



# **International Indigenous Women's Forum Foro Internacional de Mujeres Indígenas**

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## **PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES**

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## **ANALYSIS AND FOLLOW UP OF THE UNITED NATIONS PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO INDIGENOUS WOMEN**

Presented by International Indigenous Women's Forum

### *Summary*

The report "Analysis of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues recommendations related to indigenous women" presented by the International Indigenous Women's Forum has the main objective to identify advancements in the implementation of the Permanent Forum recommendations with regard to indigenous women. The framework for this research was the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Plan of Action of the 2nd International Decade of Indigenous Peoples.

The document contains a systematization of the recommendations adopted by the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) related to Indigenous women during its seven sessions (2002- 2008). The report also presents a set of indicators to facilitate the monitoring of the UNPFII recommendations, highlights concrete advancements in the implementation of the recommendations from the perspectives of indigenous women and United Nations agencies, identifies challenges, and offers final recommendations.

The information analyzed in the report was collected through a participatory process organized by the International Indigenous Women's Forum (IIWF/FIMI) between May 2008 and April 2009.

IIWF/FIMI distributed a questionnaire through various international networks; considered the results of regional meetings and conferences; and included the commentary and perspectives resulting from personal interviews. In total, IIWF/FIMI consolidated responses from 27 indigenous organizations - including indigenous umbrella organizations- in 13 countries. The response from the United Nations system included 32 responses, among which were the following entities: the Secretariat of the Convention of Biological Diversity (SCBD), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNPFA) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

The levels of advancement with regard to the implementation of the UNPFII recommendations varied greatly from country to country, which illustrated wide diversity in the situations of indigenous peoples.

In a general appraisal, we confirmed that all the regions advanced in the legal recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples and indigenous women. At the international level, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is unanimously recognized as a significant step in the struggle for the recognition of the collective and individual rights of indigenous peoples. Aside from international initiatives for the dissemination of Declaration, some countries began to include its principles in legislation, as well as, elaborate strategies for its concrete implementation. Furthermore, constitutional reform in many countries directly improved the recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples and indigenous women.

Although persistent gap between normative legislation and its application exists more or less in all countries, there are positive improvements in the design and implementation of policies, especially related to health and education. Universal strategies implemented by governments have positively impacted on indigenous women's lives including the access to basic educational and health services, especially literacy and vaccination programs.

To a lesser extent, the results of this research observed advancement in the inclusion of the intercultural perspective in government policies and programs. The achievements on this line include the creation of special mechanisms and institutional organisms to design policies for indigenous peoples. Results in this area experienced a wide variety of differences between countries. In some regions, bilingual intercultural education and intercultural health systems have been implemented since a long time ago, however, in other countries have just begun to discuss these issues. Major difficulties identified are the lack of institutional hierarchy; the lack of financial, technical and human resources; and the lack of mechanisms that guarantee the effective participation of indigenous peoples.

Globally, at local level there are many initiatives with very good results. For example, regarding violence against indigenous women, at the community level there are many good practices. In reference to the political participation of indigenous women is also at the local level where most improvement has been made, although in some countries the participation in electoral processes at regional and national levels has been also increased. In some countries, affirmative legislation facilitates the participation of indigenous peoples and gender quotas benefit women.

Finally, it is highlighted that the organizational capacity of indigenous peoples organizations at the global and national levels has vastly increased as well as the interactions between these organizations and governmental entities, the United Nations system, international cooperation and other

institutions. The improvement in the organizational capacity of indigenous organizations is linked to the increase of capacity-building processes, forging alliances among indigenous organizations and with other key stakeholders, articulation of agendas and strengthening of networks.

The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues played a key role in these advancements. First of all, by positioning the demands of indigenous women as a priority and advocating through its recommendations the inclusion of gender perspectives and inculturality. In second place, providing a space to share experiences, difficulties, and exchange proposals and strategies to achieve goals. Thirdly, providing the possibility to create networks with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and UN entities in order to exchange opinions about programs, to obtain support and resources.

Facing the future challenges, the UNPFII has the possibility of continuing playing a key role in integrating the gender perspective in its recommendations by mainstreaming and through specific issues; establishing mechanisms of participation and effective communication; planning a periodic evaluation of the implementation status of the recommendations, especially with regard to women; and supporting the elaboration of indicators for monitoring, among others.

The struggle of indigenous peoples for the recognition and exercise of their rights has been long. Indigenous peoples in this pathway have been empowered building a global indigenous movement. In this process, indigenous women have been together with male leaders learning strategies of various social movements and articulating their own agenda.

Looking the process through an historic perspective and with a long term view, the improvements have been a lot. Most of all, considering historic marks as the establishment of the UNPFII and the adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. However, indigenous women and their peoples continue, in their majority, living the systematic violation of their rights. In this regard IIFW/FIMI proposes the following recommendations:

***To the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues:***

- Institutionalize the inclusion of the gender perspective in all the work of the UNPFII and its Secretariat.
- Establish an adequate methodology to ensure indigenous women's participation not only during the session, but also during the annual work of the UNPFII and its Secretariat.
- Explore within the different methods of work established by the UNPFII the way to establish a better communication with indigenous women's organizations. It is may be possible, the organization of a closed meeting between the Indigenous Women's Caucus and one or two members of the UNPFII.
- During the UNPFII session, facilitate meetings between the different indigenous women's organizations and its country delegations.
- Propose for the next international expert workshop in January 2010 the theme of "Indigenous peoples and health with special emphasis on sexual and reproductive health"
- Use the mechanisms to appoint a member of the UNPFII as a Special Rapporteur to investigate with indigenous women's organizations on the theme of cultural practices that have a negative impact in indigenous women.

- Consolidate the work of the Task Force on Indigenous Women headed by the Secretariat of the UNPFII and implement a mechanism of participation for indigenous women's organizations.
- Actively engage through the Secretariat in the UN Reform debates regarding the gender architecture to guarantee the appropriate inclusion of the demands and priorities of indigenous women actively.
- Plan a periodic evaluation of the status of implementation of the UNPFII recommendations with regard to women.
- Support the elaboration of indicators from the perspectives of indigenous women to monitor the implementation of the UNPFII recommendations and other relevant processes.
- Continue with support to field projects designed and implemented by indigenous women through the Development Account and explore other financial resources.
- Promote an indigenous peoples summit with the full support and participation of indigenous peoples and indigenous women.

***To the United Nations System:***

- Consider the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a normative framework for policies and action and implement an accountability system including the elaboration of human rights indicators for the evaluation and monitoring of the impacts of projects and programs.
- Promote an evaluation by each UN agencies of the implementation of the Plan of Action of the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Decade of Indigenous Peoples guaranteeing the participation of indigenous women in this process.
- Adopt, when it is possible, a main policy on indigenous peoples and indigenous women taking the Declaration as a framework.
- Develop strategies at national level through Resident Coordinators to articulate actions related to indigenous peoples.
- Develop interagency groups at the country level to coordinate actions and develop joint-programming especially targeting indigenous peoples and indigenous women. Promote the participation of indigenous organizations and their inclusion in the development processes such as the Millennium Development Goals, the Common Country Assessment (CCA), UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF).
- Strengthen the capacity of the country-based Resident Coordinator office on relevant issues for indigenous peoples for example: interculturality; development with identity; free, prior and informed consent; self-determination, as well as international standards and principles including the ILO Convention 169, the Declaration, Plan of Action of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Decade, and the UNPFII recommendations, among others.
- Insure the inclusion of priorities and demands of indigenous women's organizations in the Gender Equality Architecture Reform of the UN.

***To the States:***

- Promote constitutional reforms with the objective of aligning the national legislation to international instruments of law for example the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- Take legislative and operative measures to narrow the gap between the recognition and the full exercise of indigenous peoples rights.
- Allocate more technical and financial resources to amplify and consolidate institutional spaces inside the governmental system to design and execute public policies for indigenous peoples and indigenous women.
- Establish mutually-accepted participation mechanisms.
- Include in population and housing censuses and other data collection processes ethnic variable and disaggregation by sex.
- Establish consultative groups through the ministries of foreign affairs to promote the participation of the civil society organizations in the United Nations reform processes.
- Promote the establishment of tripartite monitoring mechanisms (State, United Nations and indigenous organizations) to follow up the accomplishment of norms and laws.

***To the Institutions and Organisms of International Cooperation:***

- Adopt policies that regulate the work with indigenous organizations respecting the principle of free, prior and informed consent.
- Allocate more technical and financial resources for indigenous women's organizations guaranteeing that they are the direct beneficiaries and decide its utilization.
- Take measures to align internal requirements with the agendas of the indigenous women, especially considering their times and priorities.
- Fulfill assumed commitments as the 0.7% of support for development in the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) framework.

***To the Private Sector:***

- Adopt internal policies that regulate interactions with indigenous organizations, respecting the principle of free, prior and informed consent.
- Forge alliances with indigenous organizations based on mutual respect and the principle of free, prior and informed consent.
- Allocate financial and material resources to indigenous women's organizations guaranteeing they are the direct beneficiaries and decide its utilization.

***To the Civil Society Organizations:***

- Establish internal norms and guidelines to regulate work with indigenous organizations, respecting the principle free, prior and informed consent.
- Forge partnerships and consolidate networks with indigenous women's organizations as equal partners.

***To the Indigenous Organizations:***

- Establish mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and other commitments adopted by the States.
- To the mixed Indigenous organizations, it is recommended to establish formal mechanisms to assure the participation of women in all decision-making processes.
- To the indigenous women's organizations, it is recommended to reach consensus regarding a common agenda and their demands in the United Nations reform processes.

To conclude, we highlight the continue support of International Indigenous Women's Forum (IIWF/FIMI) to the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and its commitment to the implementation of the Permanent Forum recommendations.

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