



**Submission to the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues on
UN Women's Programmatic Initiatives in Support of the
Implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of
Indigenous Peoples (2013-2014)**

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Summary

The six programmatic priorities of UN Women’s Strategic Plan (SP, 2014-2017) — participation in decision-making at all levels; economic empowerment; ending violence; peace and security and humanitarian action; governance and national planning; setting of global norms and policies and standards on gender equality and women’s empowerment— are vital catalysts for the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the agreed outcomes of the 2014 World Conference on Indigenous Peoples (WCIP).¹

The organization is currently operationalizing these priorities with a special focus on indigenous women through a Guidance Note (GN), which will be produced in 2015 with support from a grant from the Government of the United States of America. The production of this GN will be in fulfillment of a specific recommendation of the May 2014 (13th) Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), which calls on UN Women “to finalize a road map with actions and outcomes for indigenous women and girls.”²

UN Women continues to keep the rights of indigenous women and girls high on the development agenda through the Inter Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues (IASG). Under the auspices of the IASG, it spearheaded the preparation of a thematic paper on ending violence against indigenous women and girls, in support of the WCIP. The period 2015 and beyond will mark a watershed in UN Women’s programming for indigenous women, particularly within the context of the pathway provided through the WCIP outcomes and the implementation framework of the organizational GN. UN Women is committed to supporting the design and implementation of the System-Wide Action Plan on Indigenous Peoples, as proposed by the WCIP outcome document, by making its expertise and experience in formulating and implementing the UN System Action Plan on Gender Equality available to the UN system, Member States and indigenous peoples.

Actions taken and priorities of indigenous women are also reflected in the 20 year review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and in UN Women’s advocacy efforts on the inclusion of a transformative standalone goal on gender equality as presented to the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals.

In keeping with its role as a knowledge broker of gender equality issues, UN Women launched the first global constitutional database on gender equality-related provisions contained in 195 Constitutions organized by five geographical regions (Africa, Americas, Asia, Europe and Oceania) in December 2013. The database was originally created on the basis of 16 gender equality categories and is due to be re-launched in early 2015 with an expanded searchable capacity of 9 additional categories, which includes indigenous peoples and minorities.³ The results show that over 70 percent of the constitutions of countries with indigenous peoples contain provisions on the social, economic, cultural, civil and political rights of peoples. UN Women is therefore poised to use the constitutional database as a basis for advocacy and engagement on the implementation of the UNDRIP, with and through legislatures, constitutional bodies, academics and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs).

¹ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women Strategic Plan, 2014-2017, Second Regular Session 2013.

² Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. Report on the thirteenth session, paragraph 35.

³ <http://constitutions.unwomen.org/> (last accessed on February 4 2015).

This report demonstrates UN Women's continued progress and commitment to the promotion and inclusion of indigenous issues through its policy, programming and coordination efforts. It also highlights examples of interventions undertaken in 2014 and highlights activities that are forthcoming in 2015.

Global Level Initiatives

Introduction

The mandate of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) is to assist countries and the UN system to progress more effectively and efficiently towards achieving gender equality and women's empowerment and upholding women's rights. UN Women leads, coordinates and promotes the accountability of the United Nations system in its work on gender equality and the empowerment of women, working through mechanisms such as the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), its High-level Committee on Programmes and High-level Committee on Management, the United Nations Development Group and the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality.⁴

The Entity's current country presence takes into account a number of factors such as (a) the situation of gender equality and women and girls; (b) the development and income level of the country, with a particular focus on the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS); (c) active conflict or post-conflict situations or the presence of other insecurities faced by women in the country; and (d) high levels of inequality. In line with the principle of national leadership and ownership, strengthening and/or establishment of UN Women country presences is based on requests by national governments and in consultation with country teams, depending on available resources. UN Women currently has six regional offices, six multi-country offices, 48 country offices and 28 countries with a programme presence only.

The organization's Strategic Plan (SP, 2014-2017), the 20-year Review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, advocacy and technical support to the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development and outcome of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples (WCIP, 2014), all serve as critical entry points and opportunities for demanding positive change for indigenous women and girls.

Policy Framework

In recognition of the fact that no country has achieved gender equality, the universal normative mandate of UN Women supports the development and strengthening of norms and standards internationally, regionally and nationally, alongside their implementation through operational and coordination activities, while also informing the development of those norms and standards through experience on the ground. The organization's Strategic Plan (SP) (2014-2017) places a high priority on protecting and promoting the rights of marginalized

⁴ UN Women. United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women strategic plan, 2014-2017: 'Making this the century for women and gender equality'.

and excluded women, including those of indigenous background.⁵ UN Women supports the work of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. In the light of the outcomes of the WCIP, UN Women's support will also extend to the Senior Official of the United Nations system responsible for coordinating follow up action for the World Conference. The SP represents the lens through which UN Women is implementing high impact programmatic interventions for and with indigenous women. The priority areas and what they achieve are as follows:

1. **Women lead and participate in decision-making at all levels.** This aligns with intergovernmental resolutions and provides a framework for promoting and monitoring indigenous women's participation and leadership in decision-making in national and local decision-making bodies, including government, parliaments, councils and political parties, as well their participation and influence in civic engagement.
2. **Women, especially the poorest and most excluded, are economically empowered and benefit from development.** This presents an opportunity for UN Women to promote indigenous women's increased access to sustainable livelihoods, productive assets and decent work, increased resilience in disaster risk reduction and climate change mitigation, poverty reduction, and their participation in economic policy formulation and implementation.
3. **Women and girls live a life free from violence.** This builds on intergovernmental agreements such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); the UN Declaration on Violence Against Women; the 2006 in-depth study of the UN Secretary General on Violence Against Women; and the Agreed Conclusions of the 57th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), in which indigenous women have been key actors. This priority area also supports the development and implementation of comprehensive laws, policies and strategies that aim to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls, including indigenous women.
4. **Peace and security and humanitarian action** create opportunities for indigenous women to participate in peace talks and to integrate issues affecting them in peace accords and commitments; this is critical, particularly in the context of countries where indigenous women and girls have been impacted by conflict. The creation and operation of Truth Commissions and the involvement of indigenous women in disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and reparations programmes are both moral and legal imperatives.
5. **Governance and national planning** reinforce accountability for gender equality commitments and priorities by engaging indigenous women's organizations, networks and gender advocates in support of gender-responsive national planning and budgeting processes through the development of capacities and systems of public institutions.

⁵ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women Strategic Plan, 2014-2017, Second Regular Session 2013.

6. **A comprehensive and dynamic set of global norms, policies and standards on gender equality and women's empowerment** is essential for UN Women's substantive support to intergovernmental normative processes such as the WCIP, as well as strengthened coherence between normative guidance and operational support to national partners, including indigenous women's groups.

These six priority areas are vital catalysts and building blocks for the implementation of the rights of indigenous women as set out in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the outcome document of the WCIP. The year 2014 also presented an opportunity for UN Women to partner with indigenous women in gathering evidence on progress on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. On 26 June 2014, UN Women launched a global campaign in the lead up to the 20th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women as a vehicle for galvanizing public debate, engaging younger generations, and renewing political will and commitment to accelerate the implementation of the Platform. The organization ensured the inclusion of indigenous women's voices through channels such as civil society advisory groups at global, regional and country levels.

In keeping with its role as a knowledge broker of gender equality issues, UN Women launched the first global constitutional database on gender equality-related provisions contained in 195 Constitutions organized by five geographical regions (Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe and Oceania) in December 2013. The database was originally created on the basis of 16 gender equality categories and is due to be re-launched in early 2015 with an expanded searchable capacity of nine additional categories, which includes indigenous peoples and minorities.⁶ The results show that over 70 percent of constitutions of countries with indigenous peoples contain provisions on the social, economic, cultural, civil and political rights of peoples. UN Women is poised to use the constitutional database as a basis for advocacy and engagement on the implementation of the UNDRIP, with and through legislatures, constitutional bodies, academics and CSOs.

Engagement with the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals

UN Women worked closely with the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals to ensure uptake of its transformative stand-alone Goal on Gender Equality as well as the meaningful mainstreaming of gender into all other proposed goals. A transformative stand-alone Goal on Gender Equality is grounded in an understanding that the structural causes of gender-based inequality lie in systems of discrimination that are often justified in the name of culture, history, group identity, and policy rationalities.⁷ The transformative goal aims at addressing historical under-investments in expanding women's and girls' capabilities and resources, and reversing their systematic marginalization and subordination.⁸

The proposed Goal and its related targets are relevant for the achievement of the rights of indigenous women. The Goal and targets contain proposals for ending all forms of discrimination against all women and girls; the elimination of all forms of violence against all women and girls; recognition of unpaid care and domestic work; women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in

⁶ <http://constitutions.unwomen.org/> (last accessed on February 4 2015).

⁷ UN Women, 2013. A transformative stand-alone goal on achieving gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment: imperatives and key components. Pp16-20.

⁸ Ibid.

political, economic and public life; universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights; equal rights to economic resources, including ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources; enhanced use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology; the adoption of sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels.⁹

Support to the WCIP Processes, Outcomes and Follow up

UN Women provided technical support to processes leading to the WCIP. In its capacity as a member of the Inter Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues (IASG), it was tasked with leading the preparation of a thematic paper, ‘Ending Violence against Indigenous Women and Girls’ through which it was able to advocate for specific content on this issue in the WCIP outcome document.

In collaboration with the International Indigenous Women’s Forum (IIWF), UN Women organized a High Level Side Event on the theme ‘Affirming the Beijing and Lima Plans of Action for Indigenous Women and Girls’ during the WCIP to highlight the situation of indigenous women and girls and the need for an accelerated implementation of their rights. Speakers at the event were Dr. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka (Executive Director, UN Women); Ms. Aili Keskitalo (President, Sami Parliament of Norway); Ms. Otilia Lux de Coti (Executive Director, International Indigenous Women’s Forum); Ms. Vicky Tauli-Corpuz (Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples); Ms. Soyata Maiga (Special Rapporteur on Women’s Rights and Chairperson of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations/Communities of the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights); and Mr. Raja Devasish Roy (Member of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues).

As a follow up to the WCIP, and with the goal of reinforcing the full realization of the rights of indigenous women and girls, UN Women also partnered with the Governments of Mexico, Guatemala and Ecuador, the IIWF and the Alliance of Indigenous Women of Central America and Mexico in the organization of a side event to present best practices from across Latin America regarding indigenous women’s rights and access to justice. The speakers for this event were Ambassador Xavier Lasso Mendoza, the Permanent Representative of Ecuador to the United Nations; Ms. María Vallarta, of the Federal Judiciary Council of Mexico; Ms. Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples; and Ms. Ana Guezmes, UN Women’s Country Representative in Mexico.

The two side events succeeded in highlighting the opportunities that are presented in the enforcement and implementation of the rights of indigenous women and girls, through inter alia, growing legislative and policy frameworks, access to justice and informed civil society networks.

⁹ United Nations General Assembly. 2014. Report of the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals. Pp14-15.

Regional and Country Level Interventions

Introduction

Using the SP priority areas as a framework, the narrative below highlights some key activities of UN Women Country Offices undertaken in 2014 (the reporting period), including those related to women's economic empowerment, political participation/agency and capacity building. This section also highlights planned interventions for 2015.

Economic empowerment

UN Women reaches out to marginalized groups (e.g. rural women, domestic workers, migrants and low-skilled women) with the aim of securing higher incomes, better access to and control over resources, and greater security, including protection from violence. It does so in close partnership with both State and non-State actors.

In **Asia and the Pacific**, UN Women was involved in a number of activities aimed at enhancing the security and rights of tribal and other indigenous women. Stemming from the fact that the majority of tribal and indigenous women depend on agricultural and forest resources for their survival and wellbeing, interventions largely focused on securing sustainable livelihoods and economic security. This engagement informs the need for improved participation in economic domains, particularly in the use and management of productive resources. In **Cambodia**, UN Women provided indigenous women's land rights activists with technical support in advocacy efforts related to their access and control over land and other natural resources. UN Women **India** supported **training and advocacy** in mainstreaming good practices into the implementation of a national flagship scheme called the National Rural Livelihoods Mission. As a result of sustained UN Women advocacy and technical support, the State Government of Madhya Pradesh increased investment and allocation of resources for strengthening gender responsive implementation of the central Government scheme which has tribal women as the majority of its target group.

UN Women **Rwanda** supported the socio-economic empowerment of indigenous women through improved animal husbandry and farming techniques. The project used multipronged approaches, including participation in decision-making, as well as violence protection and prevention and maternal nutrition. It was implemented in six administrative sectors of the Kamonvi District, in close consultation with stakeholders and using strategies such as capacity enhancement in entrepreneurship and in modern farming. The results have been an improvement in standards of living among women and their families as well as a positive outlook towards the ability of indigenous women to participate in local governance and decision-making.

Through its Entrepreneur Women program, UN Women **Guatemala** partnered with 29 organizations from Mexico, Guatemala and El Salvador, including 617 rural women from the Zapoteco and Ch'orti' ethnic groups on critical economic empowerment practices such as time management technologies, business management, production, marketing, media and the environment. UN Women's **South Asia** office undertook a documentation of the indigenous women's land use knowledge regarding shifting cultivation systems in **Bhutan** to assist policy learning in the wake of growing commercialization of production and privatization of land and forest resources.

Violence Against Women

UN Women partners with governments, UN agencies, CSOs and other institutions to advocate for ending violence, increase awareness of the causes and consequences of violence and build the capacity of partners to prevent and respond to violence. It also advocates for changing the norms and behaviour of men and boys, as well for gender equality and women's rights and expanding access to quality multi-sectoral responses for survivors of violence.

Indigenous women and girl's experiences of violence are closely linked to the history of colonization, poverty, and the exclusion of their wider communities. This is best contextualized in terms of the intersections of race, ethnicity, disability, age, sex, location and mutually reinforcing forms of inequalities.¹⁰ To the extent possible, UN Women implements programmes that reflect these special circumstances.

In partnership with the Asian Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP), UN Women's Regional Office for Asia Pacific developed a project that provides indigenous women with the tools to address violence-related issues, particularly within the context of land dispossession and in their capacity as managers of their natural resources. The project aimed specifically, to strengthen the capacity of indigenous women in **Cambodia, Indonesia** and **India** to better assert and advocate for their rights to their land. The indigenous women in the affected areas in the three countries who participated in the project built capacity, skills and knowledge. The project activities advanced awareness raising on the UNDRIP and CEDAW, and enhanced skills in documenting data and cases on land grabbing and impacts on indigenous women. The documentation and articulation of their issues were turned into published advocacy materials such as briefing papers and fact sheets that were disseminated to various channels and levels. The training opened the door for interactions with State functionaries who were sensitized on issues affecting indigenous women's rights to land, territories and resources.

UN Women's Anti-Human Trafficking Programme, implemented across six States in **India**, aims at building institutionalized multi-sectoral mechanisms to prevent trafficking in women and girls through community action and state accountability. In the Hurua Panchayat of Jharkhand, the programme focused on reducing the vulnerability to trafficking of women and girls in the tribal community. UN Women's implementing partner built a team of peer educators comprising of young girls from the intervention, called *Panchayat*, to train and reach out to the most vulnerable adolescents and young girls.¹¹ Out of the 60.7 percent of women who reported having received information on safe migration, 88.9 percent reported having received the same from a peer educator. Further, women from 48.1 percent of the households reported having received training/information on trafficking and violence against women and of these 75.6 percent could clearly recall content from the training. Similarly, women from 34.6 percent of the households reported having received training/information on their rights and entitlements and of these 76.8 percent were able to clearly recall the content from these trainings.

The programme further enabled Self Help Groups (SHGs) to develop a more meaningful role in the Panchayat by interlinking them with institutions that can provide vocational training to its members. The implementing partner's efforts resulted in a 17.2 percent increase in the

¹⁰ *Social Justice? The challenge of intersecting inequalities*, UNDP, New York, 2010; United Nations, State of the World's Indigenous Peoples, New York, 2009; Hall, Gillette H. and Harry Anthony Patrinos, eds., *Indigenous Peoples, Poverty and Development*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2012.

¹¹ The official meaning of Panchayat is elected village council in India.

SHG membership. The members of the SHGs were found to be actively involved in its functioning. Compared to the baseline estimates of 88.2 percent, 98.3 percent of members reported that they were actively saving at and/or borrowing from the SHGs.

In **Cambodia**, the Country Office provided technical and financial support towards the development of the Second National Action Plan to Prevent Violence against Women, which includes a reflection of specific risk factors affecting indigenous women and girls. As a result of the Cambodia Country Office's technical and financial support for the participatory process of developing the Second National Action Plan to Prevent Violence against Women, indigenous women and girls have been identified as a group with specific needs requiring alternative and targeted prevention and response strategies.

In **Latin America and the Caribbean**, UN Women **Guatemala** supported the participation of three Mayan women in the 13th Session of the UNPFII, as well as in private meetings with the UN Secretary General, to discuss the situation of violence against indigenous women in their country. The Country Office also provided support to the network of indigenous women organizations of Guatemala and aided the facilitation of their participation in the Beijing +20 review processes. During the period under review, the Country Office additionally supported 52 public officials of different ministries in the development of their respective plans and programmes that had a bearing on violence, with an emphasis on race and cultural approaches to addressing violence. As a result, this partnership was instrumental in advocating for the inclusion of protective clauses in the rules and regulations of Civil National Police, with a view to protecting female police from discrimination on the basis of ethnicity and race. Similarly, UN Women **Mexico** supported the National Supreme Court to integrate gender and intercultural perspectives within the administration of justice. It did so through a workshop for over 600 participants, which included the Judiciary, National Women's Machinery, IIFW and the Alliance of Indigenous Women of Central America and Mexico.

The Country Office of **Paraguay** supported research on trafficking and other forms of violence against indigenous young women in Paraguay, with the aim of gathering evidence on trafficking and cross border smuggling on the border between Paraguay and Brazil, to inform policy-making and decision-making on this particular issue. In the overall context of highlighting the benefits of networking, the Country Office supported the creation of the Movement of Indigenous Women of Paraguay. This, among other processes, led to the first meeting of indigenous women of Paraguay. It brought together a diversity of indigenous women from across the country and resulted in the 'Declaration of Asunción,' which included the position statement of indigenous women of Paraguay on the expected outcomes of the WCIP.

Mexico supported the establishment of the national system of information on violence against women, which facilitates the inclusion of data on the ethnic identity of women reporting violence in reporting and monitoring. UN Women also supported the creation of the Protocol of care of victims and survivors of sexual violence of the Public Health and Social Welfare Ministry as a means of ensuring that health care will be provided without discrimination and preferably using the native language of indigenous women.

Political participation and agency

UN Women provides training for female political candidates to help build their capacities, and offers civic education and sensitization campaigns on gender equality through support to gender equality advocates, as well as legislative and constitutional reforms to ensure women's fair access to political spheres as voters, candidates, elected officials and civil service members. The organization also collaborates with UN country teams and with civil society on programmes that uphold women's political rights, including the right to vote and campaign free from electoral violence.

In this context, the Multi Country Office of UN Women **India** undertook a number of capacity building initiatives for tribal women. Through the UN Women's Fund for Gender Equality, a total of 75000 women from marginalized communities (approximately 30,000 tribal women) from nine districts of the states of Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and West Bengal were supported for purposes of enforcing their rights and livelihoods. Women are organized, trained and supported to develop livelihood options and exercise control over economic resources; to effectively participate in local governance systems and build gender sensitive accountability processes; to negotiate intra-family issues that hinder equal access to rights for women and girls, including addressing domestic violence; and to realize the rights and entitlements enshrined in various statutes. Three community-based clusters of women in Mukundpur in the Rayagada district of Odisha undertook an initiative to discuss various opportunities available through the Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA). They did so by inviting officials of ITDA to their cluster meetings which resulted in the latter undertaking initiatives in less resourceful areas. Learnings from the project are being documented for replication across 25 additional districts.

During the period under review, trainings were also undertaken in the area of professional leadership for 135 indigenous women leaders from **Mexico**. This effort resulted in an increase in their knowledge and capacities to influence decision-making processes through the Certificate Course to Strengthen Indigenous Women's Leadership initiative, now in its sixth year of operation. The course is recognized as an international best practice. The National Autonomous University of Mexico is responsible for its implementation, with support from the Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples, the Alliance of Indigenous Women of Central America and Mexico, and UN Women. Additionally, as part of strategic multi-stakeholder efforts to substantively increase women's political participation, UN Women and the National Women's Mechanism, in collaboration with CSOs, implemented the 'Strengthening women's political participation and economic empowerment' project, otherwise known as the 'SUMA Initiative'¹². Implemented in 14 states over the period 2010-2014, it aimed to influence electoral results through joining efforts to enforce affirmative action as per the electoral laws. It also created a critical mass of women with political leadership and knowledge in gender equality and women's economic empowerment, to seek to transform policies and laws.

A key result was the positive influence on women's political careers and leadership through training and mentorship. SUMA benefitted 5000 women in politics from all political parties from more than 600 municipalities, of which 1600 strengthened their skills and capacities through professional training and personalized mentorship. Under SUMA, a coaching action

¹² SUMA was financed by the Fund for Gender Equality and by additional resources from the government of Mexico and implemented in collaboration with Civil Society Organizations.

plan was designed to increase the participation of indigenous women in municipal governments and local congress, and to implement a programme for the strengthening of indigenous women's political leadership in Oaxaca and Chiapas. Finally, UN Women Mexico continued its longstanding partnerships with indigenous women's networks to advance and position their agenda nationally and internationally, with a strong focus on the WCIP, the Beijing+20 review and the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

UN Women **Bolivia**, along with seven other agencies of the United Nations system, collaborated on the Free and Informed Act of Prior Consultation for Indigenous Peoples, which centered on the incorporation of the rights of indigenous women, including gender components in legislation. As part of the process, 100 workshops and consultations were held for 15 indigenous groups located within the high and low lands of Bolivia. Forty-five percent of the participants were indigenous women from national organizations such as the Bartolina Sisa National Confederation of Campesino, Indigenous, and Native Women of Bolivia, Confederación Sindical de Mujeres de Comunidades Interculturales de Bolivia, Lideresas de la Central de Pueblos Indígenas del Oriente Boliviano, and the Consejo de Ayllus y Markas del Qullasuyo. The legislative proposal had six key indigenous organizations with national representation as well as public agencies including the Ministries of Hydrocarbons, Mining, and Public Works.

With support from the Fund for Gender Equality, **UN Women Guatemala** supported 5,000 q'echi' indigenous people to register to vote. The office also worked with Saquilaj BB, a State-UN initiative that partners with local municipalities and CSO networks to assist 200 rural indigenous youth to exercise their right to an education, healthcare, and a life without violence. Finally, with support from UN Women **Paraguay**, indigenous women's groups were provided with a unique opportunity to interact with the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples during her first country visit. These meetings afforded the Special Rapporteur to hear at first hand the experiences and challenges facing indigenous women, the results of which will be documented as part of the Special Rapporteur's report to the Human Rights Council in 2015.

Other capacity building initiatives

A 2014 evaluation was carried out to assess the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women's support of the Asian Indigenous People's Pact Foundation's regional project, Empowering Indigenous Women in Traditional Customary Institutions, which covers **Nepal, Philippines** and **India**. The evaluation noted successes in enhancing knowledge, strengthening women's agency and solidarity, creating positive relationships with the community and stakeholders, and generating an environment to effect positive change to promote the enjoyment of indigenous women's rights. Moreover, the project produced significant changes in the capacities of women in the three countries, especially at grassroots level, to address issues such as domestic violence, representation in decision-making processes, and access to ancestral lands and natural resources. Identifying and addressing the strategic needs of indigenous women, who took action to change their situation, was identified under the evaluation as an important lesson learned.

The UN Women Multi Country Office of **India** partnered with the Ministry of Rural Development for the effective implementation and monitoring of the Ministry's flagship programmes from a women's rights perspective. One ongoing project was on strengthening the gender responsiveness of Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana (MKSP), a Government

initiative to empower women farmers. The expected outcome of the project was to include gender-responsive and rights based indicators for the implementation and monitoring of the project. With the help of its technical resource agency, Area Networking and Development Initiatives, UN Women provided technical support and concurrent monitoring support to government functionaries and programme implementing agencies for formulating, implementing and monitoring MKSP Gender Action Plans. In the phase of the project between June and October, 2014, 14 training sessions were conducted in Madhya Pradesh for 280 women in five predominantly tribal blocks in the Mandla, Dindori, Barwani, Alirajpur and Jhabua districts. As a result of sustained UN Women advocacy and technical support, the State Government of Madhya Pradesh has increased the investment and allocation of resources for strengthening the gender-responsive implementation of the central Government scheme, with the majority of its target group being tribal women.

UN Women **Guatemala** built an alliance with the National Coordinator of Guatemalan Widows (CONAVIGUA) to strengthen the leadership of indigenous women in the areas of peace building, human rights training, access to justice, and peace and security. CONAVIGUA also worked with indigenous widows to begin the preparation of a supplementary report to the 8th and 9th country reports to CEDAW on sexual violence and widowhood related to the armed conflict. Talks were held with indigenous women's organizations and with women survivors of sexual violence during armed conflict in Guatemala as part of the elaboration of the National Plan of Action 325. Similarly, **Mexico** supported strategic planning processes of the Alliance of Indigenous Women of Central America and Mexico, with a focus on political participation.

Sub-regional and regional intergovernmental mechanisms have also played a critical role in the advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment in **Latin America and the Caribbean**. These include the Inter-American Human Rights system, and the Belem do Pará Inter-American Convention for the Prevention, Sanctioning and Eradication of Violence against Women. The Regional Conference on Women is the region's principle intergovernmental mechanism for gender equality and has led to significant regional agreements to advance women's rights. The recent Regional Conference on Population and Development also generated a landmark regional consensus on gender equality and reproductive rights.

Highlights of forthcoming initiatives in 2015

The UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women awarded a grant to the National Indigenous Organization in **Colombia** as part of its 18th grant-making cycle. Implementation will begin within the first quarter of 2015. The Organización Nacional de Indígenas aims to strengthen and promote the adoption of measures to prevent and respond to violence against indigenous women in Colombia. The intervention will document and advocate on issues of violence against indigenous women, through awareness raising among community and relevant authorities, enhancing capacities of indigenous women as advocates of indigenous women's rights, and providing psycho-cultural, social, legal and psychological support to indigenous women survivors of violence and their families.

Financial support from the Government of the United States of America will make it possible for the UN Women Multi Country Office for the Pacific Island countries, located in Fiji, to build on and consolidate its existing work to enhance **Vanuatu**'s justice system so it addresses violence against women and girls more effectively.¹³ As part of this effort, UN Women will work to enhance the capacities of lawmakers to address gaps in existing legislation and support formal and informal justice actors, including lawyers, magistrates, and judges, to deliver legal services to victims of violence. The funds will also support UN Women **Guatemala** to build on existing initiatives to increase access to justice through both formal and ancestral-indigenous justice systems of indigenous women and girls survivors of violence from the Totonicapán and Chimaltenango departments of Guatemala. The program will provide training and other programs for formal, informal, and community-based providers of justice, including paralegals. It also will enhance the capacities of Guatemalan lawmakers to address gaps in existing legislation relating to violence against indigenous women and girls.

With the same funding source, UN Women will partner with Minority Rights Group International to undertake a multi-country study into whether domestic violence laws are being fully implemented in three countries¹⁴ in which indigenous peoples are significantly represented, and/or whether their situation and their needs are appropriately reflected. This study will support the development of the proposed Guidance Note by providing insights into the ways UN Women should address the implementation of laws that are supportive of indigenous women and girls.

In the area of economic empowerment, UN Women will follow up on a grant it is seeking from potential donors in support of its existing Rural Women Economic Empowerment joint programme to accelerate economic empowerment of rural women in the Afar and Oromia regions of **Ethiopia**. It forms part of a Joint Programme on Gender Equality and Women Empowerment, which is being implemented by the Government of Ethiopia and UN agencies. Under the coordination of UN Women, the programme is in response to the challenges facing poor rural women in agrarian and pastoral communities in their effort to secure their livelihoods, as defined by Ethiopia's Growth and Transformation Plan.

An important means by which UN Women will support the implementation of the outcomes of the WCIP will be through the development of a Guidance Note on promoting the rights of indigenous women. To be undertaken in 2015 with a grant from the Government of the United States of America and in fulfillment of a recommendation of the UNPFII issued at its 13th Session, the Guidance Note is intended to ensure sustainability of programming for indigenous women and girls at all stages of the Programme Cycle and within the context of the six priority areas of the Strategic Plan.

UN Women is furthermore committed to supporting the design and implementation of the System-Wide Action Plan on Indigenous Peoples, as proposed by the WCIP outcome document, through inter alia, its expertise and experience in formulating and implementing the UN System Action Plan on Gender Equality.

¹³ The population of Vanuatu is mainly indigenous.

¹⁴ The precise countries are still under consideration.

Conclusion and way forward

Mechanisms are already in place to ensure that Country Offices are able to effectively report on activities with and for indigenous women. This will in turn enhance future reporting to the UNPFII and overall programmatic guidance and efforts, particularly as they relate to the six priority areas of the Strategic Plan. The outcomes of the WCIP and eventually, the Beijing + 20 review, as well as the finalization of the Post-2015 agenda, will all result in important milestones and opportunities for indigenous women. The timely grant from the Government of the United States of America for country level programming, as well as the design of an organizational GN to facilitate programming for and with indigenous women, will facilitate prioritization and implementation of the outcomes of these frameworks.

Looking into the future, UN Women will intensify its engagement with indigenous women's groups, the Inter Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues, and Member States, particularly with the view to supporting the design and implementation of the System Wide Action Plan on Indigenous Peoples. To address geographical unevenness in programming, as well as broader gaps in implementation, UN Women will pursue a more rigorous fundraising agenda with bilateral and multilateral organizations, as well as the private sector, as part of efforts to increase its resource base for advancing the rights of indigenous women and girls.