



CONCEPT NOTE

“CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND GIRLS”

17 MARCH 2017
CONFERENCE ROOM – 7, UN HEADQUARTERS
18:30 HRS.

Background

Indigenous women provide tremendous contributions to sustainable development and the well-being of their families, communities and national economies. Yet, indigenous women in rural areas are often prevented from realising their full capabilities, as they struggle to overcome poverty, discrimination and multiple challenges to basic human rights. In many cases, indigenous women face loss of ancestral lands and natural resources, which leads to economic insecurity, and challenges the rights to traditional livelihoods, cultural identity and development. Many indigenous women face additional layers of discrimination and exclusion when trying to access basic public services, due to the way they dress, talk or are perceived as being ‘different.’ Despite the international recognition of women’s equal rights to economic resources, complex obstacles remain such as inequitable laws on inheritance and marriage, land reforms that tend to privilege men, and discriminatory attitudes and beliefs against women. This structural injustice keeps indigenous women impoverished, dependent and vulnerable.

To address these challenges, indigenous women have participated in global processes to assert indigenous peoples’ rights, women’s rights and human rights. Over the past two decades, these processes have yielded notable achievements, both for indigenous women and for the human rights movements more broadly.

In 1995, the Fourth World Conference on Women organized by the United Nations in Beijing marked a turning point in the indigenous women’s movement. Since then, indigenous women have been active in its follow-up meetings as well as in the sessions



of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). As a result of their advocacy, two resolutions concerning indigenous women have been adopted by the CSW: **resolution 49/7**, entitled *Indigenous women: beyond the ten-year review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*; and **resolution 56/4**, entitled *Indigenous women: key actors in poverty and hunger eradication*, which was a landmark achievement in terms of the recognition of the role of indigenous women in poverty eradication. In addition, references to the situation of indigenous women have been reflected in the CSW's Agreed Conclusions in 2013 and 2016.

At the annual sessions of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, indigenous women have shared experiences and challenges and exchanged proposals and strategies to help overcome situations of concern.¹ As a result, the Forum adopted more than 150 recommendations directly referring to the situation of indigenous women and addressing a wide range of issues, including education, culture, health, human rights, environment and development, conflict and political participation².

In 2014, Member States in the Outcome Document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples³ invited the CSW to consider *the empowerment of indigenous women* as a theme for future sessions. In follow up, the Permanent Forum in its 14th session (2015) recommended 2017 as a specific year to ensure that “empowerment of indigenous women” would be considered by the CSW.⁴

In response, to the World Conference invitation, the Commission finally decided in resolution E/RES/2016/3 on its multi-year programme of work to include a preambular paragraph, acknowledging its intention to place the empowerment of indigenous women as a focus area of its sixty-first session. Consequently, the Bureau of the CSW proposed “the Empowerment of Indigenous Women” as a focus area/emerging issue for the 61st session.⁵

¹ In 2014, the third session of the Permanent Forum devoted its special theme on indigenous women.

² (See report E/C.19/2015/2, paras. 7, 8 12 and 13)

³ (A/RES/69/2, paragraph 19),

⁴ (Paragraph 43 in E/2015/43).

⁵ (E/CN.6/2017/1/Add.1)



Unlike the situation 20 years ago, indigenous women now have a voice of their own in the global chorus of the women movement. This has given them an opportunity to push the realization of their rights and to work with Governments to strive for the implementation of their commitments.

Objective

The event will present opportunities and lessons learned from ongoing efforts at addressing specific issues affecting indigenous women and girls. Consideration of the focus area of the empowerment of indigenous women will aim to:

- Review gains and development challenges facing indigenous women,
- Highlight opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of indigenous women and girls in their different and specific circumstances,
- Identify concrete policy ideas and measures to support the empowerment of indigenous women and girls in the context of national and global level in terms of ensuring economic empowerment, combat violence and discrimination and foster political participation in decision-making.

Organizers:

Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues/DSPS/DESA and International Indigenous Women's Forum (FIMI/IIWF); in cooperation with UN Women.

Panelists:

Moderator: Ms. Chandra Roy-Henricksen, Chief, SPFII/DSPD/DESA

OPENING

- Remarks by H. E. Mr. Antonio Patriota de Aguiar, Chair of the 61st session of the Commission on the Status of Women; and
- Remarks by Ms. Lakshmi Puri, Deputy Executive Director of UN Women

SPEAKERS

- Ms. Fresia Paineñil Calfuque, Mapuche community of Llaguepulli, Chile (economic empowerment)



- *Ms. Terry Henry, USA, Tribal Council Member for the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians** (violence against indigenous women)
- *Ms. Yasso Kanti Bhattachan , National Indigenous Women Forum (NWIF) Nepal,* (political participation in decision making)

INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE

It includes statements from the floor by Member States, UN Agencies, indigenous peoples and other participants.

CLOSING

- Remarks by *Ms. Tarcila Rivera Zea, Executive President of FIMI**

Format and Participation

After introductory remarks by the moderator, a panel discussion will take place.

Languages

The event will be conducted in English and Spanish with simultaneous interpretation.



Brief biographies of speakers

H.E. Ambassador Antonio de Aguiar Patriota, was born in Rio de Janeiro. He was Minister of External Relations of Brazil. Overseas, he served at Brazil's Permanent Mission to the International Organizations in Geneva, having acted for two years as Deputy Permanent Representative to the World Trade Organization. Currently, Ambassador Patriota is Chair of the Bureau of the Commission on the Status of Women.

Ms. Lakshmi Puri, (India) is Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations and Deputy Executive Director of UN Women. Having joined the leadership team in 2011 at the inception of UN Women, she has contributed strategically and vitally to building this new and dynamic entity. She is directly responsible for the leadership and management of the Bureau for Intergovernmental Support, UN System Coordination, and Strategic Partnerships, and was the Acting Head of UN Women from March to August 2013.

Ms. Fresia Paola Paineñil Calfuqueo, Mapuche, Chile

Fresia Paola Paineñil Calfuqueo was born on 27 March 1988 in the indigenous community of Llaguepulli, Chile. She had the opportunity to attend a programme in Canada on tourism and indigenous peoples, after which she returned to her community to work in the community school. In 2010 she graduated as a Tourism Specialist. From then until now, Fresia has performed as administrator of Mapuche tourism committee lafquenche Lake Budi (a group of 18 families working on sustainable tourism of the region). She is also coordinator of communications for her community.

**Ms. Terri Henry*, Cherokee, USA

Terri Henry is an expert member of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (2017-2019). Ms. Terri Henry is a Longhair Clan of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and a resident of the Painttown Community of the Qualla Boundary. She is a founding member and Co-Chair of the National Congress of American Indians Task Force on Violence Against Women. Ms. Henry was elected to the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians Tribal Council for three terms from 2009 to 2015 representing the Painttown Community. In 2013, Terri was elected by her Tribal Council peers to be the first Tribal Council Chairwoman. Terri played a leading role as a member of the United States Department of Justice Violence Against Women Office to direct policies and programs for over 250 American Indian Tribes and Alaska Native Villages. Programming under her direction recognized the sovereignty of Indian tribes and the



principles of self-determination. Terri is the Chair of the Indian Law Resource Center Board of Directors.

Ms. Yasso Kanti Bhattachan (Gauchan), is an indigenous woman leader and gender expert in Nepal. She belongs to the Thakali indigenous peoples. She holds a Master's degree in Home Science and a postgraduate diploma in Women's Studies. Yasso is one of the five founding members and currently advisor of the National Indigenous Women's Federation, current Vice Chair of the National Indigenous Women Form. She has done consultancy works for several international organizations including ILO, CECI, IIDS, UNDP, GTZ, and Danida. Yasso had participated in many international events and she coordinated the preparation of the shadow report of indigenous women's rights by NIWF, LAHURNIP and FPP that was submitted and read out a statement in the 49th session of CSW in 2011.

**Ms. Tarcila Rivera Zea (Quechua) Perú.* Ms. Rivera Zea is an expert member of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (2017-2019). Journalist by profession and, for more than 30 years, activist for indigenous peoples' rights - especially those related to women, children and indigenous youth in national and international areas. The United Nations is her main area of impact. Working at CHIRAPAQ, the institution that she founded, she generates different social processes that contribute to cultural reaffirmation, empowerment of indigenous women, the struggle against racism and discrimination, intercultural education and food sovereignty; rescuing ancestral wisdom and practices as main inputs to these processes. She is the currently president of the International Indigenous Women's Forum.