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Statement submitted by Indigenous Information Network, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

The International Indigenous Women's Forum is a global network that represents the indigenous women from the Americas, Asia, Africa, the Arctic, and the Pacific and reaffirms the progress made in the last 25 years within the framework of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. At that historic moment, we approved and signed the Beijing Declaration of Indigenous Women that establishes the basis of our claims as indigenous people and as women.

Since then, we have been contributing to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action at the national level, as acknowledged by the Commission on the Status of Women. Its resolutions entitled, "Indigenous women: beyond the ten-year review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action" (E/CN.6/2005/11) and "Indigenous women: key actors in poverty and hunger the eradication" (E/CN.6/2012/16), were landmark achievements in terms of the recognition of our role in poverty and violence eradication. In addition, we honor the references to the particular situation of indigenous women that have been made in the Commission on the Status of Women agreed conclusions in 2013, 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019.

Despite the international recognition of our contributions as indigenous women, as well as our organizational advancements at the local, national, and global levels, we keep facing important challenges that limit the full exercise of our individual and collective rights and the achievement of equality and well-being. In particular, as Indigenous women, we still experience multiple levels of discrimination and violence: increasingly aggressive appropriation of our lands and resources, militarization of territories, forced displacement and migration, criminalization, and repression of social protest, including gender attacks, exploitation, and trafficking (International Indigenous Women's Forum, Indigenous Peoples Major Group, 2019).

The overwhelming current situation illustrates that our countries are at high risk of delaying the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. In this context, we reaffirm the Political Position Document and the Action Plan, which resulted from the World Conference of Indigenous Women held in Lima, Peru (2013). We highlight our contributions to sustainable development, biodiversity, and natural resources preservation with our own identity, through our knowledge, innovations, and practices as agents of change.

Therefore, we invite the Commission on the Status of Women to urge Member States to redouble their efforts to take up the critical areas of action of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, mainly by following priorities for indigenous women and girls:

a. Ensure the visibility of indigenous peoples, women, and girls through official data and statistics. National and global statistics require disaggregated data to capture economic-social and cultural inequalities. They also require understanding gaps and lags affecting indigenous women and girls for the appropriate formulation of public policies that guarantee empowerment, well-being, and access to relevant, quality, and sufficient services in indigenous territories and communities, as well as in the cities and in the context of internal and external migration. In addition, there is a need to improve participatory processes and to consult with indigenous women on the definition of public policies, transparent accountability mechanisms, indicators, and tools for data collection to include in the analysis the perspective of indigenous peoples – specifically indigenous women and girls.

b. Prevent, investigate, restore, and heal all forms of individual and collective violence committed against indigenous women, indigenous women with disabilities,

and girls: violence in the name of tradition, such as female genital mutilation and forced child marriage, domestic, institutional, and political; in armed conflicts and during militarization of indigenous territories; and in urban settings, during displacement and migration processes. We highlight from our collective vision, the environmental violence and the violence against Mother Earth are caused by neoliberalism and aggressive development, i.e., extractive industries, such as mining, the oil industry, intensive agribusiness, tourism not sustainable or respectful, among others.

c. Guarantee access to justice for indigenous women and girls, both in state-operated and indigenous judicial institutions. Fight impunity in cases of violence and discrimination against indigenous women, through effective criminal investigations that bring cases to justice, ensuring that crimes are duly sanctioned and that victims receive reparation.

d. Provide rights to access education and sexual reproductive health for indigenous women of all ages. This includes our rights associated with culturally appropriate health services and education in our communities and the right to exercise, maintain, and control our own health knowledge and practices (Lima Declaration, 2013). Besides, it is crucial to decisively address the issues of maternal mortality; teenage pregnancy; abortion; female genital mutilation; discrimination; exclusion and criminalization of traditional health professionals; prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases, especially HIV, which is still a taboo in indigenous communities ([E/C.19/2014/CRP.1](#)); and environmental violence and its consequences on health in general and on sexual and reproductive health of indigenous women in particular, such as the extensive use agro toxins in indigenous territories or on the borders of protected indigenous lands (International Indigenous Women's Forum, Environmental Justice, 2019).

e. Ensure quality culturally and linguistically relevant education, with access to new technologies. We emphasize the need for more quality education that can lead to the horizontal and complementary articulation of our traditional and ancestral knowledge with the strategies of universal learning acquired ([E/C.19/2014/CRP.1](#)). Technology should be considered as a crucial asset to overcome isolation, as well as a political tool and should be used in solidarity. We are aware and have the experience to affirm that the more and better culturally appropriate education women and girls receive in all aspects of life, the that more social and economic effects will ensure their well-being, especially regarding indigenous women's health and economic autonomy ([E/C.19/2014/CRP.1](#)).

f. Ensure the economic empowerment of indigenous women and indigenous women's organizations at local, national, regional, and global levels through access to economic and financial resources, as well as to the ownership of assets and our ancestral lands, intellectual property, and traditional production practices.

g. Recognize that access to ownership and control of lands, territories, resources and, free prior and informed consent for indigenous women are crucial for the full development, empowerment, and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, including the protection of indigenous women human rights defenders, who are criminalized, persecuted, and killed (International Indigenous Women's Forum Statement, United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues 17 session, 2018).

h. Protect indigenous territories as crucial areas for the social, cultural, and ecological life of recovery and resilience of humanity and the natural world, and focus investments in addressing the consequences of climate change on them, ensuring the participation of indigenous women and respect of our ancestral knowledge of

reproduction and protection of ecosystems (International Indigenous Women's Forum, Environmental Justice, 2019).

i. Promote the political exercise of indigenous women and girls by strengthening our political power and leadership, as key factors in achieving our participation in decision-making at all levels. Indigenous women demand training opportunities, reform of the political constitutions of our countries, electoral laws, and political parties to respond to a real and inclusive democracy ([E/C.19/2014/CRP.1](#)).

j. Ensure the full and effective participation of indigenous women, girls, and young people during the national implementation processes of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This includes decision-making on action plans, mechanisms, and budgetary allocations to ensure our maximum contributions to its implementation, follow-up, and review. (International Indigenous Women's Forum, Indigenous Peoples Major Group, 2019).

We reiterate the full validity of the strategic objectives and measures of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action to overcome specific and intersectional barriers that constrain the full equality and exercise of fundamental rights for indigenous women.

This document is a result of a global consultation with indigenous women and indigenous women's organizations, with support from the Centre for Indigenous Cultures of Peru and the Indigenous Information Network, and in special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council.
