



THE UNITED NATIONS PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES

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Press release

Commission on the Status of Women calls for empowerment of indigenous women

UNITED NATIONS, 27 March 2017 – The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, an expert body of the United Nations, welcomed the focus on the empowerment of indigenous women at the 61st session of the Commission on the Status of Women, held at UN Headquarters in New York from 13 to 24 March.

“The tireless participation of indigenous women in intergovernmental processes has succeeded in bringing their voices and struggles to the global agenda, as reflected in this dialogue during this 61st session,” said Aysa Mukabenova, acting Chairperson of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, when addressing the high-level dialogue on the empowerment of indigenous women on 16 March. “More needs to be done to include indigenous women in decision making processes at all levels,” she urged, adding that “this is a process that starts from the community to councils, governments, national Parliaments and to the global level.”

Indigenous women are the transmitters of indigenous cultures, knowledge and traditions, and contribute to sustainable development as envisioned in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Yet, indigenous women continue to face multiple dimensions of exclusion and discrimination – for being women, being indigenous, and often for being poor.

In its agreed conclusions, the Commission calls for economic empowerment of indigenous women, measures to address multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination against indigenous women, their participation in relevant decision-making processes, as well as respect for and protection of their traditional and ancestral knowledge.

While the recent session of the Commission the Status of Women has put a spotlight on the situation of indigenous women, this is just a first step. “We need solidarity and a strong alliance with everyone to move the agenda of empowerment of indigenous women forward,” said Tarcila Rivera Zea, an expert Member of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, who called for joint action between indigenous peoples, Member States, UN agencies and other stakeholders.

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