



Submission of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and
the Empowerment of Women to the UN Permanent Forum on
Indigenous Issues

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Introduction

UN Women’s newly launched Strategic Plan 2022–2025 will guide the organization for the next four years—with an eye toward the 2030 deadline to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. It articulates how UN Women will leverage its unique triple mandate—encompassing normative support, UN system coordination, and operational activities—to mobilize urgent and sustained action to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and support the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Strategic Plan is based on key findings from an extensive consultative process, including with indigenous women and places Issues of inclusión and the leave no one behind agenda at its centre. It draws from the analysis of lessons learned and recommendations from evaluations, audits, and other assessments, including those from the 25-year review and appraisal of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

Given the interconnected nature of global challenges, UN Women will focus on integrated approaches with seven systemic outcomes to address the root causes of inequality and affect broader systems change, across its thematic focus areas:

- governance and participation in public life;
- women’s economic empowerment;
- ending violence against women and girls; and
- women, peace and security, humanitarian action, and disaster risk reduction.

Responding to the Questionnaire, Based on the SWAP on Indigenous Peoples

Raise awareness on the rights of indigenous women

UN Women Guatemala supported the design and rollout of curricular designated “ACTIVATE YOURSELF!” in which 78 indigenous girls, adolescents, youth and women participated. This course was organized in coordination with the Guatemalan Parliament for Children and Adolescents, with the objective of providing the tools for addressing all forms of violence. In Brazil, UN Women implemented “The Human Rights of Indigenous and Quilombola Women: a governance matter!” which aims to facilitate the inclusion and meaningful participation of indigenous and Quilombola women in policy-making, state and municipal planning and budgeting, thus ensuring that governance processes, in Maranhão and Pará, including those related to tackling climate change, the prevention and elimination of discrimination and inequalities are based on gender, race and ethnicity. A second Project, “Women Human Rights Defenders” designed in consultation with indigenous women aims to create national networks of women human rights defenders, with provision of financial and technical support for their

advocacy actions with additional Support to be connected to key intergovernmental processes.

Within the scope of work of the Interagency Thematic Group on Gender, Race and Ethnicity, the UN Women Brazil responded to attacks on indigenous women human rights defenders in coordination with OHCHR. This was in specific relation to the case of the Munduruku Wakoborun Indigenous Women Association, whose members were attacked by illegal miners in March 2021. UN Women's regional office issued a joint public statement expressing concern over the attack and calling on the national authorities to respond to the situation.

In El Salvador, 30 indigenous women from Santo Domingo de Guzmán, Tacuba, Izalco, Atiquizaya, La Libertad and Santa Catarina Masahuat were sensitized on the sexual and reproductive rights of indigenous women, leadership and participation of Indigenous women in public life at local and National levels and the strategic roles of indigenous women networks. Furthermore, 35 Kakaguira women from the municipalities of Cacaopera, Yucuayquin and Guatjiagua were trained on the issues of violence against women and Community advocacy. A consultation was held with 50 indigenous women from the Lenka and Kakawira communities, based on the document “Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women in Food Systems”. The purpose of this consultation was to collect inputs for the world food security summit, as part of the Sustainable Development Goals for the year 2030. Consultations with indigenous women was part of a process of building policies and strategies on food security; so that women can bring their voice in food security to bear and propose recommendations on the thematic axes of the Summit.

In Ecuador, the situation of indigenous women was made visible through data collection and awareness raising among public and civil society actors, particularly within the context of climate change and other gender issues in the northern border, the Amazon, and the Azuay Province.

Support the implementation of the rights of indigenous women within the context of UN Women’s strategic plan and the 2030 Agenda

At the regional level within the Americas and Caribbean, the first Network of Indigenous Women Entrepreneurs and Businesswomen of the Americas was created, consisting of indigenous women from Argentina, Bolivia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Panama, within the framework of the XIV Regional Conference on Women. This network was created to facilitate and promote networking among indigenous women in business. This Network was configured to comprehensively implement the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, assuming a special commitment to indigenous women as the main transmitters of knowledge and positive cultural practices of indigenous peoples.

UN Women Cambodia supported the Ministry of Women’s Affairs in the latter’s review of the country’s Gender and Climate Change Action Plan (2014-2018) with a view to providing technical inputs and integrating lessons learned and ensuring that gender-

responsive actions are reflected in the Action Plan in consultation with key ministries, civil society organizations and indigenous women groups. Similarly, UN Women India partnered with Bangla Natak, an NGO focussing on inclusive and sustainable development and the protection of rights of women, children and indigenous peoples, using a rights framework, through theatre and culture-based approaches for empowering women and youth in negotiating their rights and mobilizing social change in the tea estates of Assam.

Within the framework of the Joint Social Protection Program of the UNSDG Fund, implemented under the leadership of FAO in partnership with UN Women, UNDP, and ILO in Costa Rica, seed capital funds were provided to indigenous women to promote food security through animal husbandry and small scale farming.

UN Women Mexico co-hosted a special session on "climate change and indigenous and Afro-descendant women" in partnership with the College of Mexico and the Population Council. The session reflected on the effects of climate change on indigenous and Afro-descendant populations in the context of marginalization and poverty, lack of access and control over natural resources, and their location in fragile ecosystems. Furthermore, in partnership with the National Institute of Women and the Center for Research and Higher Studies in Social Anthropology, UN Women Mexico rolled out a certified course on "Woman, Land and Territory: Challenges for the participation and representation of indigenous women in agrarian nuclei" for indigenous women. The course created awareness on indigenous women's agrarian rights and was utilized by indigenous women leaders from different communities across the country. Furthermore, within the context of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, the elimination of violence against indigenous women and girls was identified as one of the central themes of information and communication materials and radio broadcasts.

The Moving Forward Equality program (Avancemos por la Igualdad in Spanish) was focused on the economic empowerment of women in communities affected by the 2017 earthquake in Mexico City and Juchitán de Zaragoza, Oaxaca. In Juchitán, where the indigenous population represents more than 90 per cent of the population (mainly zapotecs), thereby contributed to building resilience among indigenous women entrepreneurs.

In Guatemala, indigenous women of Alta Verapaz, Chimaltenango and Guatemala City leveraged their role as peace builders to address hate speech and cybercrime. Attacks on indigenous women human rights defenders was closely monitored by UN Women in partnership with Chomijá -a Mayan women lawyers association -Tzununijá - an indigenous women network, and the Bufete Jurídico de Pueblos Indígenas - a law office of indigenous women lawyers. UN Women Argentina designed Protocol on Free, Prior and Informed Consent with a gender perspective for the Chaco Salteño Water Table. This initiative was aimed at providing tools to indigenous women the legal tools to guarantee their adequate participation in issues related to the administration and provision of safe water.

UN Women Ecuador elaborated a Gender and Climate Change National Action Plan for the Amazonian region and contributed to strengthening the gender dimension of the roll out of the Competitive Fund for Bio Enterprise's initiatives in the Amazon region through the design of a toolbox. The training benefitted staff of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Water and Environment. UN Women Ecuador also designed a set of guidelines on sustainable production and biodiverse heritage conservation for the National Agricultural Strategy for Rural Women of the Agriculture and Livestock Ministry.

Develop the capacities of States, indigenous women, civil society and UN personnel

UN Women contributed to the elaboration of a General Recommendation on indigenous women and girls by the CEDAW Committee. The Regional Office of the Americas and Caribbean coordinated inputs from Country Offices in the región as well as CSOs to prepare a position paper for the región. The Regional Director used these inputs as a basis for her statement during the Day of General Discussion, organized by the CEDAW Committee to gather inputs from a wide range of stakeholders.

UN Women Guatemala continued to provide a platform for indigenous women to dialogue on socio-economic, cultural and political issues affecting them. Examples include the following:

1. The First Dialogue of High Authorities of the Government of the United States of America with Indigenous Peoples of Guatemala: "Weaving governance and inclusive development". This dialogue provided opportunities for indigenous women and indigenous and ancestral authorities to present proposals at the highest level of the Government of the United States of America and members of the Congress of the United States of America, on migratory, diplomatic, economic, social, environmental issues.
2. Economic entrepreneurship initiatives for indigenous peoples and women were presented through the institutional framework of the State, these initiatives are based on Guatemalan culture as a resource for social cohesion, dialogue between peoples, and social and inclusive peace and shared development.
3. Meetings were held with indigenous and ancestral authorities of the 48 cantons of Totonicapán, Sololá Indigenous Municipality, and various indigenous leaders on the importance of women's political participation, as important dimensions of sustaining peace and strengthening the rule of law.
4. A webinar "Youth and indigenous women contribute to the prevention of migration in Guatemala" was supported in partnership with the Guatemalan Parliament for Children and Adolescents. One hundred and eleven (111) young people from all over the country and key stakeholders such as the Embassy of the United States, the Ombudsman's Office and the Commission for Minors and Family of the Congress of the Republic of Guatemala participated in this event.

5. UN Women Guatemala also partnered with the National Coordinator of Widows of Guatemala, to launch "Hope and Peace for Women: 30 Years of Struggles", a compilation of the history, struggles and contributions of indigenous women.

UN Women Guatemala further strengthened the capacity of the government to follow up on the indigenous women's rights agenda. For example, the Congress of the Republic was supported to advance the legislative agenda in favour of the political, economic, social and cultural rights of women, mainly indigenous and rural women. Technical assistance to the Supreme Electoral Tribunal to mainstream the rights of indigenous women in the implementation of its activities, achieving and publicly launching the "Gender Equality Policy of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal and the Systematization" of the jurisprudence on the rights of women and indigenous peoples during the last constitutional period of the Constitutional Court.

The project "Shared care: Collective management of care in the Calchaquí Valleys" is being supported by UN Women Argentina through a small grant, in the framework of the programme Multi Partnership Trust Fund for COVID-19. This project embraces a total of 190 indigenous women, belonging to the Diaguita-Calchaquí people, located in the upper and lower Calchaquí Valley, an area that includes Salta, Tucumán and Catamarca. UN Women supports the mainstreaming of the gender approach in the Response Plan document to the socio-health emergency in Salta, declared in February 2020 as a result of the death of Wichi children and currently supports the OHCR humanitarian adviser in updating a report on drought in Salta that mainly affects indigenous communities and how it impacts women.

In El Salvador, the National Salvadoran Indigenous Coordination Council and the National Indigenous Women's Network are being supported to manage and analyze the Observatory on the rights of indigenous women as an advocacy tool. In Brazil, UN Women contributed towards the elaboration of a gendered analysis of the human rights of indigenous women human rights defenders in Brazil, as a basis for monitoring for early signs of violation of their rights.

UN Women Ecuador worked to strengthen the capacities of women of Amazonian indigenous nationalities for conservation, environmental management and responses to climate change with the inclusion of their rights and empowerment, supporting the start-up of the Antisuyu Warmikuna School "Yachay Huasi" (School of knowledge of Amazonian women), coordinated by the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of the Amazon, with a training package on issues of rights and sustainable development.

Advance the participation of indigenous women in UN processes

The Regional Office maintains an active policy to promote and facilitate the participation of civil society representatives at regional and international intergovernmental forums, with special attention to indigenous women and young indigenous women. Special effort was made to ensure their participation in the various meetings of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women, the Regional Consultation prior to

CSW'65, Generation Equality Forums in Mexico and Paris and the Special Session of the CEDAW dedicated to the elaboration of the General Recommendation on Indigenous Women and Girls. In addition, indigenous women's organizations and their representatives are regular participants of interactions between the Regional Office and CSOs. This has afforded opportunities for their voices to be heard on a wide range of issues. Furthermore, the Regional Office coordinated with the UN Women Offices in Brazil, Colombia and Ecuador the support provided to facilitate the participation of indigenous women in the First Congress of Indigenous Women of the Amazon Basin, which took place in Colombia in October 2021. Similarly, UN Women Country Offices facilitated the participation of over 100 indigenous women and 120 indigenous young women in CSW'65 related events.

In Vietnam, UN Women provided technical inputs to the National Target Program on Socio-Economic Development of 53 Ethnic Groups and mountainous Areas (2021-2030), considered to be the highest commitment of programme interventions in the country to address development issues and was designed to achieve the SDG commitments. This is one of two National Target Programmes (NTP) of Viet Nam, for the period 2021-2030, to address the key development issues of the country and receive state budget investment. For this National Target Program on Socio- Economic Development of 53 Ethnic Groups and mountainous Areas (2021-2030), UN Women has worked closely with other development partners such as the Committee on Ethnic Minority Affairs. UN Women also worked with the government and women's organizations to generate gender statistics as a basis for advocating for the gender responsiveness of the NTP.

Addressing the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on indigenous women

In order to address the economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on indigenous women, UN Women Argentina supported, through the "win-win programme", the formulation of business plans for groups of women entrepreneurs to apply for credit from commercial banks. The cooperative of indigenous women from the "Gran Chaco Region" was one of the groups that received guidance for developing business plans for its members. To promote their inclusion in the financial system and the access to credit, four financial institutions were contacted to connect with the groups.¹

UN Women El Salvador produced a report on "Situation of Indigenous Women in Central America as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic and the impacts generated on their Social, Economic and Cultural Rights." The Report aims to identify the effects of COVID-19 on indigenous women in the Central American region, the impacts generated on their Social, Economic and Cultural Rights due to the pandemic; describing in a general way the measures that women took at the individual level to face COVID-19 as well as the collective measures implemented from their networks.

¹ See:

<https://lac.unwomen.org/es/noticias-y-eventos/articulos/2021/09/artesanas-argentinas-le-apunestan-al-empoderamiento-economico>

In Ecuador, the UN Country Team prioritized an Action Plan, to address the serious impacts and risks of COVID-19 for indigenous people, a planning and advocacy tool, with concrete responses to the situation, highlighting the gaps in response and resources aimed at that population. The plan includes actions in the areas of health, education, water and sanitation, food, livelihoods and protection. It was disseminated among indigenous leaders, defenders of indigenous rights and Government entities. The Action Plan contributes to the implementation of the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur issued in 2019. Special attention is paid to the participation of indigenous women. Within this framework, UN Women coordinates activities with the Office of the Resident Coordinator and provides technical assistance for the roll out of the Amazonian Women's Agenda, which prioritizes the protection and promotion of the rights of indigenous women during this time of the pandemic.

UN Women Brazil and the state government of Maranhão also expanded their collaboration to ensure adequate support to Indigenous women affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Leveraging resources from the project “Supporting emergency measures and recovery actions to tackle COVID-19 in the indigenous territories in the Amazon Region”. Funded by the United Nations COVID-19 Response and Recovery Multi-Partner Trust Fund (COVID-19 MPTF)², UN Women provided technical advice and contributed to two-information sharing workshops of the state Secretariat of Health. UN Women Brazil is also providing support to indigenous women in the context of COVID-19 financing, through small grants aimed at strengthening indigenous women’s movement communication and advocacy. Two funded by the Connecting Women, Defending Rights project being implemented in the states of Rondônia and Amazonas and the third through core funds with a national reach. The 18-month project is giving support to indigenous Women Human Rights Defenders in Brazil in their efforts to advance and sustain prevention and response to human rights violations and violence against women and girls in the context of COVID-19 pandemic in the country.

² This programme is jointly implemented by PAHO/WHO, UNESCO, UNFPA, and UN Women. It is possible thanks to the contributions to the UN Response and Recovery Fund by the governments of Netherlands, Denmark, Switzerland, Norway, Sweden, Republic of Korea, Finland, New Zealand, Croatia, Iceland, Thailand, Slovak Republic and Cambodia.