

**United Nations Inter-Agency Network on
Women and Gender Equality**

February 2007

TASK FORCE

ON

INDIGENOUS WOMEN

Task Manager:
Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues/DESA/DSPD

**Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality
Task Force on Indigenous Women Report
New York, February 2007**

A. Background Information

1. The Task Force on Indigenous Women of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANGWE) was established in 2004 and adopted a three-year programme of work. During the first year, 2004-2005, the Task Force conducted a general survey of work of the United Nations (UN) system with indigenous women. During the second year, 2005-2006, the Task Force devoted its efforts to collecting good practices and lessons-learned from the work of the UN system with indigenous women. Members of the Task Force are CBD Secretariat, Commonwealth Secretariat, DAW/DESA, ESCAP, ECA, ILO, FAO, IFAD, INSTRAW, OHCHR, OSAGI, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP, UNIFEM, WHO and the Interagency Gender & Water Task Force/Sustainable Development Division/DESA. It is chaired by the Secretariat of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (SPFII).

B. Main developments in the past year regarding gender and indigenous women in the UN system

2. **Commission on the Status of Women (CSW):** During the 50th Session of the CSW, the official panel for the commemoration of the International Women's Day, on 8 March 2006, included Ms. Noeli Pocaterra, President of the Permanent Commission of Indigenous Peoples National Assembly, Venezuela. SPFII co-sponsored, jointly with MADRE and the International Indigenous Women Forum (FIMI), a side event on "Violence against Indigenous Women". SPFII also participated in a panel on "Opportunities and Challenges for Women in the Americas" organized by UNIFEM/LAC and the Permanent Mission of Mexico to the United Nations.
3. **UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), Fifth Session:** During the fifth session of the UNPFII in May 2006, within the special theme "the Millennium Development Goals and indigenous peoples: redefining the Goals", special attention was given to indigenous women. An important set of recommendation on indigenous women was adopted by the Forum (Annex).
4. **7th International Meeting on Gender Statistics within the MDGs framework, 19 – 21 September 2006, Aguascalientes, Mexico:** Organized by UNIFEM, ECLAC, the National Institute of Women of Mexico (Inmujeres), the National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Computer Sciences of Mexico (INEGI). During this meeting it was possible to address recommendations adopted by the Forum at its third, fourth and fifth sessions linking indigenous women and data collection and disaggregation. SPFII highlighted the recommendations of the Forum related to the theme and also presented the activities that are taking place on data collection and disaggregation, indicators and gender issues, and conveyed the urgent need to include indigenous peoples in statistics, especially indigenous women.
5. **Expert Workshop on Indigenous Peoples and Migration, 6 - 7 April 2006, Geneva, Switzerland:** Co-sponsored by IOM and SPFII. At the workshop discussions outlined four key areas: indigenous peoples as voluntary migrants; indigenous peoples as forced migrants and displaced peoples; impact of migration of indigenous peoples on indigenous

communities; and impact of migration of non-indigenous populations on indigenous communities. The outcomes of the workshop included underlining the gender perspective and the need for disaggregated data to include indigenous peoples in national statistics. It also underscored the importance of indigenous peoples' cultural tie to their lands that may affect their migration. The report of the workshop (E/C.19/2006/CRP.5) was presented to the fifth session of the UNPFII.

6. **Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People:** The Programme of Action¹ for the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People reaffirmed the commitment of the United Nations system for the solution of problems faced by indigenous peoples including indigenous women, implementing action-oriented programmes and specific projects, increased technical assistance and relevant standard-setting activities. Within this context, in May 2006 the Advisory Group of the Trust Fund for the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People considered projects from the seven diverse socio-cultural regions and prioritized to fund projects supporting the livelihood of indigenous women and youth.
7. **Preparation of the collection of case studies "Indigenous Women and the United Nations System":** The collection prepared by the Task Force on Indigenous Women of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality contains cases submitted by CBD, FAO, IFAD, ILO, UNFPA, UNIFEM and UNDP about their work with indigenous women in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The publication is in process and we expect to launch it in May 2007 during the sixth session of the Forum. It is the intention of the Task Force to disseminate it widely, including to all UN Country Teams, so that it may serve as a practical tool for future work of the UN system and other organizations engaging with indigenous peoples.
8. **Gender and Indigenous Peoples "Briefing Notes":** As a result of cooperation between the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues (OSAGI) and the Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, a series of "*Briefing Notes on Gender and Indigenous Issues*" is under revision and it will be produced and jointly published and disseminated during the Sixth Session of the UNPFII.

C. Future work of the Task Force on Indigenous Women

1. Based on the work programme adopted in 2004, our Task Force has the objective to produce in 2007 a number of practical tools: a checklist of items to be considered in UN programming; a review of existing gender-training tools in the UN system and an awareness-raising/training video.
 - a) At the moment, the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues (IASG) is preparing a resource kit called *Participation and Partnership: a resource kit for UN county teams working with indigenous peoples at country level*. It is expected that this resource kit will be ready by the end of the year. SPFII will circulate it to Task Force members, so we can all together ensure the integration of a gender perspective.
 - b) In July 2006, the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) Principals' Meeting recommended that IASG in consultation with the UNDG Programme Group, provide support and guidance for mainstreaming and integrating indigenous issues in UN

¹ The Programme of Action for the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People appears in A/60/270, Section II and was adapted by General Assembly resolution A/RES/60/142

operational activities. As soon as the draft guidelines are ready, SPFII will circulate them for your inputs in order to integrate gender perspective.

- c) It was not possible to take the initiative to produce a film on indigenous women's issues due to lack of resources, however, there is a film on *Indigenous Peoples and the United Nations*, available in NTSC and PALM systems, which highlights the challenges faced by Indigenous Peoples, including indigenous women, worldwide and explains the role of the UNPFII in addressing them.
2. In addition to the above, the following activities will be pursued by SPFII:
- a) Presentation of the work of the Task Force on Indigenous Women during the Sixth Session of the UNPFII in May 2007.
 - b) Distribution of the report of the Task Force on Indigenous Women to the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues (IASG).
 - c) Presentation and distribution of the publication *Indigenous Women and the United Nations System* during the Sixth Session of the UNPFII.
 - d) Presentation of the "*Briefing Notes on Gender and Indigenous Peoples*" during the Sixth Session of the UNPFII in May 2007.

ANNEX**United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues****Report on the fifth session, E/C.19/2006/11
(15-26 May 2006)****Recommendations Specifically Pertaining to Indigenous Women and the Girl Child****Indigenous women**

44. The Platform for Action, adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women,² included indigenous women among those who had encountered particular barriers to full equality and advancement, both as women and as members of their communities. The review and appraisal of the Beijing Platform for Action acknowledged that indigenous women continued to face many obstacles and challenges, which included multiple forms of discrimination based on gender, race and ethnicity, as well as the impact of globalization and environmental degradation.

45. Redefining the Millennium Development Goals provides an opportunity to incorporate into the Goals the concerns of indigenous peoples, particularly indigenous women. The Goals offer a strategic framework within which to fully integrate the goals of the Platform for Action, which provides an important human rights-based approach to the development agenda for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women, including indigenous women.

46. Owing to the cross-cutting nature of gender equality, it is also critical that gender perspectives be fully integrated into the implementation and monitoring of all the other objectives associated with the United Nations Millennium Declaration³ and the Millennium Development Goals.

47. The Permanent Forum recommends that appropriate United Nations organizations, including the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), as well as States, take immediate action to review and monitor the situation of indigenous women and provide comprehensive reports on violence against indigenous women and girls, particularly sexual violence and violence in the context of armed conflict. Indigenous women must be full participants in this process.

48. The Permanent Forum, reaffirming the recommendations on health made at its first, second and third sessions, further recommends that all relevant United Nations entities, especially WHO, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and UNFPA, as well as regional health organizations and Governments, fully incorporate a cultural perspective into health policies, programmes and reproductive health services aimed at providing indigenous women with quality health care, including emergency obstetric care, voluntary family planning and skilled attendance at birth. In the latter context, the roles of traditional midwives should be re-evaluated and expanded so that they may assist indigenous women during their reproductive health processes and act as cultural brokers between health systems and the indigenous communities' values and world views.⁴

² *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 2005* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

³ See General Assembly resolution 55/2.

⁴ See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2004, Supplement No. 23* (E/2004/43), chap. I, para. 89.

49. States are urged to allocate budgets in order to implement quality services to reduce maternal mortality and ensure indigenous women's access to reproductive health services.
50. The Permanent Forum welcomes the initiative of IOM to establish a coordination mechanism for combating the trafficking of indigenous women and girls.
51. United Nations special procedures are an essential tool for monitoring the implementation of priority human rights issues. The Permanent Forum recommends that the special procedures with a mandate on gender issues (carried out by the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, and the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially in women and children) brief the Permanent Forum each year during its annual session on the situation of indigenous women.
52. The Permanent Forum urges States to intensify efforts at the national level to implement Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) of 31 October 2000 on women, peace and security, including through national action plans that pay special attention to indigenous women.
53. The Permanent Forum recommends that States foster sensitivity towards the cultures of indigenous migrants and ensure that all cultural and customary practices that negatively affect the rights of indigenous women (for example, female genital mutilation) are eliminated, including through specific legislation.
54. United Nations organizations and States should pay special attention to the specific situation and needs of elderly indigenous women.
55. The Permanent Forum recommends that the Secretary-General, in his report on the study of violence against women, address the particular situation of indigenous women and girls whose suffering is based not only on gender but also on ethnicity and culture.
56. The Permanent Forum recommends that the Commission on the Status of Women report to it on the status of the implementation of resolution 49/7 entitled "Indigenous women: beyond the ten-year review of the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action"⁵ adopted by the Commission on 11 March 2005.

⁵ Ibid., 2005, *Supplement No. 7* (E/2005/27), chap. I, sect. D.