Coalitions, includes strategies to amplify the voices of indigenous women and girls in climate justice, feminist movements and organizations that promote bodily autonomy, and at the Forum's culmination in Paris the international community stepped forward with commitments to these issues and others, such as preventing violence against indigenous women and girls, and ensuring their rights to land. Following through on actions like these will be an important part of the new social contract that we must build together.

Today, UN Women renews its dedication and commitment to indigenous women and girls all over the world. We must continue to work together, including with women's rights organizations such as the International Indigenous Women's Forum, to ensure indigenous women have equal opportunities, a voice in decision-making and a chance to use their collective priorities and experiences to drive transformative change, now and for future generations.