



United Nations

Department of
Economic and
Social Affairs



Walking Together on the Path of Change

Side event organized by FIMI & MADRE
during the 65th session of the Commission on the Status of Women

Co-sponsored by: *UNDESA, Indigenous Peoples and Development Branch-Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung NYC-Office*

DATE: Thursday, 18 March 2021

TIME: 9 a.m.-11 a.m. (EST time)

FIMI; MADRE; UNDESA, Indigenous Peoples and Development Branch/Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (IPDB/SPFII) and Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung NYC-Office (RLS NYC-Office) are co-hosting the event entitled *“Walking Together on the Path of Change.”* This event is a strategic opportunity to create awareness about the existing gaps in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) particularly around the individual and collective rights of Indigenous women and girls. The event will bring together stakeholders, CEDAW Committee members, and Indigenous women leaders from around the world to call for a CEDAW General Recommendation on the Rights of Indigenous Women and Girls, which is expected to be adopted by the CEDAW Committee in November 2022.

Background:

Indigenous women and girls worldwide have been in the frontline defending their individual and collective rights, demonstrating capacities as agents of change, and raising their voices to make visible the structural challenges and discrimination faced at different levels. In an effort to achieve gender equality and wellbeing, Indigenous women and girls have advocated for their rights at two important subsidiary bodies of ECOSOC, the CSW and the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) as well as other intergovernmental processes.

To ensure that CEDAW becomes more inclusive and accessible to women and girls at the community level, FIMI and MADRE have jointly launched a movement-building campaign to advocate for a CEDAW general recommendation that recognizes the individual and collective rights of Indigenous women and girls. The CEDAW General Recommendation on the Rights of Indigenous Women and Girls will establish legally binding obligations of all government parties and provide guidance to exercise due diligence to protect women and girls from violence.

In response to the Indigenous women movement, the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues calls on CEDAW to adopt a general recommendation on indigenous women, in accordance with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and other international instruments. The Permanent Forum further recommended that the general recommendation on indigenous women consider issues related to the individual and collective rights to equality, non-discrimination, and self-determination; social and economic

rights, including the rights to decent work and to land, territory, and resources; the right to water and food; cultural rights; civil and political rights; and the right to live free of any form of violence.

For this reason, FIMI, MADRE, the Indigenous Peoples and Development Branch - Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues from UNDESA and the RLS NYC-Office are coming together to organize a side event to elevate and advance a shared agenda for a general recommendation on the Rights of Indigenous Women and Girls that includes a deeper analysis, best practices, and strategies to advance the individual and collective rights of Indigenous women and girls.

FIMI and MADRE have led the following consultations:

- 2015 → FIMI did a consultation among networks and Indigenous Women's organizations and prepared a political statement and formal letter to CEDAW experts' members.
- 2019 → Expert Meeting on Indigenous Women Rights by Center for Social Justice, MADRE, FIMI, CWGL, WHRI.
- 2019 → FIMI raised awareness of this initiative during Regional Meetings in Asia, Africa, and the Americas.
- 2019 → MADRE organized informational sessions and workshops on CEDAW with Indigenous women and girls to bring information to rural communities in Nicaragua, Nepal, and Guatemala.
- 2020 → MADRE organized an informal consultation with 60 Indigenous women and girls.
- 2020 → FIMI and MADRE launched CEDAW Campaign

Objectives of the Event:

- Advance a shared agenda and legal framework for a general recommendation No. 39 on the Rights of Indigenous Women and Girls.
- Raise awareness on the CEDAW process and the General Recommendation on the Rights of Indigenous Women and Girls.
- Advocate for Indigenous Women and girls' rights through CEDAW.

Expected Outcomes:

- Increased awareness on CEDAW and general recommendation No. 39 for Indigenous women's rights.
- Promote dialogue between stakeholders on collective and individual rights.
- Inclusion of Indigenous women and girls in the agenda of Member States.

Methodology

The event will be an online webinar open to the public and accessible on Facebook and YouTube. This virtual event will take place on Zoom, hosted by FIMI, MADRE, UNDESA/IPDB-SPFII, and RLS NYC-Office. Simultaneous interpretation into French, Spanish, and English will be available. This meeting is an interactive session aimed to promote dialogue between the different stakeholders. Questions will be sent through the chat and communicated to the speakers by the moderator.