

INTERNATIONAL
INDIGENOUS
WOMEN'S FORUM



Global Study on the Situation of Indigenous Women And Girls

OUR VOICES AND ACTIONS FOR OUR RIGHTS AFTER
25 YEARS OF BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION

🌿 Global Study On The Situation Of 🌿
Indigenous Women And Girls

In the Framework of the 25th Anniversary of
the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action



OUR VOICES AND ACTIONS FOR OUR RIGHTS AFTER
25 YEARS OF BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION



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FOREWORD

The voices of Indigenous Women of all ages must be heard in decision-making at all levels if we are to find solutions anchored in sustainable development practices. COVID-19 has had profound and unprecedented impacts on women of many races and ethnic backgrounds, and they must be represented in the solutions.

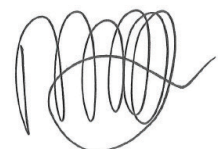
UN Women is proud to have partnered with the International Indigenous Women's Forum (FIMI) for several years. Through this relationship, we celebrate their achievements as agents of change as well as highlight the challenges that Indigenous Women and Girls face in their quest for equality and dignity. This collaboration and partnership will be further enhanced through the participation of Indigenous Women in the Generation Equality activities, including in the Action Coalitions.

The context of Indigenous Women and Girls has been well reflected in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which are interlocking frameworks for change. Achieving this change requires consensus on the importance of protecting ancestral

lands and territories from the harmful effects of extractive industries and climate change; full recognition of traditional knowledge and sustainable development practices; respect for indigenous justice systems; protection from violence; and meaningful participation in conflict prevention, peace, security and humanitarian action.

This global study complements the **Secretary-General's Report** on the Review and Appraisal of the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and Outcomes of the Twenty-Third Special Session of the General Assembly. The light that the report sheds on progress levels, good practices and the remaining structural challenges is a stimulus for us all to rethink our strategies and sharpen our focus on inclusive development.

It is our hope that this study will become a reference tool for the design of relevant public policies, budgets and programs for and with Indigenous Women and Girls. Their inclusion is vital in order to reach those who are being left furthest behind, and to respond to the devastating effects of the pandemic by building a better future.



Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka
Executive Director
UN Women

Our Journey, Our Voices!

The Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing was a milestone for the coordination of indigenous women around the world. With the will to overcome our linguistic barriers and recognizing ourselves in our diversity, the 150 indigenous women present in the “indigenous tent” built a common position¹ to make visible our priorities and proposals as women and indigenous peoples.

Since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, we have been strengthening our organizations and influencing international mechanisms with our own voice, bringing proposals built on our realities, experiences and cultures, achieving significant progress in the formal recognition of our rights and our contribution to sustainable development. However, the Political Declaration adopted by the governments at the 64th session of the Commission on the Status of Women² demonstrates that more than 25 years of struggle for our inclusion and visibility are not enough, and are reduced to a single reference to indigenous women as an example of women who “suffer multiple forms of intersectional discrimination, vulnerability and marginalization”. Invisible in the declaration are the multiple exclusions, racism and the expropriation of our lands and resources that put us in this situation.

Despite our active and purposeful participation during almost five decades since the First World

Conference on Women in Mexico in 1975, where we were represented only by Domitila Chungara, we still have a long road ahead of us to be truly visible, and an even longer road to ensure that the States see us as protagonists of change and subjects of rights, with decision-making power in international, national and local agendas. In the context of Beijing+25, which coincided with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the health, social and economic crisis, the full exercise of our collective and individual rights seems an even more distant dream and, rather, we are witnessing a worsening of the inequalities and the multiple forms of violence that affect our peoples, territories, bodies and spirit.

The path started by Domitila brings us the formation of regional networks lead by indigenous women around the world, each one with their own face, their own voices and their own ways of expressing themselves, giving life to the global coordination expressed in FIMI, now 20 years old.

The present study shows the current situation of indigenous women in different regions of the world, their efforts and active resistance, allowing us to identify the key gaps that require greater attention from the States so that we cease to be a pending agenda. Further, being the only global study of Beijing+25 from the indigenous women’s movement, in these pages we recognize and make visible the good practices of these same indigenous women in the face of inaction by the States.

Over time, new forms of violence have emerged, and we have continued to develop and expand our political agenda as indigenous women, respond-

¹ Declaration of Indigenous Women in Beijing, 1995. Available, in Spanish, at <https://asianindigenouswomen.org/index.php/indigenous-womens-human-rights/csw/23-beijing-declaration-of-indigenous-women/file>.

² Political declaration on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women, 2020. Available at <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/64/csw64-declaration-en-fin-web.pdf?la=en&vs=3738>.

ing to changing contexts. We affirm the validity of the Declaration of Indigenous Women presented 25 years ago in Beijing, and we deliver the present study and advocacy tool into the hands of the indigenous and allied women in different parts of the world who struggle tirelessly to achieve the full exercise of rights.

We remain hopeful that the indivisibility and the complementarity of our individual and collective rights, as subjects of rights, are fully understood! May the new generations join this journey, and may our voices be included in all spaces where decisions are made that affect our lives.



Tarcila Rivera Zea
FIMI President

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Even before the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BDPfA) in 1995, Indigenous Women defended our individual and collective rights and were on the front lines struggling against all forms of violence and exclusion in the face of structural challenges and injustices. However, it is important to highlight that the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing was a strategic arena that influenced Indigenous Women's movements.

It was for that reason that FIMI recognized the importance of collaboratively developing a global study to showcase some of the good practices pioneered by Indigenous Women and how we are facing the remaining challenges globally. Critically, we used a participatory process incorporating a wide variety of expertise from Indigenous sisters from Africa, the Americas, the Arctic, Asia and the Pacific.

A very special thank you goes to the Continental Network of Indigenous Women of the Americas (ECMIA), the African Indigenous Women's Organization (AIWO), the Asian Indigenous Women's Network (AIWN), the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Alliance and the Sámi Women's Forum (SNF) for their continued support in coordinating the regional reports resulting in the Global Study. Their networking, engagement and strong commitment were essential in including voices from the local, national and regional levels.

Also, we would like to extend our appreciation to all our Indigenous sisters who took time to be interviewed, sharing their wisdom, experiences and

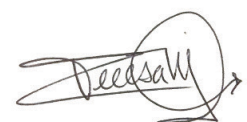
knowledge. Thanks also to our sisters who had the opportunity to attend the Regional Preparatory Meetings in Asia (October 3–6, 2019, in Kathmandu, Nepal), in Africa (December 3–7, 2019, in Yaoundé, Cameroon) and in the Americas (February 26–29, 2020, in Mexico City, Mexico) who helped analyze and reflect on the priorities and demands of Indigenous Women, enriching the Global Study.

We value the efforts made by the consulting team *Inclusión y Equidad* for their strong commitment, patience and dedication in putting all the pieces together. We would also like to thank our community of donors for their trust in Indigenous Women and for contributing to FIMI's technical and financial endeavours.

Finally, this report would not have been possible without the continued support, engagement and guidance of our Board Members: Ms. Tarcila Rivera Zea, Ms. Lucy Mullenkei, Ms. Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, Ms. Joan Carling and Ms. Sandra Creamer.

This document is a symbol of gratitude, honour and remembrance of the Indigenous Elders, Youth and Women, who came before us and shone the way. At the same time, it is a contribution to new generations, aiming to maintain the thread of history and preserve the fire of our peoples' strength and our inalienable individual and collective right to well-being.

In solidarity,



Teresa Zapeta Mendoza
FIMI Executive Director

List of Acronyms

- AIAN: American Indian and Alaska Native
- AIPP: Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact
- AIWN: Asian Indigenous Women Network
- AIWO: African Indigenous Women Organization
- ASEAN: Association of Southeast Asian Nations
- BDIW: Beijing Declaration of Indigenous Women
- BDPfA: Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
- CBD: Convention on Biological Diversity
- CBO: Community-based organizations
- CEDAW: Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
- CERD: Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
- CESCR: The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- CHT: Chittagong Hill Tracts
- CSW: Commission on the Status of Women
- DRC: Democratic Republic of Congo
- ECLAC: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
- ECMIA: Continental Network of Indigenous Women of the Americas (Enlace Continental de Mujeres Indígenas de las Américas)
- ELC: Economic Land Concession
- ELCAC: End Local Communist Armed Conflict Philippines
- ESCAP: Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
- FGM: Female genital mutilation
- FIMI: International Indigenous Women's Forum (Foro Internacional de Mujeres Indígenas)
- FSM: Federated States of Micronesia
- GBV: Gender-based violence
- GLS: Global Leadership School
- IIN: Indigenous Information Network



IP: Indigenous Peoples
IW: Indigenous Women
IWG: Indigenous Women and Girls
IWGIA: International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs
MDG: Millennium Development Goals
MMIWG: Missing and murdered Indigenous Women and Girls
MMIWG2: Missing and murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirit Persons
NGOs: Non-governmental organizations
PNG: Papua New Guinea
PICTs: Pacific Island Countries and Territories
PIF: Pacific Islands Forum
SDG: Sustainable Development Goals
SNF: Sámi Women's Forum (Sámi Nisson Forum)
SPC: Secretariat of the Pacific Community
STI: Sexually transmitted infections
UNDRIP: United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
UNFPA: United Nations Population Fund
UNPFII: United Nations Permanent Forum of Indigenous Issues
UNFCCC: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNSRIP: United Nations Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Peoples
WCIP: World Conference on Indigenous Peoples
WGIP: UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations
WWII: World War II



Executive Summary

The *Global Study on the Situation of Indigenous Women and Girls in the Framework of the 25th Anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BDPfA)* describes the situation of Indigenous Women and Girls (IWG) in five regions of the world (the Americas, Asia, Africa, the Arctic and the Pacific), outlining progress over the last 25 years, as well as ongoing issues and challenges according to the 12 critical areas of concern identified in the BDPfA.

Since the Beijing Conference in 1995, inspired by that powerful process, various national and regional Indigenous organizations across the world have been consolidated or established, and new alliances among different regional organizations have been created, giving rise to new international networks such as the International Indigenous Women's Forum (FIMI). Through advocacy strategies based on their ancestral knowledge, worldview and experience in different spaces of action, Indigenous Women (IW) have contributed to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action at the local, national and international levels, defending their individual and collective rights. However, despite the achievement of meaningful progress and the widespread recognition of IW as actors of change, after 25 years, many challenges persist.

Globally, there are an estimated 476.6 million Indigenous people, of whom 238.4 million are women and 238.2 million are men. Overall, they represent 6.2% of the world's population (ILO, 2019), but they make up 15% of the world's poorest (UN-PFII, 2020). Information for all regions identifies poverty as a multidimensional problem that affects

IW, representing a critical barrier to equality and to the full enjoyment of human rights. Additionally, poverty is the consequence of persistent discriminatory policies and of an economic growth development model based on capitalism and new forms of colonialism. Poverty is also deeply related to land dispossession, loss of livelihood assets, armed conflicts and experiencing the effects of climate change. Migration by IW in general, and to urban areas in particular, has been documented in all regions, due to limited economic opportunities, lack of basic social services, land dispossession and food insecurity, among others.

Although there has been an improvement in access to education for women and girls globally, challenges persist for IWG in particular in obtaining basic education in Africa and the Asia-Pacific region, and secondary and tertiary education in all regions. Dropout rates of Indigenous Girls are often linked to child pregnancy, forced marriage or forced labour. Limited access to quality education that is culturally and linguistically relevant is still a key challenge in all regions, undermining the transmission and preservation of Indigenous language and culture.

Regardless of their geographical location or socio-political situation, health indicators are always poorer for Indigenous Peoples and IW than for non-Indigenous ones. The effects of colonization, the loss of ancestral land, environmental violence, exclusion, inequality, discriminatory cultural practices by mainstream health care providers and discrimination with regard to traditional health practices are among the most striking factors in IW's health situation.

Gender-based violence (GBV) is also an alarming and pressing issue among IWG globally. Although there is a widespread lack of data and research on this topic, available information shows that IWG generally experience a higher rate of gender-based violence compared to non-Indigenous women and girls, a lower rate of reporting, limited or no access to quality services that are culturally and linguistically relevant, racialized policing, limited or no access to justice and an absence of relevant public policies to prevent and protect them from violence. During armed conflicts or militarization of Indigenous territories, they are also likely to be subjected to sexual violence and rape.

Indigenous Women face specific challenges in the world of work that can exacerbate marginalization and poverty. Their heavy reliance on informal work and their concentration in areas threatened by climate change place Indigenous Women in a disadvantaged position compared both to their non-Indigenous counterparts and to Indigenous men (ILO, 2019). In addition, they are likely to face many other challenges: macroeconomic adjustment policies that affect them disproportionately; discriminatory laws related to land rights, natural resources, loans and credit; and aggressive development projects such as mining and agribusiness on Indigenous land which result in land contamination, dispossession and loss of traditional livelihood assets. IW also carry most of the responsibility to provide unpaid care and domestic work in their communities.

There has been progress regarding the political participation of IW at the national and international levels, thanks to the strengthening of Indigenous Women's organizations and their advocacy capacity. However, Indigenous Women continue to face critical barriers to their effective and equal participation in Indigenous and non-Indigenous local, national and international institutions. They are less represented and even excluded in meaningful political decision-making at the national and local levels, due to a lack of recognition of Indigenous Peoples in national constitutions and laws, discrimination and marginalization, lower levels of

education, domestic and care-related responsibilities and political violence.

Moreover, national and global statistics frequently lack disaggregated data to capture socio-economic and cultural inequalities, jeopardizing the visibility of Indigenous Peoples, including IWG, in official data. This critical issue encompasses all areas: education, health, economic empowerment, political participation and freedom from violence. In countries where IP lack formal recognition (Africa, Asia and the Pacific), data collection and the development of evidence-based public policies represent an even greater challenge.

Twenty-five years after Beijing, the advancement of the situation of Indigenous Women is still constrained by the major barrier that is the full and effective recognition, protection and fulfilment of the rights of IP enshrined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). The absence of recognition of Indigenous Peoples in national legislation, as well as land dispossession and the lack of protection of IP's land rights, are key human rights issues that affect IP's collective and individual rights, having specific consequences for Indigenous Women. Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous Women are also systematically criminalized, persecuted and killed for defending their land and rights.

Although Indigenous Women's participation in media has increased, there are still many obstacles to their engagement in communication and the broadcasting of information, including poor communication infrastructures in Indigenous territories, gender discrimination, legal barriers to the establishment of community media and the criminalization of journalists and reporters, among others. However, media may also be used as a tool for exercising IW's rights to self-determination, to enable their empowerment through reclaiming their narratives, allowing them to be voices for social change.

Finally, Indigenous Women live in some of the most fragile ecosystems in the world, and they are being affected by the impacts of climate change

more than anyone else. As for their specific relation to land, Indigenous Women are most likely to experience the first and worst consequences of climate change globally, including natural disasters and emergencies, food insecurity, forced migration, limited access to natural resources and related concerns. Although Indigenous Women hold important knowledge for both mitigation and adaptation, they remain underrepresented in environmental policymaking at multiple levels. Besides, environmental violence caused by large development projects, extractive industries and agribusiness, as well as military contamination on IP's territories are having alarming consequences on IW's reproductive health and spiritual well-being.

To deal with these pressing challenges, Indigenous Women have been building alliances among themselves and with other social organizations and movements. Everywhere in the world, there are many positive examples of IW, particularly young IW, who are leading innovative initiatives on many important issues such as self-determination; violence and access to justice and sexual and reproductive rights; environmental justice and climate change; emergency responses to the COVID-19 pandemic; criticizing and challenging colonialism and capitalism; and promoting and protecting IW's collective and individual rights.



Introduction

1. Introduction

Since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BDPfA) in 1995, Indigenous Women (IW) have been defending their individual and collective rights and consciously empowering themselves against all forms of violence and the violation of those rights.

However, complex and profound challenges and structural injustices continue to threaten IW. Exploitation and trafficking, the increasingly aggressive appropriation of their lands and resources, the militarization of their territories, forced displacement and migration, the repression of social protest and the criminalization of defenders of human rights and the environment are just some of the human rights violations that continue to affect Indigenous Women and Girls (IWG). Furthermore, the recent COVID-19 pandemic is spreading rapidly all over the world, representing another critical contemporary challenge for Indigenous Women.

In this context the International Indigenous Women's Forum (FIMI), a global network that represents Indigenous Women from the Americas, Asia, Africa and the Arctic and Pacific regions, has identified the need for a global political and strategic report to compile an overview of the situation of IWG in the context of the 25th Anniversary of the BDPfA.³

³ The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, adopted unanimously by 189 countries at the Conference in 1995, is considered to be the most comprehensive global policy framework for women's rights. It recognizes women's rights as human rights and sets out a comprehensive roadmap for achieving equality between women and men. Since the Beijing Conference, the implementation of the Platform for Action has been assessed by the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) each year and through a review process carried out every five years, reaffirming States' commitment to its full implementation.

To meet this need, this global report (GR) outlines challenges and areas of progress for and good practices implemented by IW in five regions of the world (Americas, Asia, Africa, Arctic and Pacific), in relation to the 12 areas of concern of the BDPfA.⁴ This document represents an important tool for advocacy, providing relevant information to sustain FIMI political strategy through the voices, proposals and programs of Indigenous women. It highlights ongoing issues and critical areas of concern in the current context, as well as meaningful advances and contributions achieved by Indigenous women's organizations since the adoption of the BDPfA, demonstrating their capacity to develop political approaches based on their ancestral knowledge, worldview and experience in different spaces of action, on levels from local to global.

The information gathered and analyzed in the study will support the proposals and political position of Indigenous Women and Youth in their interaction with States, the United Nations System, the broader women's rights movement and the Indigenous movement. The GR will also serve as an input for the second World Conference of Indigenous Women to be held in 2021, where it will be presented.

⁴ The Beijing Platform for Action identifies 12 critical areas of concern. In each critical area of concern, the problem is diagnosed and strategic objectives are proposed with concrete actions to be taken by various actors in order to achieve those objectives. The 12 critical areas of concern of the BDPfA are: A) Women and poverty; B) Education and training of women; C) Women and health; D) Violence against women; E) Women and armed conflict; F) Women and the economy; G) Women in power and decision-making; H) Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women; I) Human rights of women; J) Women and the media; K) Women and the environment; and L) The girl child.

The GR is divided into six sections. After this brief introduction, Chapter 2 will describe the methodology used for the compilation of the global report. Chapter 3 will narrate the history of the Indigenous Women's movement since 1995 and the main achievements of IW over the last 25 years, mainly at international level. Chapter 4 will analyze

progress and challenges regarding the situation of IWG according to the BDPfA's 12 critical areas of concern, and it will include examples of good practices from the five regions. Finally, Chapters 5 and 6 will respectively detail conclusions and recommendations made by IW.



Methodology


2. Methodology


This Global Study has been compiled using the information provided by five regional studies⁵ on the situation of IWG in the Americas, Africa, Asia, the Arctic and the Pacific, written using a common methodology to maximize consistency during the research process in the different regions. Regional studies have been prepared by Indigenous and non-Indigenous Women consultants, in close collaboration with a FIMI Board member from the same region, who also approved the final content ensuring that the voices and experiences of Indigenous Women at all levels were reflected.

The common methodology was defined and agreed in collaboration with FIMI staff and board members and specific guidelines were shared with the consultant in charge of each regional study. These guidelines were designed to ensure consistency in the data compilation phase and to avoid possible variations in the information collected, techniques used, geographical regions covered and timeframe considered.⁶ The research process lasted approximately four months⁷ and included an intense process of consultation and

analysis with FIMI staff and board members at the global level.

To guarantee that all studies included references from different sources, the following data collection techniques were used.

 **Literature review.** Information and documents from the following sources were analyzed: Indigenous women's organizations, international and national NGOs, international organizations, academic institutions, governmental bodies, FIMI political declarations and UN declarations, among others.⁸

 **Interviews.** Interviews were undertaken with key Indigenous Women informants and Indigenous Women's organizations at the local, national and regional levels.⁹

In most of the regions, young Indigenous Women were involved in the research process. Additionally, the regional consultants responsible for the regional studies for Asia, Africa and the Americas took part in regional preparatory meetings for the second World Conference of Indigenous Women.¹⁰ In the case of Africa and Asia, the outcomes

⁵ The Situation of Indigenous Women in Asia: an overview, 2020; Mujeres indígenas y Beijing+25 Región Las Américas, Mayo de 2020; Pacific Regional Report, 2020; Africa Indigenous Women's Report on the progress made on the implementation of Beijing +25, 2020; Regional Study: the situation of Indigenous Women in the Arctic Region in the framework of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 2020.

⁶ Regional consultants were asked to map the most important events in terms of implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action over the last 25 years, recognizing and highlighting regional achievements. However, they were recommended to focus on recent data and facts that have occurred in the last 5–6 years (since the last World Conference of Indigenous Women held in Lima in 2013).

⁷ The common methodology was shared with regional consultants at the end of November 2019 and the first drafts of the regional reports were submitted at the end of March 2020. As concerning the Arctic region, the research process started in January 2020.

⁸ Considering the five regional studies, more than 380 documents have been reviewed. All documents have been included in the bibliography.

⁹ The number of interviews varies among regions: in the case of Africa 11 interviews and a focus group were undertaken; six interviews were held for the Americas regional study, two for the Arctic, five for the Pacific and no one in the case of Asia.

¹⁰ The 2019 Asia regional meeting of AYNILFS Partners and Indigenous Women's Networks was organized in Kathmandu, Nepal, for 4 days from October 3rd – October 6th. The Asia meeting was jointly organized by FIMI and NIWF (Nepal Indigenous Women Federation), an umbrella organization of 31 Indigenous Women organizations from all over Nepal (Asia meeting Report, 2019); African Regional Prepa-

of the regional conferences were integrated into the analysis in the regional reports, while in the case of the Americas, the regional meeting was an opportunity to present the preliminary results of the study and discuss them with Indigenous Women's organizations. No regional preparatory meetings were held in the Arctic and Pacific regions during the period of this research.

To ensure that the regional and global studies included balanced information in terms of geographic representation, each regional study focused on specific subregions/countries.

The following table presents the subregions/countries considered in each regional report.

Finally, in the framework of the 12 critical areas of concern of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BDPfA), each regional consultant delved deeper into those items that were of special relevance to the region according to the availability of existing information and the political priorities set by Indigenous Women's organizations at regional level. Hence, the methodological guidelines allowed all regional consultants to have a common structure without failing to value, welcome and respect the differences of each regional context. This global report therefore reflects the diversity, richness and specificity of each regional research process, which followed different paths in line with the opportunities, possibilities, capacities and understanding of the BDPfA possessed by IW in each region.¹³

REGION	SUBREGIONS/COUNTRIES COVERED
AMERICAS	North America: Canada, Mexico, USA ¹¹ , Central America: Belize, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama South America: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, French Guiana, Guyana, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Uruguay and Venezuela
AFRICA	Central Africa, Eastern Africa, Northern Africa, Southern Africa and Western Africa. Specific attention was given to Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, South Africa and Tanzania
ASIA	Southeast Asia: Philippines and Timor-Leste Mekong area: Cambodia and Thailand East Asia: Japan and Taiwan
PACIFIC	Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia, Melanesia, Micronesia, Polynesia
ARCTIC	Canada, Finland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden and the USA ¹²

ratory Meeting on Beijing +25 and the Second Indigenous Women Conference Yaoundé – Cameroon, December 3 – 7, 2019; ECMIA VIII Continental Meeting, 26–29 February 2020.

¹¹ The USA and Canada were both analyzed in the Americas study and in the Arctic one. In the Arctic regional study, a specific attention was given to the Alaska State in the US and to the Inuit Nunangat in Canada, which includes the Inuvialuit Settlement Region in the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Nunavik in northern Quebec and Nunatsiavut in northern Labrador.

¹² The study focused especially on Sámi Indigenous women, Inuit Indigenous women, American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) women of Alaska and, in much more limited terms, Russian Nenets Indigenous women.

¹³ Different types and levels of information analysis were used: the descriptive analysis to outline the context and those events that have characterized the situation of Indigenous Women over the past 25 years, as well as the main advances and challenges regarding the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action; the content analysis to identify common trends, themes and patterns in each key unit of analysis; the comparative analysis to examine, contrast and compare the situation of IW in the five regions and in the different thematic areas; the integrated analysis to have an overview on the situation of Indigenous Women within the framework of 25 years of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.



Indigenous Women and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

3. Indigenous Women and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

3.1 The Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing (1995): A Milestone Event in the Creation of the Indigenous Women's Movement

In 1995, during the Fourth World Conference on Women, many Indigenous Women's (IW) organizations from all over the world approved and signed the **Beijing Declaration of Indigenous Women (BDIW)**, which established the basis of IW's claims as Indigenous and as women.¹⁴ Over 100 Indigenous Women from different regions of the world attended the meeting, which was the first international UN conference that had so far seen substantial participation by IW.¹⁵ In previous international conferences, IW's attendance had been very limited: in Mexico City in 1975 only one Bolivian Indigenous Woman took part in the first World Conference on Women, while in Nairobi in 1985, only 12 Indigenous Women attended.¹⁶

IW's participation at Beijing in 1995 is also considered to be a milestone in the creation of the global Indigenous Women's movement. In fact, it was not until that conference that IW were able to establish their own political platform at international level. Prior to Beijing, IW had organized their

own conferences and meetings such as the first Conference of Indigenous Women in Australia in 1989,¹⁷ the International Conference of Indigenous Women in Karajsok, Norway in 1990 and the International Conference of Indigenous Women in Aotearoa New Zealand in 1993 (Dahl, 2009).¹⁸

Since the mid 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, regional networks of IW had also been created. In the USA, the **Indigenous Women's Network (IWN)** was established as a grassroots initiative at a gathering of over 200 Indigenous Women in Yelm, Washington in 1985.¹⁹ In Asia, the First Asian Indigenous Women's Conference was held in the Philippines in 1993, with the theme "*Sharing Commonalities and Diversities: Forging Unity Towards Indigenous Women's Empowerment.*" The conference gave rise to the **Asian Indigenous Women's Network (AIWN)** as a collective response to common experiences of discrimination as women, as Indigenous people

¹⁴ During the Beijing Conference, Indigenous Women considered that their interests and concerns were not clearly incorporated in the platform. This finding prompted the so-called "Indigenous tent" at the Conference to draw up The Beijing Declaration of Indigenous Women. This declaration was inspired by the Declaration prepared by Indigenous Women of the Americas in the 1st ECMA Continental Meeting (Declaración del Sol).

¹⁵ The Beijing Conference registered 17,000 participants and 30,000 activists. IW's attendance still represented a small percentage out of the total participants.

¹⁶ Interview with Tarcila Rivera Zea, 2019. FIMI internal document.

¹⁷ During the first World Conference of Indigenous Women held in Australia in 1989 called "Finding Common grounds", the debate focused especially on issues related to rights, education, employment, health, working with governments, human rights, sexual harassment, domestic violence, women's refuges, resource centres, and Aboriginal prisoners, among others. The right to self-determination, the right to land and the necessity to guarantee IW's participation in decisions on matters regarding land and natural resources were the three key aspects of the Declaration of Unity agreed during the Conference. Among the future options envisaged by the participants were also the creation of a political platform for decision making and action for Indigenous women, as well as the establishment of a forum on IW's priorities.

¹⁸ In Australia in 1989 and in Norway in 1990, participants came from different regions of the world. However only 2 countries from the Asian region had representatives for both conferences, namely Japan and Philippines, while no African representatives are listed as participants during these two conferences (Hodgson, 2011). Unfortunately, no documents of the 1990 and 1993 Conferences are available.

¹⁹ Indigenous Women Network: <http://www.naotw.biz/directory/non-profits/women/Indigenous-womens-network>

and based on socio-economic class.²⁰ The **Continental Network of Indigenous Women of the Americas (ECMIA)** took shape in 1993 thanks to the collective effort of IW leaders who had been participating since the 1980s in various international conferences on women and human rights.²¹ ECMIA was officially established in 1995 in Quito during the First Continental Meeting of Indigenous Women, where proposals were formulated to share at the Beijing Conference the same year. In Scandinavia, the **Sámi Women's Forum (Sámi Nisson Forum, SNF)** was established in 1993, as a regional organization working with Sámi women from Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. The **Omomo Melen Pacific (Women Lifeblood of the Pacific)** was created in a December 1994 meeting as a network of Indigenous Women activists from Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia, Bougainville, Timor-Leste, New Caledonia, Tahiti and West Papua.

The creation of regional networks of Indigenous Women in different regions of the world reflected their capacity to organize and develop political advocacy strategies. Approving and signing a common declaration in Beijing also signified that Indigenous Women's organizations were able to express themselves, define their priorities and build consensus at the international level.²²

²⁰ The conference surfaced important issues to Indigenous Women in the region, i.e. land rights vis-à-vis aggression from extractive and other development projects and initiatives, Indigenous sustainable use and management of resources, multi-level human rights violations, health policies, globalization and political representation. While approaches and priority work vary, Indigenous Women in the region were clear that they are not separate from the collective struggles of their communities and that the intersectionality of their identities as Indigenous peoples and as women results to their disproportionate discrimination that requires multidimensional approaches in pursuit of development (Situation of Indigenous Women in Asia: an overview, 2020).

²¹ The process that led to the creation of the ECMIA was initiated thanks to the effort and leadership of American Women's Indigenous organizations, with the initial impulse of the Native Women's Association of Canada - NWAC Femmes Autochtones du Quebec - FAQ and the Inuit Pauktuutit women's organization.

²² National organizations and regional networks of Indigenous Women went to Beijing prepared to discuss clear political statements and proposals that had been previously agreed with Indigenous Women at local, national and sub-regional level. ECMIA, for example, held 3 preparatory meetings in the three sub-regions (South, Central and North America) before 1995 to build consensus on a common platform for advocacy and action that was then shared in Beijing.

The BDIW was the result of a collective effort which covered issues of concern to Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous Women around the world: self-determination, land and territories, health, education, human rights violations, violence, intellectual property rights, biodiversity, the Human Genome Biodiversity Project and political participation (Sillet, 2009). **It recognized the multiple oppressions suffered by IW as Indigenous, as citizens of colonized and neo-colonial countries, as women and as members of the poorer classes of society; however, it also strongly conveyed the powerful role of IW** affirming that *“we have been and continue to protect, transmit, and develop our Indigenous cosmovision, our science and technologies, our arts and culture, and our Indigenous socio-political economic systems, which are in harmony with the natural laws of mother earth. We still retain the ethical and esthetic values, the knowledge and philosophy, the spirituality, which conserves and nurtures Mother Earth. We are persisting in our struggles for self-determination and for our rights to our territories. This has been shown in our tenacity and capacity to withstand and survive the colonization happening in our lands in the last 500 years.”*

Finally, it offered a strong criticism of the **Beijing Platform for Action** for its overemphasis on gender discrimination and gender equality, resulting in a depoliticization of issues facing Indigenous Women and failing to recognize their special circumstances (Sillet, 2009). In particular, it claimed that the BDPfA was *“not critical at all of the New World Order,”* questioning neither the basic framework of the global economy, nor the development paradigm based on capitalism and colonialism, nor the *“Western orientation of the prevailing education and health systems.”*

To sum up, the content of the BDIW outlined, for the first time, the political claims of IW at the global level, taking into account IW's particular circumstances and multifaceted identities. As Kuokkanen has asserted: *“For the international women's movement, the key concern in the conventional human rights framework has been the*

*dichotomy between the private and the public spheres. For indigenous women, the key issue is to pursue a human rights framework that **not only simultaneously advances individual and collective rights, but also explicitly addresses gender-specific human rights violations of indigenous women in a way that does not disregard the continued practices and effects of colonialism.***” (Kuokkanen, 2012; p. 232)

3.2 Strengthening Indigenous Women’s Organizations at the Local, National, Regional and International Levels

Since the 1995 Beijing Conference, inspired by that powerful process, various national and regional Indigenous organizations have been established across the world. One example is the **African Indigenous Women’s Organization (AIWO)**, a continent-wide NGO whose membership is composed of African Indigenous Women representing Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs) from all over the continent. AIWO was formed on April 24, 1998, in Agadir, Morocco, by a number of Indigenous Women (IW) who had attended the first African Indigenous Conference held the same year, in response to the lack of recognition of IW’s rights in Africa.²³ IW from Africa have faced challenges in gaining recognition and, although some attended Beijing, they never had the opportunity to sign the Beijing Declaration of Indigenous Women (BDIW). Nevertheless, as a regional group, African IW have continued building alliances with IW’s organizations globally.

²³ The main objectives of the organization were: defending and promoting the rights and interests of African Indigenous women; providing assistance and support to IWG who are victims of violence and female genital mutilation (FGM); supporting IW in the preservation of their Indigenous knowledge and natural resources, making every effort to guarantee the property rights of IW, monitoring the initiation of sustainable economic development in the areas inhabited by Indigenous Peoples of Africa, organizing training sessions for Indigenous Women in the field of human rights (AIWO Conference. Amplifying African Indigenous Women’s Voices. African Regional Preparatory Meeting on Beijing +25 and the Second Indigenous Women Conference Yaoundé – Cameroon, December 3 – 7, 2019).

Furthermore, various regional organizations have consolidated strategic alliances, leading to the establishment of new international networks such as the International Indigenous Women’s Forum (FIMI), which was established in 2000 during the CSW session dedicated to the Beijing+5 review. Today, FIMI is a global network of Indigenous Women’s local, national and regional organizations from Asia, Africa, the Americas, the Arctic and the Pacific advocating for Indigenous Women’s issues at international level. In so doing, FIMI places itself at the intersection of three interrelated fields: Indigenous Peoples’ rights, human rights, and women’s human rights (Mairin Iwanka Raya, 2006).

Over the last 25 years, there has been a progressive institutional and political strengthening of Indigenous Women’s organizations and regional networks around the world. For example, since its first meeting in 1995, the **Continental Network of Indigenous Women of the Americas (ECMIA)** has held seven regional meetings²⁴ that were very important for coordination between the three sub-regions of the Americas and consolidation as a continental network for the defence and promotion of the rights of Indigenous Women, Youth and Children. Today ECMIA brings together organizations from 23 countries all across the Americas: Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, French Guiana, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the United States, Uruguay, Suriname and Venezuela. Since 2011, it has also had a dedicated Commission on Indigenous Youth and Children. Among its main functions are representation, dialogue, knowledge building, resource procurement and distribution and, most importantly, international participation and advocacy. Several delegates from ECMIA have participated in the development of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and in the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII).²⁵

²⁴ In 1997 in Oaxaca; in 2000 in Panamá; in 2004 in Lima; in 2007 in Québec; in 2011 in Morelos; in 2015 in Ciudad de Guatemala; in 2020 in México.

²⁵ ECMIA y CHIRAPAQ, 2013. Del silencio a la palabra. Trayectoria del

Since its inception in 1993, the **Asian Indigenous Women's Network (AIWN)** has worked to strengthen local and national IW's organizations including in conjunction with UN bodies and Indigenous Peoples' regional and global networks. It has contributed to the formation and strengthening of national networks of Indigenous Women in Thailand (Indigenous Women's Network of Thailand/IWNT), Nepal (National Network of Indigenous Women/NNIW, National Indigenous Women's Federation/NIWF), northeastern India (Indigenous Women's Federation in North East India/IWFNEI) and Bangladesh (Women Resource Network/WRN). The network has also organized four regional conferences, in 1993, 2004, 2010 and 2018.²⁶ Currently, AIWN consists of 11 Indigenous Women's organizations and 26 Indigenous Peoples' organizations with committees dedicated to women.

Since 1998, **AIWO** has been sustaining African Indigenous Women's organizations at the local level through community research and knowledge generation, as well as through capacity building on issues related to education, policy change, environmental conservation, reproductive health, women's economic empowerment and cultural preservation. It has organized meetings in various subregions, as well as regional meetings in 2004 in Nairobi and 2019 in Cameroon, with the support of FIMI.²⁷ In the 2019 Conference report, AIWO founder members and representatives highlighted the challenges that AIWO has faced in recent years, due to a scarcity of funding and a lack of recognition of Indigenous Peoples by African governments and other partners in Africa. They rec-

Enlace Continental de Mujeres Indígenas de las Américas – ECIWA 1993 – 2013.

²⁶ 1993 First Asian Indigenous Women's Conference. Theme: Sharing Commonalities and Diversities, Forging Unity Towards Indigenous Women's Empowerment; 2004 Second Conference. Theme: Heightening Asian Indigenous Women's Empowerment and Solidarity; 2010 Third Conference. Theme: Indigenous Women and Climate Change: Securing rights and enhancing capacities for adaptation and mitigation; 2018 Fourth Conference. Theme: Indigenous Women matter: Resilience, Government and Sustainable development. For more information visit the following link: <https://asianindigenouswomen.org/index.php/activities/conferences>

²⁷ Seventeen (17) countries were represented at the 2019 Conference: Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Kenya, Mali, Mexico, Morocco, Nigeria, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Gambia, and Uganda.

ognized that FIMI support has been crucial for AIWO members.²⁸

In the Pacific, Aboriginal women have been organizing themselves since the 1980s. The first World Conference of Indigenous Women was held in Australia, and various organizations from Australia also participated in the Beijing Conference and signed the BDIW.²⁹ The **National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Alliance (NATSIWA)** was established in 2009 to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women to have a strong and effective voice in the domestic and international policy advocacy processes. NATSIWA represents over 180 IW's organizations from across Australia. Moreover, representatives of the **Pacific Indigenous Women's Human Rights Council** from Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia, Hawaii, Guam, Indonesia, participated in the 2013 World Conference of Indigenous Women in Lima, while in 2019, the **Pacific Indigenous Women's Network (PIWN)** was established in Guam.³⁰

In the Arctic region, the **Sámi Women's Forum (SNF)** has organized a meeting every year since 1997, bringing together Sámi women from Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. Founded in 1977, the **Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC)** is an international non-governmental organization representing approximately 180,000 Inuit people from Alaska, Canada, Greenland and Chukotka (Russia). Although it is not an Indigenous Women's organization, many Indigenous Women members have occupied leadership positions and participated actively in international forums such as the UNPFII. Russia's first IW's organization, the **Research Centre for Cultural Heritage**, was registered in December 2019.

The strengthening of Indigenous Women's organizations over the last 20 years has also

²⁸ AIWO Conference. Amplifying African Indigenous Women's Voices. African Regional Preparatory Meeting on Beijing +25 and the Second Indigenous Women Conference Yaoundé – Cameroon, December 3 – 7, 2019.

²⁹ 1995 Beijing Declaration of Indigenous Women.

³⁰ Martinez L., September 20th 2019, Kuam News: <https://www.kuam.com/story/41075374/the-pacific-Indigenous-womens-network-arises-now>

been bolstered by the active work of FIMI, which has gone from strength to strength as a mechanism for coordinating the agendas and priorities of local, national and regional IW's organizations from Africa, the Americas, Asia, the Arctic and the Pacific.

FIMI's work focuses on four major programs: i) Political Advocacy; ii) Training and Capacity Building; iii) Research and Impact Themes in the Life of Indigenous Women; and iv) the AYNi Fund. The **AYNi Fund** was established in 2008 as a unique, innovative international fund directed by Indigenous Women for Indigenous Women. Its mission is to support and co-invest in human, financial and material resources with women from Indigenous organizations and communities in order to achieve the fulfilment of their individual and collective rights and contribute to the *buen vivir* (good living) of Indigenous Peoples (FIMI, 2013c).³¹

The **Research program** enables IW's organizations to develop research within their communities, strengthening the perspective of Indigenous Women in knowledge building. The program has produced reports on violence against IW,

³¹ Since 2017, AYNi Fund implements the Leading from the South Program (LFS), which is a four-year grant program (2017-2020) launched and funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands. In 2017, LFS supported 27 Indigenous women's organizations, and in 2018 it rose to 45 organizations (FIMI, 2020). For example, the AYNi-LFS fund had three calls in Africa and it supported 28 beneficiary organizations from Tanzania, Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo, South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Madagascar and Chad (AIWO Conference, Amplifying African Indigenous Women's Voices. African Regional Preparatory Meeting on Beijing +25 and the Second Indigenous Women Conference Yaoundé – Cameroon, December 3 – 7, 2019).

economic autonomy and environmental justice. FIMI has also provided technical and financial resources for the publication of shadow reports by Indigenous Women's organizations as part of the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women's (CEDAW Committee) reporting process in 2018, among others. This is the program under which the regional studies on the situation of Indigenous Women in the context of the 25th anniversary of the BDPfA were produced, resulting in this global report (FIMI, 2020).

FIMI work methodologies and approach

FIMI has developed a unique approach and set of work methodologies, which recognize the principles, values and spirituality of Indigenous Peoples, reaffirming a vision built around community, reciprocity, *buen vivir* (good living), consultation, consent and territoriality as central elements. The FIMI's work methodologies and proposals highlight the contribution of Indigenous Women and their organizations in the development of projects. In addition, they incorporate an effort to build horizontal relations following the concept of co-investment, recognizing the contribution of the diverse skills and knowledge of Indigenous Women in various processes (FIMI, 2020).

Our **Political Advocacy program** coordinates and facilitates the participation of Indigenous Women around the world in regional forums, conferences and events, as well as in international spaces such as the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the UNFPII and the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF). At the same time, the **Training and Capacity Building program**, through the **Global Leadership School (GLS)**, has promoted the training of Indigenous Women on how these spaces function, encouraging them to define and present demands and proposals speaking up for their lives, territories and cultures (FIMI, 2020).³²

In 2013, the **first World Conference of Indigenous Women**, with the theme **“Progress and Challenges Regarding the Future We Want,”** was organized by the Continental Network of Indigenous Women of the Americas (ECMIA), the

³² Around 141 Indigenous Women leaders from more than 40 countries and six Indigenous regions of the world have participated in the GLS, with high a recognized positive impact in the lives of women participants and their organizations.

Alianza de Mujeres Indígenas de Centroamérica y México, CHIRAPAQ Centre for Indigenous Cultures of Peru, the Africa Indigenous Women's Organization, the Indigenous Information Network, the Asian Indigenous Women's Network, the Indigenous Pacific Women's Network and FIMI. An advocacy roadmap, strategies for action and a political stance were adopted in Lima as a framework to eradicate the violence, discrimination, racism and poverty faced by Indigenous Women around the world, showing a specific interest and commitment in the design of advocacy strategies.³³

In conclusion, FIMI's support of Indigenous Women's organizations has been crucial. Its strategic programs represent solid platforms for the building of IW's capacities and to ensure that their voices, demands and proposals are heard at the local, national, regional and global levels. IW's organizations and networks across all regions have recognized and valued FIMI partnership, which has allowed them to strengthen their capacities to defend their individual and collective rights and consolidate their leadership and advocacy strategies, all while building effective networks and alliances (FIMI, 2020).

3.3 The 25th Anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action: The Main Achievements of Indigenous Women over the Last 25 Years

Since 1995, Indigenous Women have been contributing to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BDP-fA) at the local, national and international levels. They have participated in follow-up meetings on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, as well as in the sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)³⁴, and have

³³ IWF/FIMI, 2013c. Political position document and plan of action of the world's Indigenous Women adopted in the world conference of Indigenous women. E/C.19/2014/CRP.1

³⁴ In 1996, ECOSOC in its resolution 1996/6 expanded the Commis-

taken part in numerous official and periphery events, coordination meetings, press conferences and training sessions.³⁵

As a result of IW's advocacy, the CSW has adopted two resolutions concerning Indigenous Women: Resolution 49/7 on March 11, 2005, entitled *Indigenous women: beyond the ten-year review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*; and **Resolution 56/4 on March 9, 2012**, entitled *Indigenous women: key actors in poverty and hunger eradication*. Resolution 49/7 (E/CN.6/2005/11) was the CSW's first on Indigenous Women and outlined their rights and specific needs, including on the topics of poverty and violence, while Resolution 56/4 (E/CN.6/2012/16) recognized the role of Indigenous Women and their traditional knowledge in poverty eradication.³⁶ In addition, the Commission made references to the particular situation of IW in its agreed conclusions in 2013, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019.³⁷

At the 59th Session of the CSW, on March 13, 2015, the Secretariat of the Permanent Forum and FIMI organized a **panel discussion entitled Beijing+20: The Voices of Indigenous Women** on the occasion of the Beijing+20 review, to celebrate the achievements of IWG and to highlight persistent obstacles to the full realization of their rights (UNPFII, 2015a).

In 2017, in commemoration of the 10th anniversary of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), the CSW held an interactive dialogue at its 61st session on the topic "*Empowerment of Indigenous Women*" (E/

sion's mandate and decided that it should take a leading role in monitoring and reviewing progress and problems in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Source: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/csw>

³⁵ Statement submitted by Indigenous Information Network, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, November 2019. E/CN.6/2020/NGO/51

³⁶ It is worth mentioning that IWF/FIMI played a key role in the approval of the CSW Resolution 49/7 in 2005, as well as in positioning the perspectives and priorities of IW over the last 20 years in the CSW as well as in different international fora, such as, for example, the United Nations Permanent Forum of Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) (FIMI, 2013b).

³⁷ For comprehensive information visit the UN link: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/mandated-areas1/indigenous-women.html>

CN.6/2017/12).³⁸ The interactive dialogue represented the first time that the priorities of IW had been discussed as a standalone topic as part of the Commission's official agenda. In the discussion, participants highlighted that *"although indigenous women and girls face special challenges and discrimination, they should not be portrayed as victims. Indigenous women are active change agents. They have an essential role in passing on Indigenous cultures and languages to future generations. A significant proportion of global cultural and linguistic diversity resides with them; they actively contribute to international processes and are champions of sustainability. Indigenous women are part of the solution to many of the challenges that societies, and women within those societies, face worldwide,"* including climate change (E/CN.6/2017/12, par. 3).

Indigenous Women also participated and contributed to the negotiations on UNDRIP, which was adopted by the General Assembly in 2007. The declaration affirms Indigenous peoples' civil, political and cultural rights, and emphasizes that these rights apply equally to men and women in Indigenous communities (art. 44), while article 22 states that *"Particular attention shall be paid to the rights and special needs of indigenous elders, women, youth, children and persons with disabilities in the implementation of this Declaration."*³⁹

Between 1995 and 2007, **advocacy by Indigenous Women influenced the establishment of the three United Nations mechanisms with specific mandates concerning Indigenous Peoples**: the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) in 2000; the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2001; and the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2007. Each of these mechanisms has continually addressed IW's concerns through

³⁸ This was in response to a call made in 2014 in the outcome document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples (General Assembly resolution 69/2, para. 19), and a recommendation of the Permanent Forum (E/C.19/2015/10, para. 43) to consider Indigenous Women as a priority theme. https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/CN.6/2017/12

³⁹ United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2017.

special themed sessions, international expert meetings, country visits and studies. IW have also occupied leadership roles in each of these bodies (UNPFII, 2015a).

The Permanent Forum in particular, since its first session, has paid special attention to IW, adopting numerous recommendations containing direct references to the situation of IW in connection with a wide range of issues, including education, conflict, culture, health, human rights, development and the environment, and political participation.⁴⁰ In addition, each year, the Permanent Forum has a standalone agenda item devoted to IW's issues (UNPFII, 2020).

IW also participated in the process leading up to the High-Level Plenary Session of the General Assembly, known as the 2014 World Conference on Indigenous Peoples (WCIP). Indeed, the first World Conference of Indigenous Women organized in Lima in 2013 was part of the preparatory process for the WCIP. As a result of Indigenous Women's advocacy, the WCIP Outcome Document includes important commitments related to IW's empowerment, the full and effective participation of Indigenous Women in decision-making processes and the elimination of violence and discrimination against IP and IW (A/RES/69/2, par. 17-18).⁴¹

IP, including IW, and the Permanent Forum took an active role in the consultation and negotiation processes that led to the **adoption of the 2030 Agenda** (see General Assembly resolution 70/155).⁴² More recently, IW participated in the

⁴⁰ According to Yapapaq.info, the UNPFII has made almost 200 recommendations related to indigenous women. Source: <https://yanapaq.info/search/cluster-en.htm?type=topic&id=58> and <https://yanapaq.info/search/results-en.htm?search=women>

⁴¹ Outcome document of the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, A/RES/69/2, par.17-18. Available at: <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/69/2>

⁴² The 2030 Agenda contains six specific references to Indigenous Peoples: three in the political declaration, two in the targets under Sustainable Development Goals 2 on zero hunger (target 2.3) and 4 on education (target 4.5) and one in the follow-up and review section, in which States expressed their commitment to engage with Indigenous Peoples in the implementation of the Goals and were encouraged to conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress in achieving them, including at the national level, and to draw upon

summit held in Nairobi to mark the **25th anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development** and in the **negotiations conducted in December 2019 ahead of the 25th session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change**, which was held in Madrid (UNPFII, 2020).⁴³

Thanks to IW's advocacy strategies, their rights have also been consistently addressed in the international human rights system. FIMI, since the beginning, had affirmed the need for the acknowledgement of IW's particular context within the CEDAW, while the Permanent Forum, in its 2004 Recommendation, called for a CEDAW General Recommendation on Indigenous Women (E/C.19/2004/23, para. 6). This recommendation was reiterated in 2019 thanks to advocacy efforts from FIMI and IW that participated in the 18th session of the Permanent Forum.⁴⁴

Furthermore, during a 2013 workshop as part of the International Summit of Indigenous Women, the participant organizations, *UK'ux B'e*, the *Equipo de Estudios Comunitarios y Acción Psicosocial (ECAP)*, *TikNaoj, SinergiaNo'j*, the T'zununija Indigenous Women's Movement, Just Associates Mesoamerica (JASS) and the Women's Human Rights Education Institute (WHRI), agreed to es-

the contributions of Indigenous Peoples in those reviews (Assembly resolution 70/1, para. 79) (UNPFII, 2020; par. 11).

⁴³ In the decision adopted by the States it was recognized, among other aspects, that the impacts of climate change on women and men could often differ owing to historical and current gender inequalities and multidimensional factors and could be more pronounced in developing countries and for local communities and Indigenous Peoples. The decision sets a historic precedent for the inclusion of rights-based language within the policies and practices adopted by countries and will guide gender-responsive climate policy and action for the next five years (UNPFII, 2020, par. 16-17).

⁴⁴ Report of the 18th Session of the Permanent Forum, par.53: "The Permanent Forum reiterates its invitation to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to adopt a General Recommendation on Indigenous Women by 2020, in accordance with the Declaration and other international instruments. The Forum recommends that the General Recommendation on Indigenous Women consider issues related to the individual and collective rights to equality, non-discrimination and self-determination; social and economic rights, including the rights to decent work and to land, territory and resources; the right to water and food; cultural rights; civil and political rights; and the right to live free of any form of violence." Source: https://yanapaq.info/search/recomm_detail-en.htm?rcm=1470

establish the Indigenous Women's Alliance for CEDAW, with the purpose of calling upon the CEDAW Committee to develop and adopt a specific General Recommendation that would contribute to the understanding and propagation of IW's human rights.⁴⁵

Over the last 10 years, IW have been persistently raising their concerns with the relevant United Nations treaty bodies, including the CEDAW Committee and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), presenting shadow reports and participating in sessions of the treaty bodies in the context of specific countries' periodic reviews (UNPFII, 2015a).⁴⁶ As a consequence, the CEDAW Committee, the CERD and other international human rights mechanisms, have started to routinely address issues related to IW's rights.

Kambell (2004) shows how IW within the United Nations human rights system were initially invisible. For example, a review of the annual reports of the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations (WGIP) showed that from its inception in 1983 until 2000, Indigenous Women were only mentioned in 1991, at its 9th session. Since then, although Indigenous representatives have referenced human rights violations committed against Indigenous Women, there has been little focused discussion within the WGIP on the human rights problems experienced by Indigenous Women. The UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was first appointed in 2001, and produced their first report in January 2003, focusing on the impact of large-scale or major development projects on the human rights and fundamental freedoms of Indigenous Peoples. Despite the office's mandate to pay special attention to discrimination against IW, it only referred to them once. In 2015, how-

⁴⁵ Brief history of the movement for a CEDAW General Recommendation on Indigenous Women, 2019. Available at: <http://learnwhr.org/history-general-recommendation-on-Indigenous-women/>

⁴⁶ Many examples can be outlined: in 2009 the Tz'ununija' Indigenous Women's Movement from Guatemala prepared their first shadow report to the CEDAW Committee on the situation of Indigenous Women in their territory, followed by Indigenous Women in Colombia (2013), Australia (2014), India (2014) Philippines (2016), Thailand (2016), Nepal (2018), Bolivia (2019), among other relevant examples. In 2019 Indigenous Women in Guatemala prepared a shadow report for the CERD Committee, so did Indigenous Women in Mexico the same year.

ever, Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, the former Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples (2014-2020 mandate) and an Indigenous Woman, dedicated the annual report to the situation of Indigenous Women globally (A/HRC/30/41).⁴⁷

At the national level, over the last 25 years, States have made progress in meeting the critical targets of the BDPfA (UNPFII, 2015a; UNPFII 2020). For example, the creation of institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women has been a land-

mark achievement in many countries, as has the continuing development of national laws and public policies to address violence against women. IW have also contributed to the formulation of laws and public policies with a gender-oriented and intercultural perspective, improving IW's visibility in national economic and political agendas. However, the lack of implementation of international conventions and national laws and policies still represents a key obstacle to IW's empowerment and the full enjoyment of their human rights.

⁴⁷ Report of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous peoples, Victoria Tauli Corpuz, 2015. A/HRC/30/41.



**Progress and challenges
FOR Indigenous Women
in the framework of the Beijing
Declaration and Platform
for Action**

4. Progress and challenges FOR Indigenous Women in the framework of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

As described in Chapter 3, the capacity that Indigenous Women (IW) have gained to position the issues that are critical to them at the national level and in international development and human rights agendas has been remarkable. However, despite the achievement of meaningful progress and wide recognition of IW as actors of change, many challenges persist.

Considering global and regional political declarations,⁴⁸ the agenda of IW since 1995 has maintained a specific focus on critical issues such as self-determination, land rights, violence, discrimination, access to basic rights, racism and poverty. It simultaneously denounces the effects that neo-liberal economic policies, extractive industries, militarization and, more recently, climate change have on land and natural resources, which are deeply interconnected with the well-being and ultimately the survival of Indigenous Women and their communities.

In 2013, participants at the Lima World Conference of Indigenous Women made an initial global assessment of IW's progress and challenges with regard to the BDPfA, the Programme of Action adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development in 1994 and the Post-2015 Development Agenda. This assessment outlined the following critical issues: identity and relevant statistical information; sexual and reproductive rights; gender violence; political participation; a development agenda with an Indigenous perspective; the digital divide; migration and increasing ur-

banization; and climate change.⁴⁹ During the Conference it was also highlighted that equity was the most important issue addressed in Beijing, along with the importance of protecting and caring for the environment. However, in evaluating the Beijing Declaration, four areas of special concern for Indigenous Women were highlighted: (a) recognition and respect of the right to self-determination; (b) the right to territories, development, education and health; (c) ending human rights violations and violence against Indigenous Women; and (d) recognition and respect of rights to intellectual property and cultural heritage.⁵⁰

This chapter will analyze those persisting challenges in the implementation of the BDPfA, focusing on those issues that have emerged more recently. Eleven out of the twelve critical areas of concern of the BDPfA will be analyzed: poverty, education, health, violence, armed conflicts, economy, power and decision-making, institutional mechanisms, human rights, media, and the environment. Rather than the Indigenous girl child being addressed as a separate area, references will be made thereto throughout the chapter, as this is a cross-cutting issue. To maintain a historical perspective, specific quotations from the 1995 Beijing Declaration of Indigenous Women will be included throughout, while examples of good practices promoted by IW's organizations will be presented at the end of each paragraph.⁵¹

⁴⁸ See declarations from regional conferences of ECMIA, AIWN, AIWO. See political statements of IWWF/FIMI for the CSW. See Declaration of Unity of 1989; 1995 Beijing Declaration of Indigenous Women; 2013 Lima Declaration.

⁴⁹ IWWF/FIMI, 2013c. Political position document and plan of action of the world's Indigenous Women adopted in the world conference of Indigenous women. E/C.19/2014/CRP.1

⁵⁰ FIMI, 2013b Memoria, Conferencia Global de Mujeres Indígenas. Avances y desafíos frente al futuro que queremos 28 al 30 de Octubre. Lima, Peru; pag.27.

⁵¹ Good practices compiled for this study are examples selected among those presented in the five regional reports. They show the powerful work of IW organizations to achieve self-determination,

In the analysis of each critical area, the first paragraph will summarize the main challenges experienced by IWG globally. This will be followed by specific information regarding the five regions, in line with the critical issues emphasized in the five regional reports. It is worth clarifying that information highlighted with regard to a specific region is, in many cases, also relevant to the other regions, although there may be differences between regional priorities. Likewise, when specific countries are used as representative examples throughout the study, note that the situation may be similar in many other countries, although this is not expressly indicated.

Finally, the analysis presented in paragraphs 4.2 to 4.12 should be read considering the commitments made by States in signing the BDPfA, in order to contrast their obligations with the reality of IWG's situation. With the BDPfA, States committed themselves to remove all obstacles to women's active participation in all spheres of public and private life by guaranteeing women a full and equal share in economic, social, cultural and political decision-making. To this end, States and other actors are called upon to take action in the twelve critical areas of concern in order to combat the key barriers to gender equality and achieve the following strategic objectives.

CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN	STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES
A. Women and poverty	A.1. Review, adopt and maintain macroeconomic policies and development strategies that address the needs and efforts of women in poverty. A.2. Revise laws and administrative practices to ensure women's equal rights and access to economic resources. A.3. Provide women with access to savings and credit mechanisms and institutions. A.4. Develop gender-based methodologies and conduct research to address the feminization of poverty.
B. Education and training of women	B.1. Ensure equal access to education. B.2. Eradicate illiteracy among women. B.3. Improve women's access to vocational training, science and technology, and continuing education. B.4. Develop non-discriminatory education and training. B.5. Allocate sufficient resources for and monitor the implementation of educational reforms. B.6. Promote lifelong education and training for girls and women.
C. Women and health	C.1. Increase women's access throughout their lives to appropriate, affordable and quality health care, information and related services. C.2. Strengthen preventive programmes that promote women's health. C.3. Undertake gender-sensitive initiatives that address sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS and sexual and reproductive health issues. C.4. Promote research and distribute information on women's health. C.5. Increase resources and monitor follow-up for women's health.
D. Violence against women	D.1. Take integrated measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women. D.2. Study the causes and consequences of violence against women and the effectiveness of preventive measures. D.3. Eliminate trafficking in women and assist victims of violence due to prostitution and trafficking.

land rights, environment protection, women economic autonomy and political empowerment, capacity building, violence prevention and healing, access to education and health, climate change adaptation and mitigation, among others.

E. Women and armed conflict	<p>E.1. Increase the participation of women in conflict resolution at decision-making levels and protect women living in situations of armed and other conflicts or under foreign occupation.</p> <p>E.2. Reduce excessive military expenditures and control the availability of armaments.</p> <p>E.3. Promote non-violent forms of conflict resolution and reduce the incidence of human rights abuse in conflict situations.</p> <p>E.4. Promote women's contribution to fostering a culture of peace.</p> <p>E.5. Provide protection, assistance and training to refugee women, other displaced women in need of international protection and internally displaced women.</p> <p>E.6. Provide assistance to the women of colonies and non-self-governing territories.</p>
F. Women and the economy	<p>F.1. Promote women's economic rights and independence, including access to employment, appropriate working conditions and control over economic resources.</p> <p>F.2. Facilitate women's equal access to resources, employment, markets and trade.</p> <p>F.3. Provide business services, training and access to markets, information and technology, particularly to low-income women.</p> <p>F.4. Strengthen women's economic capacity and commercial networks.</p> <p>F.5. Eliminate occupational segregation and all forms of employment discrimination.</p> <p>F.6. Promote harmonization of work and family responsibilities for women and men.</p>
G. Women in power and decision-making	<p>G.1. Take measures to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making.</p> <p>G.2. Increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership.</p>
H. Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women	<p>H.1. Create or strengthen national machineries and other governmental bodies.</p> <p>H.2. Integrate gender perspectives in legislation, public policies, programmes and projects.</p> <p>H.3. Generate and disseminate gender-disaggregated data and information for planning and evaluation.</p>
I. Human rights of women	<p>I.1. Promote and protect the human rights of women, through the full implementation of all human rights instruments, especially the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.</p> <p>I.2. Ensure equality and non-discrimination under the law and in practice.</p> <p>I.3. Achieve legal literacy.</p>
J. Women and the media	<p>J.1. Increase the participation and access of women to expression and decision-making in and through the media and new technologies of communication.</p> <p>J.2. Promote a balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in the media.</p>
K. Women and the environment	<p>K.1. Involve women actively in environmental decision-making at all levels.</p> <p>K.2. Integrate gender concerns and perspectives in policies and programmes for sustainable development.</p> <p>K.3. Strengthen or establish mechanisms at the national, regional and international levels to assess the impact of development and environmental policies on women.</p>

L. The girl child

- L.1. Eliminate all forms of discrimination against the girl child.
- L.2. Eliminate negative cultural attitudes and practices against girls.
- L.3. Promote and protect the rights of the girl child and increase awareness of her needs and potential.
- L.4. Eliminate discrimination against girls in education, skills development and training.
- L.5. Eliminate discrimination against girls in health and nutrition.
- L.6. Eliminate the economic exploitation of child labour and protect young girls at work.
- L.7. Eradicate violence against the girl child.
- L.8. Promote the girl child's awareness of and participation in social, economic and political life.
- L.9. Strengthen the role of the family in improving the status of the girl child.

4.1 Conceptual Framework

Indigenous Peoples' ways of life, cultures and traditions have evolved over hundreds of years through a very close connection with nature and land. Access to land and natural resources is essential to the ability of Indigenous peoples to maintain and develop their distinct identities and cultures, as well as to develop economically.⁵² As a consequence, **self-determination and the relationship with land** will be emphasized throughout the analysis, as they encompass most of the critical areas of concern of the BDPfA, shaping the particular condition of Indigenous Women as women and as Indigenous, dealing with individual and collective rights simultaneously. Thus, access to land, land rights and land dispossession are deeply interconnected with poverty, health, violence, armed conflicts, economy, human rights and the environment.

⁵² Indigenous peoples, their lands, territories and resources are the source of livelihood, medicine, intellectual property, food security and spiritual well-being. Land is not only a factor of production. For Indigenous women, this also signifies Mother Earth, life, dignity, the basis for their culture, spirituality, beliefs, their survival, food systems and traditional medicine. Thus, the loss of their lands, territories and resources results in the deterioration of their capacities to survive and of their resilience (UNPFII, 2020; par. 47). Kuokkanen (2019) in her research conducted in Canada, Scandinavia and Greenland, explains that Indigenous peoples, regardless of the region, commonly describe self-determination as a relation with the land. The collective integrity of Indigenous peoples depends on the integrity of the land and relations with the land are considered central to the survival and well-being of Indigenous peoples. Those relations are inevitably gendered and many Indigenous Women affirm that it is the role of women to look after the land, the water and the medicines that the land provides.

Different forms of violence will be identified and described throughout the report. Some of them are gender-specific, meaning that they target Indigenous Women as women (in society and within Indigenous communities), and others are not, meaning that IW are not specifically targeted by this form of violence but they may (and usually do) bear a disproportionate burden of the effects of these forms of violence due to their gender roles as the primary caretakers of children and families and due to their particular relation with the land. Thus, individual integrity and freedom from violence are not limited to interpersonal physical and sexual violence but also includes freedom from structural violence and dispossession related to land and natural resources (Kuokkanen, 2019). On top of this, IW experience racism and discrimination due to their Indigenous identity, which also explains their increased exposure to systemic violence and inequalities within societies. Given that they encompass almost all areas of concern of the BDPfA, different forms of violence will be outlined throughout the chapter, especially in paragraphs 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.10 and 4.12.

The issues of **internal and external migration and forced displacement** will be referenced throughout the analysis of the critical areas, as they are deeply linked to poverty, low employment rates, violence and armed conflicts, human rights violations, lack of access to basic social and health services, limited education and training opportunities, land grabbing and dispossession, climate

The “New World Order” which is engineered by those who have abused and raped Mother Earth, colonized, marginalized, and discriminated against us, is being imposed on us viciously. This is recolonization coming under the name of globalization and trade liberalization. The forces behind this are the rich industrialized nation-states, their transnational corporations, financial institutions which they control like the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization (WTO). They will cooperate and compete among themselves to the last frontiers of the world’s natural resources located on our lands and waters.

The 1995 Beijing Declaration of Indigenous Women

change and the impact of extractive industries and agribusiness on Indigenous territories.

As the 1995 Beijing Declaration of Indigenous Women states, any analysis of the situation and condition of IWG cannot be undertaken without considering the currently dominant growth-oriented development model based on capitalism and globalization, resulting in new forms of **economic and political colonialism** by a few powerful nations. Additionally, **the imposition of a Western orientation in all disciplines** such as philosophy, politics, economics and science undervalues and discriminates against differing cultures, as well as against the ancestral knowledge of IP and IW, resulting in various forms of discrimination and, ultimately, racism.

These issues, strongly emphasized in the 1995 Declaration, are still pertinent today. However, although they are better understood and have been considered in the 2030 Agenda, the global political and economic system has not yet made any profound and meaningful change, and injustices and inequalities persist.

4.2 Indigenous Women and Poverty

Globally, there are an estimated 476.6 million Indigenous people, of whom 238.4 million are women and 238.2 million men. Overall, they represent 6.2% of the world’s population. (ILO, 2019), but they make up 15% of the world’s poorest people (UNPFII, 2020). Recent data from ILO (2019) shows that Indigenous Women (IW) are consistently at the bottom of all social and economic indicators. They are the least likely to have completed basic education and are the most likely to be in extreme poverty.⁵³

Information available in all regions shows that poverty is higher among Indigenous people and Indigenous Women compared to the non-Indigenous population. It is described as a multidimensional problem that affects IW, representing a critical barrier to equality and to the full enjoyment of human rights. It is the consequence of persistent discriminatory policies and of an economic growth development model based on capitalism, as well as on new forms of colonialism. Poverty is also deeply related to land dispossession, migration, armed conflicts, climate change, forced displacement and loss of livelihood assets. IW’s migration in general, and migration to urban areas in particular, has been documented in all regions, due to limited economic opportunities, food insecurity, land dispossession and lack of basic social services, among other factors.

⁵³ It is important to outline that statistical measurements of poverty do not always take into consideration the cultural knowledge and livelihood assets of Indigenous women. Especially in the American region, the concept of impoverishment is preferred to the one of poverty. Talking about poverty may lead to public policies based on mere economic assistance without bolstering IW’s meaningful empowerment (VIII ECMIA regional Conference, 2020). Besides, for Indigenous peoples, “poverty and prosperity” is intertwined with the status of their ownership, control and access to lands, territories and resources, along with the practice of their traditional occupations, sustainable resource management systems and self-governance (Indigenous Peoples Major Group for Sustainable Development, 2017).

In Africa, Indigenous Women representatives of Chad, Mali and Burkina Faso indicated that there is a high level of poverty in their communities caused by a **lack of access to resources and the consequences of climate change** including severe famine caused by drought. The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Sudan, Cameroon, Uganda, and Botswana faced poverty due to **internal displacement caused by armed conflict and logging and mining activities** which affect women the most, aggravating poverty.⁵⁴ Across the **Pacific region**, reported proportions of female populations living in poverty at the national level range from 1.7% to 70%. Increasing food and fuel prices, low levels of formal social protection measures, and **the erosion of traditional systems of solidarity** exacerbate women's exposure to poverty. Population growth and limited employment and business opportunities have led to significant **migration from rural areas** (Erni, et al., 2016), resulting in a **loss of culture and traditional authority**, which is related to observed increases in alcohol abuse and suicide, especially among young people (Guam-pedia Foundation, 2019).

In Asia, most Indigenous people live in rural areas of low- to middle-income countries, and they are **three times poorer than the Asian average**. The 2019 ILO data analysis reveals that Indigenous peoples in middle-income countries are still behind in terms of poverty and employment.⁵⁵ In the **Arctic Region**, the situation differs among countries. While in Scandinavia there is no infor-

In the 1995 Beijing Declaration of Indigenous Women, IW recognize that, although the Beijing Platform for Action identifies the persistent and increasing burden of poverty on women, it does not acknowledge that “this poverty is caused by the same powerful nations and interests who have colonized us and are continuing to recolonize, homogenize, and impose their economic growth development model and monocultures on us”.

mation indicating that the poverty rates of Sámi women are higher than those of Sámi men or of other Scandinavian women (Kuokkanen, 2015a), IWG in Canada and the United States continue to face significant social, economic and political inequalities and do not share the same standard of living or access to health and social services, food, housing, employment, education or socio-economic development of most other Canadian and US citizens, also resulting in **migration to urban areas**.⁵⁶

In the Americas, available data show that despite the encouraging figures related to poverty reduction in all countries until 2015, the situation for IW has remained fairly static. Poverty is structurally linked to IW's limited engagement in the labour market and it has to be analyzed in conjunction with the **violation of their collective rights to their lands and territories** and to the **process of forced migration** (especially from rural to urban areas) that has been taking place for decades.

GOOD PRACTICES

AIWO's Central African Network has been working in the field of capacity building, skills empowerment and national and international lobbying in order to: train IWG in tailoring to help them generate income and self-employment; develop projects to fight climate change in the Central and East regions of Cameroon through forest protection, solar energy, clean water and the REDD+⁵⁷ processes; implement

⁵⁴ Interviews with IW key informants, December 2019 and January 2020. Africa Indigenous Women's Report on the progress made on the implementation of Beijing +25.

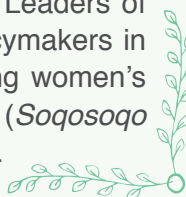
⁵⁵ Around 70.5% (corresponding to 335.8 million, 167.7 of which are women) of the world's Indigenous peoples live in Asia making it the most culturally diverse region in the world; 72.8% of them, corresponding to 244.3 million, live in rural areas.

⁵⁶ More recent research has drawn attention to the problems of relative invisibility of the living conditions of urban Indigenous peoples. Urban Indigenous Women are vulnerable to disproportionate violence, sexual abuse, and trafficking (Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, 2017).

⁵⁷ REDD+: Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries

income-generating activities in Niger and Nigeria, training women on sheep rearing and how to transform milk into cheese and yogurt; carry out construction projects in northern Cameroon, such as building a classroom and renovating a primary school in the Adamawa region, building a residence for a medical doctor, and renovating and equipping a hospital with clean water; and drill a borehole equipped with a solar-powered pump (Africa Regional Report, 2020).

In Fiji, *Soqosoqo Vakamarama l’Taukei* is an Indigenous women’s organization founded in 1924 that funds itself through contributions from women from all provinces and villages (*Soqosoqo Vakamarama i Taukei – Viti*, 2019; *Biumaitotoya*, 2020). The organization promotes Indigenous Fijian culture and traditions and encourages women to use their handicraft and other skills for income-generating projects within their communities. Leaders of this organization have joined policymakers in ministerial positions in encouraging women’s participation in the public sphere (*Soqosoqo Vakamarama i Taukei – Viti*, 2019).



4.3 Education and Training of Indigenous Women

Education is one of the most important determinants of health and of economic and social well-being. Moreover, for Indigenous peoples, it represents the primary means of ensuring their individual and collective development, whether economic, social or cultural, and is necessary for the realization of their right to self-determination (UNPFII, 2020; par. 37).

Although there has been an improvement in access to basic education for women and girls globally, IW and girls still experience higher gender disparities and lower educational attainment compared to non-Indigenous women. Challenges persist for IWG in basic

education in Africa and Asia-Pacific, and in secondary and tertiary education in all regions. Dropout rates are often linked to child pregnancy, forced marriage or specific forms of forced labour, among other factors.⁵⁸ In those countries where IW complete higher levels of education, they still face barriers in finding employment. Limited access to quality culturally and linguistically relevant education is still a key challenge in all regions, undermining the transmission and preservation of Indigenous language and culture.

In Africa, despite progress made at the primary level, much still needs to be done to increase the Gender Parity Index, which remained between 0.90 to 0.96 from 2012 to 2018 in Central and West Africa (UNESCO, 2019).⁵⁹ In most African countries, Indigenous communities prefer to prioritize male children’s education while girls are kept home to carry out housework. In the case of IWG in Botswana and Namibia, the **language barrier is also an important aspect**, since the school curriculum is designed without consideration for Indigenous languages (United Nations, 2017). Finally, in countries that experience armed conflict, this affects the level of school enrolment, with high dropout rates, higher gender disparity and low completion rates (World Development Report 2018). In the Arctic region, although Sámi Indigenous peoples in Scandinavia enjoy almost full access to education, they experience **limited access to quality culturally and linguistically relevant education**.⁶⁰ In Canada, despite posi-

⁵⁸ In many indigenous societies, the education of the girl child will get low priority compared with that of a boy child. There may be both cultural and economic reasons for this. Girls usually have multiple work tasks within their family and some will never be enrolled or will drop out at an early age, usually to get married. Others will migrate, even at a very young age, to urban centres and engage in domestic work (ILO, 2006). Besides, there have been indications of a high incidence of the worst forms of child labour among Indigenous Peoples in several countries (ILO, 2019).

⁵⁹ Around 9 million girls between the ages of 6-11 are not enrolled in school compared to 6 million boys, 23% of girls drop out of primary school compared to 19% of boys and female adolescent exclusion is 36% compared to 32% of boys (UNESCO 2019).

⁶⁰ In Finland the CERD Committee notes that “75% of Sámi children under the age of 11 years live outside the Sámi homeland and, despite an allocated budget increase, the number of qualified teachers of Sámi languages remains insufficient.” In Sweden, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) recommends that the State party take immediate steps to provide Indigenous children

Indigenous Women of Africa



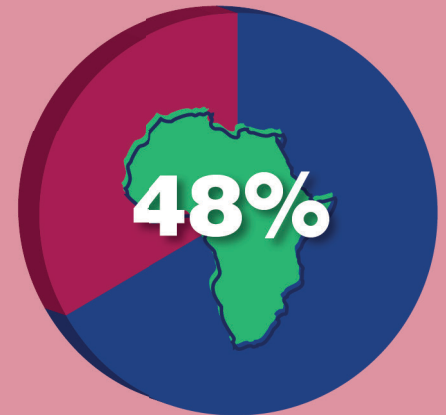
77.9
Millions
are Indigenous
Peoples



38.7
Millions
are Indigenous
Women



How many
Indigenous Women
are in Africa?



Where do indigenous
women live in Africa?

18%

of Indigenous Women
live in urban areas



82%

of Indigenous Women
live in rural areas

89%

89% of women without
formal education
are indigenous

Education



0.6%

0.6% of indigenous
women have an
advanced education

61%

61% of indigenous women
over the age of 15
are in the labor force

Work



97%

97% of indigenous
women are informal
workers

tive gains in post-secondary education among IP, significant gaps in educational accomplishment persist. Inuit women have the lowest levels of educational attainment, and less than one third of women aged 15 and older (29%) have a post-secondary qualification. The corresponding data for First Nations women is 39%, and 49% for Métis (Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2019). In the Russian Federation, one of the main problems around formal education is the **closure of kindergartens and schools in remote**

rural settlements due to governmental budget optimization programs. IP also have limited access to universities, as they are located in regional centres and large cities with high costs of living and transportation (RAIPON, 2013).

In the Pacific region, gender parity in primary education is improving in most Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs), but not in secondary and tertiary education. In Australia, as of 2014, retention rates for girls aged 7/8 to 12 years old were much lower for Indigenous girls, at 58% compared to 86% for non-Indigenous girls. In Aotearoa New Zealand, education disparities continue for female and male students of Māori or Pacific ethnicity (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, September 2015). Due to gender-segregated labour markets and the weight of traditional gender roles, **education gains for women do not necessarily lead to improved employment outcomes** (Secretariat of the Pacific Community, February 2015). **In Asia**, access to reliable and adequate information, education and training is still a challenge for

and children belonging to minorities with educational opportunities that allow them to develop their mother tongue skills. The Committee also recommends that the State party broaden the access to bilingual education in areas populated by Indigenous peoples and minority groups, and that increase the availability of Sámi and minority language teachers.

In the 1995 Declaration, Indigenous Women recognized that “while the BPfA correctly identifies unequal access to education and health as areas of concern, it does not question the basic Western orientation of the prevailing education and health systems. It does not reflect the fact that these systems have perpetuated the discrimination against Indigenous Peoples. It also does not acknowledge the role of Western media, education, and religion, in eroding the cultural diversity which exists among Indigenous peoples. These Western systems hasten ethnocide.”

IWG. In India, Adivasi women and girls, especially those who live in rural areas, have **limited to no access to schools** and lack information on their human rights as women. The **non-citizen status** of hundreds of IW in Thailand raises serious concerns about their enjoyment of fundamental rights, including education. Even in an industrialized country like Japan, as of 2015, the percentage of Ainu peoples in Hokkaido who attended high school was at 92.6% compared to the general average of 98.6%, and only 25.8% continued to the uni-

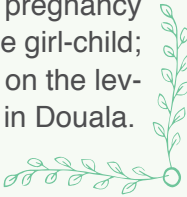
versity level, compared to the general average of 42.0%. **In the Americas**, the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Women in formal education is very high in all countries in South and Central America. In several, only a small percentage of Indigenous girls (less than 10%) complete secondary school: 6% in Panama, 7% in Colombia and Nicaragua and 8% in Ecuador. In other countries, school completion rates are between 10% and 20% (IACHR, 2017).⁶¹ Furthermore, illiteracy is a persistent problem among IW. In Guatemala, for example, about 58% of all Indigenous Women are illiterate;⁶² in Paraguay, the figure is 43% and in Mexico, it is 34%, four times higher than for non-Indigenous Women (IACHR, 2017). The educational careers of Indigenous Girls and Young Women are often interrupted for various reasons, including limited access to and coverage of schools due to urban/rural disparities; Indigenous child labour; forced labour performing domestic chores or sales or agricultural work; child and adolescent pregnancy; and early and forced marriages (United Nations, 2010c).

⁶¹ 13% in Mexico and 14% in Costa Rica, while in some countries the rates are higher than 20%: 23% in Uruguay and 29% in Peru.

⁶² A situation that tends to worsen in specific geographical areas: 87% among Chuj women.

GOOD PRACTICES

In Samoa, **Brown Girl Woke (BGW)** is an NGO whose mission is to provide the new generation with resources to become confident and independent thought leaders (Tulifau, 2020). BGW acknowledges and recognizes the intersectionality of gender and racial equality, and provides opportunities for young women to discuss their opinions and share their perspectives of themselves, the world and the future, emphasizing the importance of supporting one another. BGW girls work with their mentors to apply for colleges and jobs and organize service projects, receiving over 100 hours of mentorship, which improves their academic achievement, self-confidence and public speaking and leadership skills (Brown Girl Woke, 2020).

SURA-MAMA together with IIN and AI-VO-East Africa have worked to implement the following projects to empower Indigenous Mbororo Women: training with stakeholders on how to alleviate the consequences of climate change in Cameroon; providing cash envelopes for IW to start income-generating businesses in the urban towns of Bangangte in the West Region and Douala in the Littoral Region; training Indigenous Mbororo Girls on the dangers of early marriage and pregnancy and the importance of educating the girl-child; and conducting a household study on the level of education of Mbororo women in Douala. 

4.4 Indigenous Women and Health

Regardless of their geographical location or socio-political situation, health indicators are always poorer for IP and IW than for the non-Indigenous population. IW experience lower life expectancy and higher rates of maternal morbidity and mortality. They have limited or no access to quality and culturally and linguisti-

cally relevant health care services (including mental health care services) and suffer higher suicide rates. Indigenous health knowledge and practices are not widely recognized. IW lack information and education on sexual and reproductive health, and experience higher rates of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS, and higher rates of teenage pregnancy. The effects of colonization, environmental violence, exclusion, inequality, the loss of ancestral land, cultural discriminatory practices by mainstream health care providers and discrimination with regard to traditional health practices are among the most striking causes of the health situation of IW.⁶³

In some **African** countries, despite progress in the implementation of health policies, Indigenous Women still face persistent **inequalities in accessing health and health care services**. For example, in the DRC, 37% of IW have access to antenatal care compared to 94% of Congolese women overall (UNFPA, 2012). Indigenous Women from Botswana reported that San women face **discrimination at health care facilities** on the basis of their appearance, class and gender, resulting in them avoiding hospitals (Interview, 2019). In Cameroon, Mbororo and Pygmy women **do not have easy access to health facilities** as they are often located far away from their homes and are not free. Lack of primary health care for Indigenous Women is a leading cause of high mortality and preventable diseases in Chad (IGWIA, 2019). In conflict-affected countries such as Mali, Sudan, Burkina Faso and Cameroon, IW stated that pregnant women have to travel long distances to hospital and sometimes face difficult conditions on the journey (Interview, 2019).

In the **Pacific Region**, health facilities are typically concentrated in the main islands and urban areas, resulting in **unequal access to health ser-**

⁶³ The impact of environmental violence, extractive industries and climate change on Indigenous women's health will also be described in chapter 4.12. Deforestation, environmental violence and climate change are affecting Indigenous women's capacity to access and use traditional medicinal plants. Besides, there is a link between the expansion of extractive industries as well as return migration and HIV/AIDS.

vices for those in rural or remote areas (Secretariat of the Pacific Community, February 2015). Chamorus in Guam suffer disproportionately high mortality and incidence rates in comparison to other ethnic groups on the island, and showed a **higher mortality rate for all cancers** between 1998 and 2002 compared to the United States. Similarly, the Indigenous People of Hawai'i, the Kanaka Maoli, had the highest age-adjusted cancer

death rates, the lowest life expectancy and the worst health indicators of all ethnic groups in Hawai'i (Braun, Mokuau, Hunt, Ka'ano'I and Gotay, 2002). In **Asia**, health-seeking behaviours among Indigenous Women are relatively rare primarily due to issues of access (such as geographical distance or isolation, cost and adequacy of services available) and this trend is further reinforced by the **discriminatory attitude of health service providers**. In India, the health and well-being of IWG have worsened, especially for those living in rural areas. There is also a high rate of **chronic nutritional deficiency** associated with displacement. As this study is being finalized, the **COVID-19 pandemic** has emerged at a global scale. Reports from Indigenous Peoples' and Women's organizations in Asia raise serious concerns that Indigenous Women will be unable to access relief services because they do not have citizenship (Thailand and Nepal) or they are not on official or census lists (Philippines).

In the **Arctic region**, Sámi Peoples in Scandinavia face **limited access to culturally and linguistically appropriate health services**, resulting in poorer health conditions for Sámi people in general and Sámi women in particular.⁶⁴ In Rus-

⁶⁴ Sámi women in Finland, as elsewhere in the Nordic countries, experi-

In the 1995 Declaration, Indigenous Women urged governments and the international community to implement health policies which guarantee accessible, appropriate, affordable and quality services for Indigenous Peoples and respect and promote the reproductive health of IW. Indigenous health care systems and practices should be accorded proper recognition and respect, and the roles of Indigenous health practitioners and healers should be further enhanced.

The 1995 Beijing Declaration of IW recognized that "the increasing suicide rates among Indigenous Women, especially those who are in highly industrialized countries, are caused by psychological alienation and assimilationist policies characteristic of these countries."

sia, many remote rural communities **lack access to health care**, posing specific and alarming challenges in the case of maternal care (Cultural Survival, 2015); furthermore, life expectancy for Indigenous small-numbered peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East is much lower than for the Russian population overall (Bogoyavlenskiy, 2010). **Mental health issues and high suicide rates** are distressing problems among Indigenous peoples living in the Arctic region. A 2018 study on the well-being of Indigenous Children and Youth in the Arctic affirms that compared to the Nordic majority populations, young

Sámi and Inuit in Greenland experience a higher degree of violence, abuse, suicidal thoughts and suicide (Ingemann and Lytken, 2018). In the United States, suicide represents the second cause of death among AIAN people aged between 10 and 34.⁶⁵ In Canada, the suicide rate among First

Nations girls and young women is seven times the rate for non-Indigenous girls and young women, with 35 deaths per 100,000 versus five per 100,000. Sumarokov et al. (2014) found that according to the Russian Federal State Statistics Service, the Nenets Autonomous Okrug (NAO), a region where Indigenous Nenets constitute about one sixth of the population, has one of the highest suicide rates in Russia. In

ence cultural and language barriers when turning to social and health services. In northern Norway, a woman interviewed for this study expressed her concern about the mental health western approach applied by mental health professionals and services to Sámi women, without knowing and considering their cultural background.

⁶⁵ Report of the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights on his mission to the United States of America, 2018. A/HRC/38/33/Add.1. Paragraph 62.

the Americas, available data indicate inequalities related to adolescent pregnancy and maternal and infant mortality between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations. Significant **gaps also persist in access to health services**; for example, an analysis of three key indicators in 16 countries of the region demonstrates that Indigenous Women and Adolescents are less likely to have access to maternal health services compared to non-Indigenous Women (UNFPA and CHIRAPAQ, 2018). In addition to higher infant mortality,⁶⁶ IW also experience higher maternal mortality rates. Although some countries show evidence of significant progress, an Indigenous woman in Bolivia is almost twice as likely to die during pregnancy, childbirth or puerperium than the average Bolivian women. According to data from the last census (2016), around 68% of maternal deaths in Bolivia occur among Indigenous Women.

GOOD PRACTICES

Inuulitsivik Midwifery Program in Nunavik.

Across Inuit Nunangat, several culture- and land-based programs have been created and are being successfully implemented by Inuit for Inuit. One of many promising Inuit-led, community-based practices that have demonstrated great success in bridging Inuit and Western approaches is the Inuulitsivik Midwifery Program in Nunavik. In this program, teams of Inuit midwives offer prenatal, birth and postnatal care, enabling Nunavik communities to reclaim the experience of pregnancy and childbirth. Rather than following a biomedical risk-scoring system to determine who needs to be evacuated for birth, the Inuulitsivik Midwifery Program follows a community-based birthing system with a community-centred risk-scoring process, prioritizing the use of Inuit knowledge. Their system provides evidence that restoring traditional Inuit knowledge and communal authority over childbirth can meet, if not surpass, biomedical

⁶⁶ Among the main causes of child mortality are acute respiratory infections, malnutrition and diarrhea, all preventable diseases.

standards for infant and maternal health before and after birth. Inuit are in a unique position where they can embrace and combine the strengths of traditional knowledge and Western knowledge into their sexual health programming (Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, 2007; p. 22).

In **Mexico**, a multi-stakeholder working group was set up a few years ago to address maternal mortality, midwifery and other issues related to safe and violence-free motherhood. Through this initiative, donors lent strong support to the acceleration of processes in this area and established national midwifery schools, respected birth care protocols and discussions on legislative issues as well as on the eradication of forced and child marriage (*Red autonoma de medicos tradicionales y parteras de la CDMX y área metropolitana*).⁶⁷

4.5 Violence Against Indigenous Women and Girls

Violence against women is a serious, widespread human rights problem related to cultural, economic, social and legal aspects of the hegemonic patriarchal system in which we live. It arises at the intersection of multiple systems of oppression affecting the lives of Indigenous Women, most significantly racism (Crenshaw, 1999; FIMI, 2006). Among the different forms of violence identified by FIMI (2006),⁶⁸ this chapter will focus specifically on gender-based violence (GBV).

⁶⁷ Information available at: <https://www.facebook.com/Red-autonoma-m%C3%A9dicos-tradicionales-y-parteras-cdmx-%C3%A1rea-metropolitana-112667363433612>

⁶⁸ FIMI has introduced the concept of ecological violence to illuminate the ways that the health, livelihoods, social status, and cultural survival of Indigenous Women are threatened by policies and practices that harm the Earth, its climate stability, and its many ecosystems. In addition, the category of spiritual violence has also been elaborated, to show the connection between violence against women and the systematic attack on Indigenous spiritual practices (FIMI, 2006; pag.12).

GBV is an alarming and pressing issue among IW globally and includes domestic violence, physical and sexual violence, disappearances, femicide, trafficking for sexual exploitation, forced surrogacy and early marriages, among others. Although there is a widespread lack of data and research on this topic, available information shows that IW experience higher rates of gender-based violence compared to non-Indigenous women, lower reporting rates, limited or no access to quality and culturally and linguistically relevant services, racialized policing, limited or no access to justice and insufficient relevant public policies to prevent and protect them from violence.

The UN has indicated that the **Africa region** has the **highest rate of gender-based violence**, estimated at 69% in 2017 (UNODC, 2018). Indigenous women's organizations indicated that **domestic violence** is very prevalent in their communities and that most IW do not report such abuses because of their dependence on men (Interview with Ogiek women, 2020). In countries such as Mali, Burkina Faso, the DRC and Cameroon, Indigenous girls are becoming targets and victims of sexual violence, early marriage and pregnancy, due to high levels of poverty, illiteracy and armed conflict in their communities (Interview, 2019). The rate of female genital mutilation (FGM) in some Kenyan Indigenous communities is very high, estimated at 94% for Somali, 86% for Samburu, 84% for Kisii and 78% for Maasai (IGWIA, 2019).

In Asia, a 2016 study on gender-based violence in Timor-Leste by the Asian Foundation found that 59% of girls and women aged 15 to 49 experienced sexual and physical violence from their intimate partners, while 14% experienced violence from

people other than their partners. Conservative policies remain, such as Section 277 of Thailand's Criminal Code, which gives alleged rapists the option to marry their underage (13 to 15 years old) victims in lieu of criminal punishment. Indigenous Girls and Young Women throughout the Mekong region are especially vulnerable to **trafficking for sexual exploitation**, while the sale of Indigenous Girls for the purposes of trafficking and debt bondage has been reported in Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Myanmar, the Taiwan Province of China and Thailand.⁶⁹ In India, Cambodia, Thailand, Laos and Nepal, **forced surrogacy** has been documented as a new form of exploitation, while in India, cases of "*witch hunting*" have also been recorded.⁷⁰ **In the Pacific** region, women and girls often experience multiple forms of discrimination and are disproportionately vulnerable to violence. In Australia, prevalence studies showed that one

out of every three women has experienced physical violence and one out of five has experienced sexual violence, with IW many times more likely to experience physical violence over their lifetime than non-Indigenous women. In Aotearoa New Zealand, Māori women are twice as likely to experience violence as other women in the country, and at least 50% of IW who are sexually assaulted are likely to be victimized again (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, September 2015). In Hawaii,

The 1995 Beijing Declaration of Indigenous Women recognized that "The violence and sexual trafficking of Indigenous Women and the increasing numbers of Indigenous Women becoming labour exports, has been aggravated by the perpetuation of an economic growth development model which is export-oriented, import-dependent, and mired in foreign debt. The development of tourism to attract foreign capital has also led to the commodification of Indigenous Women and the dramatic increase in the incidence of HIV/AIDS."

⁶⁹ Young Indigenous Women from hill tribes in north and north-east Thailand, for example, make up most of the victims of internal trafficking, particularly for sexual exploitation.

⁷⁰ In Rajasthan, India, government data records a total of 134 alleged witches killed by mobs in 2016, 123 of which are in Jharkand. Justice for victims of witch hunting is framed under the Indian Penal Code of 1860 which seeks to punish acts of rape, murder and torture against women. Nine people received death penalty in 2018 for murdering three members of a family who were accused of being witches. Critics opine that the Penal Code does not adequately consider the entire range of associated crimes which includes vilification, public shaming, and sexual assault among others.

32.3% of documented reports of intimate partner violence were made by Native Hawaiʻian women who self-identified as such in medical record documentation. (Oneha, Magnussen & Shoultz, 2010) **Access to services** remains a challenge for women in remote areas and outer islands.

Violence is one of the most compelling issues affecting IW in all States in **the Arctic** region. Nevertheless, the availability of data and research on violence varies greatly among countries. In Scandinavia, with a few exceptions in the case of Norway, there is a **lack of research on violence** against Sámi women.⁷¹ Conversely, in Canada and the United States, it is widely recognized that AIAN women experience violence at much higher rates than non-Indigenous women.⁷² Furthermore, hundreds of IW in Canada and Native women in the USA have gone missing or been murdered in the past thirty years, and an extensive amount of research has been undertaken on the subject.⁷³ It has also been documented that IW encounter **challenges in finding safety when violence occurs**. The availability of shelters has been reported to be insufficient in Sápmi (Scandinavia) as well as in Nunavut (Canada). In Canada racialized policing also persists, reflecting the problem of systemic discrimination embedded in institutional policies

⁷¹ Interviews conducted by Kuokkanen (2015a; p. 274) in several Sámi communities revealed that “various forms of gendered violence including physical, sexual, psychological and structural, are a pressing problem that is hidden and not properly addressed by political institutions and public policies”. The same situation has been confirmed by the two informants interviewed for the regional study.

⁷² In Canada, according to The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (2019), Indigenous Women are 3 times more likely than non-Indigenous Women to be a victim of spousal violence (2014 General Social Survey), 12 times more likely to be murdered or missing than any other women in Canada, and 16 times more likely than Caucasian women. One quarter of all female homicide victims in Canada in 2015 were Indigenous. The levels of violence are also alarming among Indigenous girls and teens. A larger proportion of Indigenous people self-report being physically or sexually assaulted before the age of 15 (40%) than non-Indigenous people (29%). Of this group, Indigenous girls are more likely to report experiencing both physical and sexual maltreatment compared to Indigenous boys (Boyce, 2016). Compared to non-Hispanic White-only women, AIAN women in the USA are 1.2 times as likely to have experienced violence in their lifetime, 1.7 times as likely to have experienced violence in the past year (Rosay, 2016), and they are 2.5 times more likely to be raped or be victims of sexual assault compared to the rest of the country (Amnesty International, 2006).

⁷³ National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (2019), Final Report; Urban Indian Health Institute Report (UIHI, 2017).


and practice (Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, 2020). **In the Americas**, violence against women is a serious, widespread and multidimensional human rights problem, which takes different forms and affects all countries in the region. Three main limitations are (a) the lack of disaggregated data by gender and ethnicity in countries’ statistics and administrative records; (b) few studies on the various expressions and dimensions of GBV against Indigenous Women; (c) the absence of public policies that are culturally relevant and adapted to the contexts where Indigenous Women live. Another pressing issue is violence resulting from early and forced child marriages and unions involving Indigenous Girls and Young Women (FIMI, 2006; CHIRAPAQ and UNFPA, 2018). Finally, access to justice in ordinary justice systems as well as in Indigenous ones is still a major challenge and many gaps remain, while setbacks have been recorded in some countries (VIII Continental Meeting of Indigenous Women of the Americas, Violence Group, 2020).

GOOD PRACTICES

To address violence toward Indigenous Women in Asia, Indigenous Women’s organizations conduct many initiatives, such as promoting documentation and reporting of cases; supporting rehabilitation centres for survivors; working with and lobbying governments to implement care services for trafficked women and girls (India, Bangladesh, Nepal); exposing the activities of the military (Philippines); and organizing survivor sessions and initiating referral for survivors, among others (Report on Asia Regional Meeting of AYNI-LFS Partners and Indigenous Women’s Networks, October 3–6, 2019).

In Canada, following long-term pressure by Indigenous Women’s movements and families of survivors, the federal government finally carried out an inquiry into

missing and murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. The inquiry was launched in December 2015, and the final report, Reclaiming Power and Place, was officially presented to the government on June 2019. The report, based on extensive evidence, testimony, independent research and legal analysis, concluded that Canada has committed genocide against Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirit Persons. It also affirmed that Canada's federal, provincial and municipal laws, policies and practices have formed an infrastructure of violence resulting in thousands of murders and disappearances as well as other serious human rights violations against IWG (Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2019; p. 12).



4.6 Indigenous Women and Armed Conflict

Armed conflicts that affect Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous Women are mostly related to their lands, territories and natural resources. In nearly every region of the world, IP are being displaced and severely affected by violence on their lands and territories. The situation of Indigenous Women is worse, as they are also subjected to sexual violence and rape. In addition, they experience the consequences of the militarization of territories by national armies or organized crime related to drug trafficking, as well as the expansion of military bases on Indigenous lands and territories.

Nevertheless, Indigenous Women do not see themselves as passive victims but have taken up roles as mediators and peacebuilders (UN-PFII, 2020; par.55).

UN Women (2015) acknowledges that Indigenous Women have made remarkable contributions to

the Women, Peace and Security Agenda **in Africa**.⁷⁴ However, **most armed conflicts on the continent occur in places with high levels of natural resources, which are home to most Indigenous communities.** In these contexts, Indigenous Women experience high rates of violence, rape and harassment by armed groups (Interview 2019). In the DRC, Cameroon, Sudan, Mali and Burkina Faso, women and girls are exposed to gang rape, sex slavery, murder and harassment by armed groups operating in the areas where they live (Jayakumar, 2016). Furthermore, armed conflicts have increased food insecurity and poverty among IW, especially in cases where their husbands are killed in the conflict and they are left to take care of the children. In these cases, some turn to prostitution or suicide due to the unbearable conditions they face (Interview 2019). **In the Americas**, the armed conflict in Colombia has been the main cause of forced displacement among IW, posing the threats of sexual violence, exploitation and sexual abuse in addition to the dispossession of IW's land and rural property (Fuentes López, 2010; 58). **Violence caused by armed groups** of different types in the northern triangle of Central America (Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and Mexico) **has also worsened**, and armed groups have transformed some areas into highly militarized zones, leaving Indigenous Women extremely vulnerable (UNHCR, 2015 and RAISG).

In Asia, the **militarization of territories due to land and resource-related conflicts** has a deep impact on IW. For example, the Filipino government's declaration of an all-out war and martial law in Mindanao forced Indigenous Women to bear the brunt of harsh conditions at temporary shelters and evacuation centres, exposing them to higher risk of illness. **The use of gender-based violence** as a strategy to weaken Indigenous peoples' communities is also common, especially in militarized

⁷⁴ For example, The Democratic Republic of the Congo has put in place the second-generation action plan for the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, whose operational plan disposed of a budget of \$26 million in which Indigenous Women are inclusive (UN Women 2018).

The 1995 Beijing Declaration of Indigenous Women

recognizes that while the BDPfA talks about the effects of persecution and armed conflict, “it does not acknowledge that many of these armed conflicts are occurring on Indigenous People’s lands. These armed conflicts are the result of the aggressive actions of transnational corporations and governments to appropriate the remaining resources on Indigenous People’s territories despite the assertion of Indigenous Peoples to their right to control these resources. It does not recognize that the resolution of armed conflict, especially those happening on Indigenous People’s lands, lies in the recognition of our rights to self-determination and to our lands and waters. Military operations conducted on Indigenous People’s lands use rape, sexual slavery, and sexual trafficking of Indigenous Women, to further subjugate Indigenous Peoples.”

areas and countries like Bangladesh, the Philippines, India and Burma. Finally, in Japan, the Ryukyuan peoples of Okinawa have dealt with the continuous **expansion of United States military bases** on their lands.⁷⁵ **In the Pacific region, colonization, militarization and nuclearization** are also issues of contention and serious concern (Evans, 2014; UNRCPD, 2020). Centuries of colonization have had an impact on the lives of the CHamoru people, including on the survival of their native language, traditions and identity (Natividad & Lizama, 2019). The presence of United States military forces in Guam has resulted in environmental contamination and the dispossession of CHamorus from ancestral lands and sacred sites, among other consequences. The colonization of

⁷⁵ Although US bases cover only 0.6% of Japan’s territory, 74% of this is in Okinawa. Okinawan delegates to the UNPFII 16th Session (2017) discussed the insecurity of the local people due to the overwhelming presence of US military bases on their land and criticized Japan’s indifference to their situation. Another air base (Kadena) was built on caves and tombs that are sacred for the Ryukyuan.

the Hawai’ian people has also severely impacted the socio-economic situation of Hawai’ians: in O’ahu, the capital of Hawai’i, the US military controls 25% of the land area and much of the land taken by the military is legally reserved for Hawai’ians (Trask, 2004).

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The case of **Sepur Zarco** (2014) in Guatemala represents a good practice in **transitional justice**, as it was a key part of addressing the systematic violence and sexual slavery perpetrated near the military base of Sepur Zarco against 15 Q’eqchi’ women during the armed conflict. This was the first such case in world history to reach the national courts, and it marked a historic advancement in international gender jurisprudence. A military commissioner and a military officer are in pre-trial detention. However, “the advances in transitional justice in Guatemala seem minimal compared to the dimension and seriousness of the human rights violations committed during the armed conflict.” (Impunity Watch, 2019)

Long-standing community relationships and **CHamoru cultural revival**, including efforts to reclaim history, language, literature and traditions, have formed the foundation of a movement **against militarization** (Natividad & Kirk, Fortress Guam: Resistance to US Military Mega-Buildup, 2010). Women leaders with Fuet-san Famalao’an and groups such as I Nasion CHamoru, Guahan Coalition for Peace and Justice, Tao’tao’mona Native Rights, Guahan Indigenous Collective and We Are Guåhan have brought together people from diverse ethnic and occupational backgrounds to advocate for transparency and democratic participation in decisions regarding the future of the island. The CHamoru activist network Famoksaian is active in California urban centres, addressing young CHamorus in the diaspora (Natividad & Kirk, Fortress Guam: Resistance to US Military Mega-Buildup, 2010) (Cristobal, 2006).

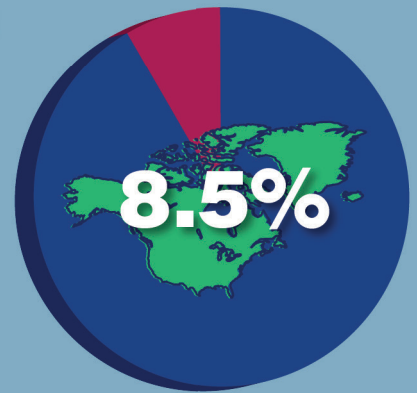
Indigenous Women of the Americas



How many Indigenous Women are in the Americas?

28 Million
Indigenous Women are in Latin America and the Caribbean

3.8 Million
of Indigenous Women in North America



Where do Indigenous Women live in the Americas?

48%
of Indigenous Women from LAC live in rural areas

31%
of Indigenous Women from North America live in rural areas



53% **3.6%**

53% of indigenous women in LAC have no formal education and 3.6% have advanced education

Education



3.6% **37.8%**

3.6% of indigenous women in North America have no formal education and 37.8% have advanced education

24%

24% of indigenous women in LAC are paid workers

Work



96%

96% of indigenous women in North America are paid workers

85%

85% of indigenous women in LAC have informal jobs



4.7 Indigenous Women and the Economy

Indigenous Women face specific challenges in the world of work that can exacerbate their situation of marginalization and poverty. Their heavy reliance on informal work and their concentration in areas at risk of climate change put IW at a disadvantage compared to their non-Indigenous counterparts and to Indigenous men (ILO, 2019). There are many more economic challenges faced by Indigenous Women such as macroeconomic adjustment policies that affect them disproportionately; discriminatory laws related to land rights, natural resources, loans and credit; and aggressive development projects such as mining and agribusiness on Indigenous land which result in contamination, dispossession and loss of traditional livelihood assets. IW also carry most of the responsibility to provide unpaid care and domestic work in their communities.⁷⁶

The 1995 Beijing Declaration of Indigenous Women stated that “the clear bias of the New World Order for big industries, big agri-business corporations, etc., has meant the decimation of traditional livelihood and economic activities of Indigenous Peoples like hunting, food gathering and harvesting, reindeer herding, subsistence agriculture, fishing, small handicraft businesses, etc. The non-economic activities of Indigenous Women have been ignored and rendered invisible, although these sustain the existence of Indigenous Peoples. Our dispossession from our territorial land and water base, upon which our existence and identity depends, must be addressed as a key problem.”

Most African countries do not have programs to economically empower Indigenous Women, and Cameroon, Sudan, Uganda, Chad and the DRC do not guarantee access to land and loans.

⁷⁶ In the Fourteenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean (Santiago, 27–31 January 2020), the delegation of Indigenous Women of ECMA achieved to include a mention to the care economy related to the traditional knowledge, art and culture of Indigenous Women in the Santiago Commitment: “Measure the multiplier effects of boosting the care economy in terms of women’s labour market participation—including work associated with the traditional knowledge, art and culture of indigenous, Afrodescendent, grassroots and rural women—, well-being, redistribution, economic growth and the macroeconomic impact of the care economy.” (Santiago Commitment par. 25).

The inability of IW to own land makes them dependent on men, and they often lack critical skills for self-improvement. Land rights and access enable IW to use the land to secure loans, start businesses, improve their lifestyle and develop their communities (Njieassam 2018).

In Asia, the neoliberal macroeconomic perspective of land as capital or as an economic good is totally incompatible with Indigenous Peoples’ connection with land as the core of their identity.

It runs roughshod over their collective history, knowledge, culture, systems and spirituality that sustain the land. It denies the existence of peoples whose lifestyles revolve around nurturing the land for the future generations. This being the case, economic empowerment for women is hard to achieve in a situation where Indigenous Peoples **do not have the right to access, manage and control their lands and resources.**

In the Americas, IW tend to have **higher unemployment and lower participation rates in the labour market** compared to non-Indigenous women. They often work in precarious jobs, without contracts and without access

to social benefits (ILO, 2019). While the number of women in the region without an independent income has fallen from 41% in 2002 to 28% in 2017, data from household surveys in 4 countries (Brazil, Ecuador, Peru and Uruguay) show that, by hourly labour income and considering ethno-racial status and years of schooling, Indigenous Women continue to occupy positions at the bottom of the income scale for systemic and structural reasons, regardless their level of education (ECLAC, 2019). Moreover, according to the FAO, the percentage

of women land owners is fairly low in the region⁷⁷ and they also **face barriers in accessing credit and technical assistance**, receiving only 10% of the credit and 5% of the technical assistance for the sector in the entire region (UN, 2015). Moving on to **the Arctic region**, in Alaska, Native women's workforce participation rate is around 56%, being the lowest in the State compared to other ethnic groups, while in Canada, IW's employment rate is 11 percentage points below that of non-Indigenous Women and 6 percentage points below the rate for Indigenous men (Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2019).⁷⁸

The **informal economy** is an important source of income and livelihood for the majority of households in the **Pacific region**. An estimated 80% of households in Papua New Guinea and more than 75% of Vanuatu's population relies on the informal economy (Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development, March 2017). Women's over-representation in informal and subsistence sectors is aggravated by the slow progress in women's workforce participation and access to employment and decent work. In Australia, Indigenous Women are 49% less likely to participate in the workforce than Indigenous men and 62% less likely than non-Indigenous women. In Aotearoa New Zealand, Pacific and Māori women have the highest unemployment rate; for Māori men and Māori women in September 2014, it was 64.6% and 53.3% respectively (Dhir, 2015). In addition, women and girls bear most of the responsibility for providing domestic work and unpaid care, which are significantly unrecognized and undervalued (Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development, March 2017).⁷⁹


⁷⁷ Approximately, 32% of IW in Mexico are land owners, 27% in Paraguay, 20% in Nicaragua and 14% in Honduras (UN, 2015). In the case of Nicaragua, 23% of agricultural livelihood assets are managed by women, which represents a significantly smaller percentage than those managed by men (Latin American Summary, 2017).

⁷⁸ A 2016 study by Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada (2016) found that the most significant barriers to Inuit women's economic participation were, among others: limited level of education and skills, overcrowding and poor housing condition, social issues (like family violence, substance abuse and mental health issues), geographical isolation, scarcity of jobs and the absence of affordable and reliable child care, which is particularly pressing as the vast majority of single-parent households in Inuit Nunangat are formed by women.

⁷⁹ There is an inter-relationship between women's increasing con-

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Indigenous women's organizations in Africa have played a vital role in contributing to Indigenous Women's participation in the economy through income diversification. In Chad, the collaboration between AFPAT (an IW's organization), the French Embassy and the Swiss Cooperation Office has provided investment to a women's cooperative processing millet and transforming groundnuts into paste and oil, helping them to generate income and fighting the effects of climate change (IWGIA 2019).


In Mexico, on land recovered by the Zapatistas, women's participation in politics, social organizations and food creation contribute to collective survival. In these spaces, women have occupied leadership positions in various projects, such as *"[in] regular militia forces, command posts and positions in the Good Government Councils, the various work councils [and] support bases, among others."* In the context of these experiences and this advocacy, they have made a "voice-claim" with their own proposals to transform gender relations and have contributed to promote the role of women in their communities, both in public and private spheres, as well as in all aspects related to access to and care of natural resources and land (Padierna Jiménez, 2013). 

4.8 Indigenous Women in Power and Decision-making

Although there has been progress regarding the political participation of Indigenous Women at the national and international levels

ontrol over financial resources and the risk of increasing domestic or household conflict and violence (Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development, March 2017). In semi-subsistence communities in the Solomon Islands and Fiji, cash in the hands of women can expose them to the risk of violence by men (Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development, March 2017).

thanks to the strengthening of IW's organizations and their advocacy capacity, IW continue to face critical barriers to their effective and equal participation in Indigenous and non-Indigenous local, national and international institutions. They are less represented and included in meaningful political decision-making at the national and local levels due to a lack of recognition of IP in national constitutions and law, discrimination and marginalization, lower levels of education, domestic and care-related responsibilities and political violence.

 The main appeal of the BDIW resonated 18 years after in Lima: "We, Indigenous women, assert our right to self-determination, which encompasses the direct, **full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples**; including the vital role of Indigenous Women in all matters related to our human rights, political status, and well-being. **We endorse the principle: 'Nothing about us, without us,' and further declare 'Everything about us, with us.'**" (Lima Declaration, 2013)

In **African** States, the **absence of recognition of IP in constitutional reforms** makes it much more difficult to include Indigenous Women's issues as part of the general discourse of women's empowerment. For instance, in Cameroon, **IW experience discrimination, stigmatization and marginalization** as their level of participation in decision-making processes at the national level is still very low. Patriarchal aspects of traditional Indigenous Peoples' cultural systems, as well as the lack of education and high rate of illiteracy among IW, are preventing them from participating in decision-making and power processes concerning their situation (Interview with Ogiek women, 2020).

In Asia, as well as leading communities and organizations, Indigenous Women have also engaged in political participation as part of their advocacy.⁸⁰

⁸⁰ Indigenous Peoples' organizations in the region, including the Asian Indigenous Women Network (AIWN), Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP), Kapaeeng Foundation in Bangladesh, Nepal Indigenous Women's Federation, Nepal Indigenous Women's Forum, Cambodia Indigenous Peoples Organization, Indigenous Women's Federation in the Philippines, the Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusa Tenggara and Institut Dayakologi of Indonesia and Tebtebba among others, are

In Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines, there are many IW in local and national positions and in policy-making bodies.

Mainstream interests and male privilege, however, continue to mute their voices. In communities highly influenced by patriarchy, **women are forced to prove their worth as capable leaders**, having to break the internalized patriarchy that hinders their full participation in public spaces. Given their multiple roles, they cannot do this without family and community support. **In the Pacific region**, there has been some progress in IW's political participation and representation (Secretariat of the Pacific Community, February 2015; Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, August 2016).⁸¹ However, IW continue to be **underrepresented in leadership and decision-making roles within organizations, in occupations and across industries**. There is also a lack of political will to implement measures to increase the participation of women in national and regional governments and in senior management positions (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, August 2016).⁸²

increasing the visibility of Indigenous Peoples and articulating the situations and recommendations of Indigenous Women in different levels and spaces of advocacy, including reporting to various United Nations human rights mechanisms. This includes shadow reports to the CEDAW, CERD and proactive participation in the UNPFII, UNFCCC, CBD, SDGs and other related processes.

⁸¹ Samoa became the first PIF country in 2013 to successfully amend its Constitution to introduce a quota system to reserve 10% of parliamentary seats for women. Australia, Marshall Islands, Palau, PNG, Tuvalu and Vanuatu introduced temporary special measures at local level resulting in an increase in the number of women in local governments or councils. The number of women candidates contesting for elections increased in Tonga, Marshall Islands, and Solomon Islands (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, September 2015).

⁸² Except for Samoa, PNG, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, and French territories, most reporting countries indicated no national targets for achieving equal representation of women and men in elected and civil service positions (Secretariat of the Pacific Community, February 2015). Besides, electoral laws pose barriers to women's engagement in formal politics: for example, in Tonga, new electoral laws which were introduced after a major constitutional reform process require candidates to resign from their public service jobs, which is a disincentive for senior women public servants who may not want to risk their jobs if they are not elected (Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development, March 2017).

Financing Indigenous Women's Organizations

In Africa, during the AIWO 2019 Conference, it was determined that there are very few funds specific to Indigenous Women, and that IW cannot access most of these funds because of the nearly impossible criteria set by funding partners. Other challenges include the lack of information on available funds, since most of IW live far from cities and connectivity is poor. IW's organizations also see fierce competition and vehement discrimination due to a lack of understanding of IP's worldviews, values and culture (AIWO Conference, 2019).

Regarding the Arctic region, in Nordic countries, financial support for women's organizations is generally scarce. This limits their ability to attend international conferences, advocate for IW's rights or secure political influence for women. (Sámi Women's Forum's Note of February 14, 2020, presented to UNPFII members visiting the Sami Parliament of Norway in Karasjok)

In the Pacific region, finding support for local women's groups, including access to finance opportunities and strategic planning efforts, has been challenging. The resourcing of local women's organizations is critical to supporting women's empowerment and providing a mechanism for women to express their needs and views (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, September 2015).

During the first World Conference of Indigenous Women held in Lima in 2013 (FIMI, 2013b), an increase in political participation of Indigenous Women **in the Arctic** was highlighted. However, in Sweden and Finland, the CEDAW Committee has acknowledged a **low representation** of Sámi women in the Sámi parliament and in other political decision-making bodies. In Canada, Indigenous Women are particularly underrepresented in democratic leadership and politics, including in Indigenous governments, where they make up 94 of 545 chiefs (Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2019). In the United States, according

to Castro et al. (2016), data show that Native Americans are grossly underrepresented in elected positions at every level of government and that Native American women experience the most severe underrepresentation. Very different is the situation of remote regions of the North and the Far East of Russia (such as the Nenets Autonomous Region), where women usually manage community life, holding important positions in politics, religion, business and education (Cultural Survival, 2015).⁸³

In the Americas, Indigenous Women continue to be **underrepresented in political power**, both in elected and appointed positions. Despite the increase in women's representation in national parliaments (rising from 15% to 31% in the region between 2002 and 2019), female participation continues to be lower than male, and it does not necessarily improve diversity or reach all areas of representation. In 2019, there were only 11 IW parliamentarians in Latin America, and in some countries, including Peru, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras and Brazil, there was only one.⁸⁴ The main obstacles to IW's participation in decision-making include economic factors, double discrimination, stereotypes, racism, a lack of experience in public affairs, the rigidity of political parties, exclusion from political participation at the community level linked to lack of land ownership and the low priority that the spiritual dimension accords to the public apparatus generally. **Political violence** has been documented as a barrier to Indigenous Women's participation at all levels in many countries. In Canada, for example, various forms of gender-based violence and discrimination, such as hateful and misogynistic comments

⁸³ NAO ranks "medium" in women's participation in regional and municipal elective bodies and "very/extremely high" in Indigenous women's representation in self-government institutions in Indigenous municipalities. In these municipal districts, where Nenets and Komi represent more than 40% of the total population, the local elections of 2016–2018 saw a majority of women elected in 8 out of 10 municipalities, forming a vast majority in 7 municipalities. Overall, as of 1 January 2020, elected women hold 51 municipal seats (72.9%) and men only 19 (27.1%) (Rozanova and Mikheev; 2020).

⁸⁴ It is worth mentioning that in Perú IP represent 12,5% (4 millions) of total population; in Guatemala is 45% (8 millions); in Ecuador is 6.9% (1,1 million) (IWGIA, 2019).

or sexual assault, affect young women and Indigenous Women in particular (Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2019).

GOOD PRACTICES

Despite the volatile situation of Indigenous Peoples and the relentless and unconscionable rates of violence against Indigenous Women in Bangladesh, **IW in the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh** are transforming local governance without invalidating their traditional governance systems. To date, 385 kbaris (village heads) out of more than 870 are reportedly women. While challenges ranging from the personal to the broader social level persist, these women, taking strength from each other and their network and with the support of progressive traditional leaders, are slowly advancing of the status of Indigenous Women as they drive their communities toward gender empowerment.

The **National Organization of Andean and Amazonian Indigenous Women of Peru (ONAMIAP)** has been taking action to ensure the effective participation of Indigenous Women in decision-making forums in Andean and Amazonian communities. One of ONAMIAP's main struggles is for access to lands for women. In 2017 it worked to achieve the inclusion of Andean and Amazonian Indigenous Women in the governance of communal territories as part of the "Indigenous Women and Land Governance" project. One of the main achievements was the modification of the communal statutes to incorporate Indigenous Women as qualified women in communities. It was also decided that 30% of the board of directors should be women.

4.9 Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Indigenous Women

Despite progress in the domain of policies and programs for gender equality, Indigenous Women do not usually participate in the development and formulation of national policy, and gender issues are not prioritized in Indigenous self-government institutions. Institutional mechanisms, when present, have limited capacity and scarce economic resources to ensure the effective implementation of meaningful public policies addressing IW. Moreover, national and global statistics frequently lack disaggregated data to capture socio-economic and cultural inequalities, jeopardizing the visibility of Indigenous Peoples and IWG in official data. This critical deficiency encompasses all areas: education, health, economic empowerment, political participation and violence. In countries where IP lack formal recognition, data collection and the development of evidence-based public policies represent an even greater challenge.

Institutional Mechanisms and Public Policies

Many **African countries** have **no robust laws and policies or strong institutional mechanisms** to coordinate actors and ensure that public policies addressing IW are meaningful and effective. The appointment of incompetent gender representatives who have limited knowledge on gender issues, the absence of political will to advance gender policies and inadequate systems of accountability are stumbling blocks for IW (Africa Review 2015). **In the Americas**, although 17 countries in the region have specialized institutions dedicated to Indigenous Peoples' issues, there are no specific mechanisms for IW.⁸⁵ Those insti-

⁸⁵ In Latin America, for example, there is only one institution with a mandate and focus on Indigenous Women, which is the DEMI (Defensoría de la Mujer Indígena) of Guatemala. Created in the framework of the Peace Accords, it has undergone several substantive

tutions that do exist continue to be weak, mainly because IP's political participation is, in most cases, limited to them, and IP are less visible in the development and implementation of public policies at the national level. There is also a **lack of funds associated with specific, sensitive and appropriate actions** and the limited access of IW (especially rural and migrant) to public programs and policies, which are not culturally relevant as they have been designed in a standardized manner. **In the Pacific**, almost all PIF countries⁸⁶ have gender policies and strategies that guide legal reforms and programs (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, August 2016). Despite this progress, gender mainstreaming across key sectors has been slow and inadequate resources are dedicated to promoting gender equality; less than 1% of most governments' national budgets is allocated for national women's machineries (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, September 2015). In the **Arctic region**, as Kuokkanen has stated (2015a; 2015b; 2019), **issues of concern for Indigenous Women have been commonly portrayed as being in opposition to self-determination**, and they have not been part of Indigenous self-government institutions' political agendas. For example, the Parliamentary Sámi Council, established in 2000 by the three Sámi Parliaments of Norway, Finland and Sweden, has not set strategies or priorities regarding gender equality. According to the research of Eva-Maria Svensson (2017), Arctic governance bodies such as the Arctic Council, have not, so far, given much attention to gender equality and the consequences of economics, policies and governance for women and IW. As the Sámi Women's Forum (SNF) states, "*[the] women's perspective is not visible when challenges are defined, strategies are developed, and processes are initiated.*"⁸⁷

modifications since its creation in 2001. Other institutions such as ombudsmen's offices or ministries for women have, in some cases, departments dedicated to the situation of Indigenous Peoples, with weak leadership from the responsible authorities.

⁸⁶ Australia, Cook Islands, FSM, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Tokelau.

⁸⁷ Sámi Women's Forum SNF's Note Feb. 14th 2020, presented to UN-PFII members visiting Sami Parliament of Norway, Karasjok.

Data and Statistics

In Africa and Asia, where IP are not recognized as such, the **collection of disaggregated data** is still a challenge. In Asia there is a dearth of comprehensive data on Indigenous Peoples in general, and on Indigenous Women in particular, due to the lack of disaggregated data based on ethnicity and gender. Their invisibility is a combination of different factors including, among others, limited resources for the inclusion of ethnic identification in data collection, lack of data processing and absence of political will. **In the Pacific**, although there has been some progress on the availability of gender-disaggregated data and statistics, the scope of data should continue to be expanded to improve the level of understanding of issues regarding Indigenous Women, including gender pay disparity, the role of gender in food security, the value of unpaid care support and the cost of domestic violence (Secretariat of the Pacific Community, February 2015). States also reported **weaknesses in their statistical systems** regarding gender-disaggregated data and gender statistics, resulting in policies, plans and programs that fail to adequately respond to the various needs and interests of women and girls (United Nations Economic and Social Council, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, 2014).

In the Arctic region, Finnish legislation **prohibits the collection of data on ethnicity**. However, data is available on the basis of native language: those who speak Finland's official languages (Finnish, Swedish, Sámi) as their native language, and those who speak another language as their mother tongue.⁸⁸ In Sweden, due to the horrendous race-based politics of the European Nazi regime during World War II, the Swedish State prohibited the collection of data and statistics based on ethnicity after WWII. Furthermore, in Norway, there is no Sámi, Norwegian or Nordic institution that has a particular responsibility for collecting and documenting knowledge and source material about the historical lives and livelihoods

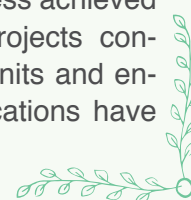
⁸⁸ Country Report by Finland. Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) and the Outcome of the Twenty-Third Special Session of the General Assembly (2000) May 2014.

of Sámi women.⁸⁹ According to the NGO Cultural Survival (2015), no disaggregated data on the IW of the Russian Federation exist and little research has focused on their experience. The media, academia and national politics neglect and overlook Indigenous Women. They are also largely ignored in human rights reporting and monitoring.⁹⁰

In the Americas, only 17 countries provide systematic information on the situation of Indigenous Women from a statistical perspective, while other detailed statistical analyses on IW have been developed through specific surveys that included the ethnic dimension (ECLAC, SCA and UNFPA, 2017). However, there is a lack of disaggregated data on many aspects of life, such as gender-based violence, femicide, political participation and social and health condition, among others. **The scarcity of properly disaggregated data can be explained, in part, by the sensitivity of the issue.** Historically, governments have used census data (including data on ethnicity and religion) to target certain populations with assimilation policies or even persecution. However, in many cases, the absence of disaggregated data is due to the limited functioning of information systems, as well as to the lack of political priority accorded to data collection.

searchers in their work towards justice for MMIWG2. The database originally included cases from the US and Canada only, but since 2019, it has expanded its reach to include all Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit People. This database is an expression of indigenous data sovereignty, as Indigenous people themselves control how the data is collected and used.⁹¹

In the case of Mexico, the **National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI)**, in partnership with the **National Commission on Indigenous Development (CDI)**, collects information and develops indicators aimed at strengthening the implementation of evidence-based public policies for Indigenous populations. Currently, the indicators show the magnitude and extent of the social exclusion of Mexico's Indigenous People, Communities and Women, as well as the progress achieved through plans, programs and projects conducted by public administration units and entities. Specific studies and publications have been produced in recent years.



GOOD PRACTICES

In the US, the **MMIWG2 database**, managed by the Sovereign Bodies Institute, logs cases of missing and murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit People, from 1900 to the present. The database represents a comprehensive online resource and is routinely updated to support community members, advocates, activists, and re-

⁸⁹ SNF 2018 Project Report, "Gávavuohta" (Women's Pride - Sami women's self-esteem) 2016-18, funded by the Barents Secretariat and the Sami Parliament in Norway

⁹⁰ For example, the Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of Indigenous people (2010) does not refer to Indigenous women, neither does the Russian Federation progress report on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Beijing+25).

4.10 Human Rights of Indigenous Women

Twenty-five years after Beijing, the advancement of Indigenous Women's situation is still constrained by the major barrier that is the full and effective recognition, protection and fulfilment of the rights of IP as enshrined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). Lack of recognition of Indigenous Peoples in national legislation, especially in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, as well as land dispossession and insufficient protection of IP's land rights, are key human

⁹¹ MMIW data base: <https://www.sovereign-bodies.org/mmiw-database>.



Indigenous Women of Arctic



0.4

Millions
are Indigenous Peoples

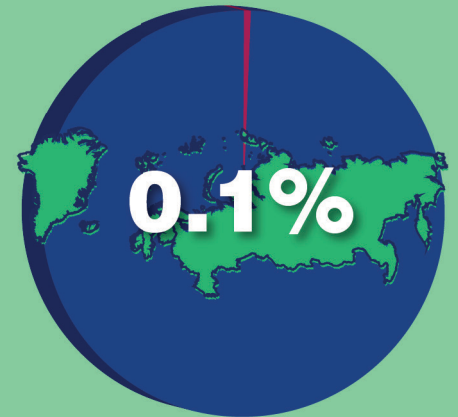


0.2

Millions
are Indigenous Women



How many
Indigenous Women
are in the Arctic?
(Europe and central Asia)



Where do Indigenous Women live in the Arctic?

34%

of Indigenous Women live in urban areas

66%

of Indigenous Women live in rural areas



rights issues that affect IP's collective and individual rights, with particular consequences for Indigenous Women. IP and IW continue to be criminalized, persecuted and killed for defending their land and rights.

🌀 Lack of Recognition of Indigenous Peoples in National Legislation

Indigenous Peoples make up the majority of the populations of the small island States in the **Pacific region**. Compared to other elsewhere in the world, most Indigenous peoples in the Pacific constitute independent island countries, rather than politically marginal or minority populations within larger States. The exceptions are the larger countries and islands of Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia, Guam, Hawai'i and New Caledonia. However, **the legal recognition of Indigenous sovereignty is still contested** across the Pacific, and active independence movements continue in Bougainville, West Papua, and Guam (Erni, et al., 2016). The lack of recognition of IP's collective rights also has specific consequences for the full enjoyment of IW's human rights. For example, recognition of IP's collective rights is key to combating violence against women and structural discrimination.

In Africa, many countries do not recognize Indigenous Peoples and their right to self-determination as presented in the UNDRIP.⁹² For example, according to IWGIA (2016), the Botswanan government does not accord any specific recognition to ethnic groups as Indigenous, maintaining instead that all citizens are Indigenous, therefore **violating their right to self-determination and**

⁹² According to 2017 IWGIA Report, some African states recognize and are willing to redress the historical injustices and marginalization suffered by certain sections of their national populations that self-identify as Indigenous Peoples, "but remain uncomfortable with the term 'Indigenous peoples' and therefore prefer using alternative concepts in their laws or policies.

The Beijing Declaration of Indigenous Women recommended that "all governments and international non-governmental and governmental organizations recognize the right of Indigenous peoples to self-determination, and enshrine the historical, political, social, cultural, economic and religious rights of Indigenous peoples in their constitutions and legal systems."

self-identification. For Indigenous Women in Botswana, therefore, it is very difficult to remain on their lands, as they are under constant threat of being relocated by central government or district councils (IWGIA Report, 2019). In this situation, their right to maintain their traditional livelihoods is jeopardized, exacerbating their impoverishment. **In Asia**, with a few exceptions, like Philippines,⁹³ States extend only limited or partial recognition to Indigenous peoples, who are usually referred to using terms such as "tribal peoples," "hill tribes," "scheduled tribes," "adivasis" or "janajatis" and "Indigenous cultural communities," among others. For example, India's 1950 constitution has a "Scheduled Tribes" classification which is how it refers to Indigenous Peoples today, while in Thailand, there are only ten Indigenous Peoples officially recognized referred to as "hill tribes." Furthermore, up to the present, **there are thousands of undocumented/unregistered Indigenous Peoples** in Thailand,⁹⁴ Indonesia, Nepal, Malaysia and the Philippines, many of whom **are women and girls**. This impacts negatively on the availability of disaggregated data, as well as their capacity to access basic services, mobility, redress and state protection.

🌀 Land Dispossession and Insufficient Protection of Land Rights

In Africa, in recent decades, the Indigenous communities inhabiting the equatorial forest in their various countries have been victims of **forced displacement** due to logging, mining, tourist activities and armed conflict in the DRC, Uganda and Kenya (Musafiri 2009). There is **no clear le-**

⁹³ Philippines is the most advanced country in terms of enacting a state policy on IP. The Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act of 1997 remain a legal basis for Indigenous peoples' assertion of their collective rights.

⁹⁴ In Thailand alone, an estimate of over 100,000 Indigenous Peoples are reported to be without citizenship.

gal recognition of the land rights of Pygmies in the DRC, so they are being expelled from their forests and lands without receiving any financial compensation or cultivable land. This means that they are also exposed to food insecurity, health problems and deterioration of cultural, physical, spiritual and economic integrity (Musafiri 2009). Also, in most Indigenous communities, women are not allowed to inherit land or property (AIWO 2019 Conference). **In Asia**, the displacement or relocation of IP from their traditional territories and the dispossession of their lands and resources by government- and private sector-led projects in the extractive industries are common, and have been recorded in Cambodia,⁹⁵ Bangladesh, Japan, India, the Philippines and Thailand.⁹⁶ In the name of forest conservation, forest-dependent Indigenous Peoples and communities in India are being expelled from their land.⁹⁷ In matters of women owning land or property, Asian cultures are generally patriarchal, preventing women, including Indigenous Women, from claiming property rights.⁹⁸ Finally, **demographic engineering and the state-sponsored relocation** of large numbers of non-Indigenous people into the territories of IP is marginalizing IP in their own territories.⁹⁹

⁹⁵ In Cambodia, 2001 Land Law explicitly defines Economic Land Concessions (ELC). In 2016, Hengfu International Sugar, a company based in Guangdong, China, was granted an ELC covering 42,422 hectares of forest and farmlands of Kuy people in Preah Vihear province, Cambodia.

⁹⁶ In Thailand, Indigenous communities are resisting the imposition of national parks within their territories. The application for a World Heritage Site over the Kaeng Krachan National Park currently covering 2,900 square kilometres has already violently impacted on the lives and limbs of the Karen people. Karen Women, generally engaged in rotational farming are left without a choice but to use chemical fertilizers and herbicides to cope with the limited area and time for their farming activities. This has put more burden on Indigenous Women who are expected to provide food for the family. As a result, gender-based violence is exacerbated at the household level, and women are forced into migration.

⁹⁷ India's 2019 latest renegeing on its Forest Rights Act, supported by international conservation organizations, will displace and dispossess 7.5 million Indigenous Peoples and forest dependent communities.

⁹⁸ In Timor Lest, for example, Land Law No. 13/2017, ensures that women and men have the same right to be title holders of land, however, women are less likely to assert or claim land and property.

⁹⁹ In Bangladesh, violent displacements and land grabbing in the Chitragong Hill Tracts (CHT) is almost a norm. The United Nations estimate about 9,700 already displaced families have yet to reclaim their lands or houses from Bengali settlers and military personnel. Reports from AIWN partners in India cite marginalization of Indigenous peoples in North East India, particularly in Assam and Tripura because of the influx of migrants from neighbouring Bangladesh.

In the Americas, despite the progress made over the last 25 years in relation to the legal recognition of Indigenous Peoples' land rights,¹⁰⁰ countries show a great disparity in their jurisprudence and often violate international treaties on the matter. Moreover, Indigenous Women are systematically dispossessed of their territories, as in the cases of Q'eqchi' women in Guatemala and of Nasa women in Colombia.¹⁰¹ With regard to the **Arctic region**, Article 31 of the Russian Land Code, which explicitly stated that local governments must consult the local population through meetings and referenda before taking any decision that could result in land appropriation, had been erased from the Land Code. However, following protests, in 2015 it reappeared in a weakened form as Article 39, which does not specify who exactly has to inform the population, organize the gatherings or take the results into account. Because of this, companies have tended to withhold information on their projects, refraining from public consultations with Indigenous Peoples and their representative authorities (IWGIA, 2019).

Criminality and Violence Against IP and IW Human Rights Defenders

Asia is the second most dangerous region for human and Indigenous Peoples' rights activists. Front Line Defenders reported that **304 human rights defenders (HRDs) were killed globally in 2019 alone, of whom 13% were women and 40% were advocating for land rights, Indigenous Peoples' rights and environmental rights.**¹⁰² In the Philippines, Indigenous Women

For Indigenous Women, this means heightened competition to already scarce resources, services and opportunities targeted for women. In West Papua, Indigenous Peoples comprised 96% of the population in 1971. At the current rate of the government's transmigration program, however, the Indigenous population may drop to 29% by 2020.

¹⁰⁰ Americas is the region with the highest number of States that have ratified the ILO 169 Convention.

¹⁰¹ However, there are also victorious struggles such as that of the Warari people of Pastaza who appealed to the courts after years of struggles to protect the Amazon area where they live, and managed to stop the installation of 16 oil blocks on their lands.

¹⁰² Front line defenders 2019 Report: https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/sites/default/files/global_analysis_2019_web.pdf

at the forefront of defending their ancestral lands from aggression were charged and branded as “high-ranking officials” of the Communist Party of the Philippines’ New People’s Army.¹⁰³ These cases illustrate a systematic approach on the part of the Philippine government, using its Inter-Agency Committee on Legal Action (IACLA) to handle cases against HRDs. In India, civil society organizations, including Indigenous Women’s and Indigenous Peoples’ organizations and communities, are facing restrictive laws such as the Financial Contributions Regulations Act (FCRA). In November, Amnesty International India was raided and its accounts frozen for alleged violation of FCRA regulations. There are also burdensome requirements for NGO registration in Bangladesh, Nepal, Cambodia and Pakistan. According to the 2019 Front Line Defenders report, more than 60% of murders of environmental defenders that year occurred **in the Americas**, where Brazil (with 23 cases) was second only to Colombia (with 106 cases). Cases in Guatemala rose alarmingly from three cases in 2017 to 16 in 2018 and 15 in 2019, which, per capita, makes the Central American country the most dangerous in the period analyzed. In 2019, Mexico had 23 murders of HRDs, Peru had three, Ecuador two and El Salvador, Costa Rica and Bolivia one. However, it is believed that the real numbers could be higher, because cases are often not recorded and are rarely investigated.¹⁰⁴ Cases such as those of Máxima Acuña Atalaya, Berta Cáceres Flores, Macarena Valdés Muñoz and Cristiana Bautista Taquinás reflect the extreme forms of violence experienced by IW when they lead struggles to defend water, land, territories, spiritual practices, traditional health systems, food sovereignty and the rights to self-determination and self-government of Indigenous Peoples (CIDH, 2017).

¹⁰³ Among those included were UNSRIP Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, Expert Member on the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Joan Carling, Cordillera Peoples Alliance Advisory Council Member, Joanna Cariño, and Global Coordinator of the Indigenous Peoples Movement for Self-Determination and Liberation (IPMSDL), Beverly Longid.

¹⁰⁴ The majority of activists killed are male. According to Front Line Defenders around 13% are female.

GOOD PRACTICES

In New Caledonia, the French government, the independence movement *Front de Libération Nationale Kanak et Socialiste* (FLNKS) and leaders of anti-independence parties agreed to a second referendum on self-determination to be held in September 2020, under the terms of the Nouméa Accord and following the November 2018 referendum which saw an unprecedented 43% vote for independence (Australian National University, Department of Pacific Affairs, 2020). **Kanak women were visible as leaders in the independence movement, including *Femmes engagées pour le Oui*, which organized several rallies and marches (Delrieu, 2020).**

In Ratanakiri, **Cambodia**, a rubber company based in Vietnam was granted an Economic Land Concession (ELC) over land occupied by 17 Indigenous communities, mainly the Tampuan, Jarai, Kachok and Kreung. Indigenous Women’s organizations and NGOs joined efforts to bring the case to the International Financial Corporation. This resulted in an agreement obliging the rubber company to facilitate the processing of the communal land titles of 11 affected Indigenous communities in 2015. Also, the Phnom Prich, Srepok and Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuaries in Mondulkiri Province in Cambodia acknowledged the rights and roles of Indigenous communities in a sustainable shared management agreement in 2019. The agreement, stipulating community rights to ownership and resource management, resulted from an organized lobby by the communities whose livelihoods are

directly dependent on the forest. The area covered by the sanctuary is home to 12,804 individuals, 46% of whom are women and girls.

4.11 Indigenous Women and the Media

Indigenous Women are usually underrepresented in media. Moreover, media coverage tends to bolster negative stereotypes of Indigenous Women and use language that may serve to perpetuate racism and racial discrimination. Although Indigenous Women's participation in media has increased, there are still many obstacles to their engagement in communication and information broadcasting, including poor communication infrastructure in Indigenous territories, gender discrimination, legal barriers to the establishment of community media and the criminalization of journalists and reporters, among others. However, media may also be used as a tool for exercising IW's rights to self-determination, enabling their empowerment through the reclamation of their narratives and allowing them to be voices for social change in the fight against gender discrimination, racism and human rights violations (UNPFII, 2020 par. 73).

African Indigenous Women's access to media has been significant in the establishment of community development radio in Indigenous languages. These initiatives have helped Indigenous Women discuss issues that unite them (Interview, 2020).¹⁰⁵ On the other hand, the **stereotyping of women in general and Indigenous Women in particular** (BPFA 2010) and Indigenous Women's unequal access to and participation in all channels of communication, especially in the media,

¹⁰⁵ For example, the Cameroon national television has a slot on Monday and Friday for the promotion of cultural groups in which Indigenous people's organizations including Indigenous Women have participated (Interview 2019).

continue to pose major challenges (Interview, 2020). **Poor communication infrastructures** in Indigenous Peoples' territories further contribute to their lack of access to communication. **In the Pacific region** also, women still encounter obstacles to their engagement in media, including unequal wages, unfair treatment, insufficient recognition at work, harassment and balancing professional and personal responsibilities (United Nations Economic and Social Council, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, 2014).

The access and use of technologies by Indigenous women is an important and current factor to consider. Although there are no comparative data available for the Americas, the data for Peru can be illustrative: in 2017, 13.7% of Indigenous Women used the Internet, compared to 21.9% of Indigenous men, 52.6% of non-Indigenous Women and 57.4% of non-Indigenous men (Mujeres indígenas y Beijing+25, Región Las Américas, 2020).

In the Americas, mass media has been a leading factor in bolstering stereotypical images and narratives of Indigenous Women in the region (CHIRAPAQ, 2019). Programs about politics, government and the economy rarely include the perspective and practices of IW, nor are IW recognized as having any expertise in the area. Instead, media usually represents them as voices expressing personal experiences, testimonies or popular opinions. In Canada, the 2019 report of the non-profit organization Women in View (2019) on women in Canada's film and

TV industry revealed that Indigenous Women remain seriously underrepresented as writers, directors and cinematographers.¹⁰⁶ An Urban Indian Health Institute (UIHI) study (2017) on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) in 71 cities in the United States concludes that the vast majority of media coverage on MMIWG was focused on reservation-based violence, minimizing the problems in urban settings

¹⁰⁶ After analyzing 90 television series funded by the Canadian Media Fund (CMF) between 2014 and 2017, 267 film productions and 831 development projects between 2015 and 2017, the report concludes that only 22 television contracts went to Indigenous Women between 2014 and 2017. Besides, out of the 24 television series created in 2017, none had any Indigenous Women on staff and that out of 1,637 film contracts issued between 2015 and 2017, just 12 were given to Indigenous Women (Women in View, 2019).

and helping reinforce stereotypes of American Indian and Alaska Native people as exclusively living on reservations or in rural areas. The study also finds that media sources use language that could be perceived as violent and victim-blaming in their coverage of MMIWG cases.¹⁰⁷

GOOD PRACTICES

The **Sámi Women's Forum (SNF)**¹⁰⁸ promotes the magazine *Gába* (“skilled Sámi woman”). Written in the Norwegian and Sámi languages, the magazine publishes articles, interviews, short stories, poems and book reviews about Sámi culture, ethnicity and other issues as they relate to women.¹⁰⁹ SNF has also produced audiovisual material to raise the visibility of the situation of Sami Women in Russia, Finland, Sweden and Norway through the multimedia project *Gávavuohhta Time*.¹¹⁰

Women communicators and filmmakers in **Latin America** have made significant progress in recent years. They routinely hold meetings and film screenings related to IW's life and violence against IW in the region. **CHIRAPAQ** (*Centro de Culturas Indígenas del Perú*) organized the film festival *Our Lives in Images: Violence and Indigenous Women*, in which all works were directed by, and most of them also featured, Indigenous Women.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ Out of 931 articles examined, 31% media outlets used violent language in their coverage, revealing racism or misogyny attitudes reflected in references to drugs, alcohol, sex work, gang violence, victim criminal history, victim-blaming, racial misclassification, false information on cases, not naming the victim, and publishing images/video of the victim's death. Twenty-five (25%) of the media outlets reviewed used violent language in 50% or more of the cases they covered, and 15% used violent language in 100% of the cases they covered.

¹⁰⁸ SNF works as a women's resource-center, functioning through volunteer work and project funding.

¹⁰⁹ Sámi Women's Forum: *Gába Magazine 1999: Voices of Sami Women*. Special Issue 1999 in English.

¹¹⁰ Multimedia project «Gávavuohhta time»: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MC_6VyMFtB4&feature=share&fbclid=IwAR2jLicxMGf8bF_kkciPaxvRYoS2huz-MIE5DU76GWgpBYqgL6FLEs4HQd8

¹¹¹ For further details, visit the following website: <http://chirapaq.org/es/es/cine-dirigido-por-mujeres-indigenas-se-proyectara-en-lima>

4.12 Indigenous Women and the Environment

Issues surrounding the environment, sustainable development, biodiversity and climate change involve several different rights enshrined in the UNDRIP, including the basic right of Indigenous peoples to self-determination (UNPFII, 2020; par.46). Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous Women live in some of the most fragile ecosystems in the world, and the impacts of climate change are affecting them more than anyone else. With regard to their specific relation to land, Indigenous Women are most likely to experience the first and worst consequences of climate change globally, including natural disasters and emergencies, food insecurity, forced migration and limited access to natural resources and conflicts related thereto. Although Indigenous Women hold important knowledge for mitigation and adaptation, they remain underrepresented in environmental policymaking at multiple levels. In addition, environmental violence caused by large development projects, extractive industries, agribusiness and military contamination on IP's territories are having alarming consequences on IW's health, including reproductive health, and spiritual well-being.¹¹²

Climate Change

According to the Arctic Centre,¹¹³ lands and natural resources in the **Arctic region** have been increasingly affected by climate change, which is

¹¹² The term “environmental violence” is the deliberate and lethal exposure to pesticides, mining waste and other sources of toxic contamination. It was identified and defined in the “Declaration for Health, Life and Defense of our Lands, Rights and Future Generations” adopted by consensus by 52 Indigenous women and girls ages 14 to 92 from five regions at the 2nd International Indigenous Women's Symposium on Environmental and Reproductive Health held on April 2012 in Chickaloon Village, Alaska. This concept was formally recognized in the report of the 2012 UNPFII EGM to the UNPFII 12th session. It was also included in the Lima Declaration from the International Conference of Indigenous Women in October 2013.

¹¹³ Arctic Center: <https://www.arcticcentre.org/EN/arcticregion/Arctic-Indigenous-Peoples>.

significantly **impacting the traditional harvesting activities of Indigenous Peoples**, threatening their survival. Indigenous Women are particularly exposed to the impacts of climate change due to geography, patriarchal structures and land rights and ownership, among other factors. Climate change endangers their food security and traditional subsistence food sources.¹¹⁴ In Canada, although women, especially Indigenous Women, hold important knowledge for mitigation and adaptation, they remain underrepresented in environmental policymaking at multiple levels (Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2019). IW's lack of representation in politics at the national and international levels on climate change has been recognized as a major challenge in the Arctic region (Prior and Heinämäki, 2017).

In Africa, Indigenous Women are important stewards of environmental conservation and protection, as their livelihoods are dependent on the environment. Hence, the consequences of climate change are affecting Indigenous Women disproportionately. Climate change has influenced rainfall patterns over the years, causing floods or even drought. This has led to **increased nomadism**, whereby IW move from place to place in search of water and green pastures, and it has sometimes resulted in **conflicts** due both to scarcity and being forced onto others' land (AIWO Newsletter, 2020).¹¹⁵ In the **Pacific region**, given women's concentration in the agriculture and

fisheries sectors, the increasing risk of climate change demands greater attention to property insurance coverage for damages sustained from natural disasters and income losses in agriculture and fisheries (Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development, March 2017). The lack of gender- and age-disaggregated data across different geographical areas hampers responses to crises, including humanitarian and rehabilitation action, and places women and girls at risk (Secretariat of the Pacific Community, February 2015).

Environmental Impact of Large Development Projects, Extractive Industries and Agribusiness

Everywhere, but particularly in the **Arctic**, extractive industries represent an urgent threat to Indigenous People's lands and territories, ways of life and spiritual well-being. Large-scale development projects have **devastating impacts on the environment, health, food security, personal safety and economy**, affecting Indigenous Women enormously. In the north of Siberia, an Indigenous Chukchi woman attested that companies dispose of oil barrels improperly in Chukchi territories, resulting in soil contamination and thus affecting the subsistence of fauna including reindeer. The smaller reindeer population resulted in an increase in unemployment among Indigenous peoples, and therefore in the precariousness of their lives, in their lack of food security and in rates of violence against women.¹¹⁶ In Qamani'tua, Nunavut (Canada), community members discussed the loss of caribou directly connected to the operations of the Meadowbank mine. They said that the dust from the road leading to the mine had ruined the roadside vegetation, making fishing or gathering near the mine significantly more difficult. Women in the community had to spend money on food that would normally be hunted or gathered (Sweet, 2014). **In the Americas, environmental violence** resulting from extractive industries and

¹¹⁴ At this respect, in its note presented to the members of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) visiting the Sami Parliament of Norway, the Sámi Nisson Forum (SNF) recommends that knowledge regarding the impact of climate change on Indigenous Women be disseminated to a greater extent to Sami communities and organizations.

¹¹⁵ In Kenya IW face forced migration, drought and also floods which brings the degradation of land, landslides, locust invasion, and food insecurity (Interview 2020). Indigenous Women from Cameroon, Mali and Burkina Faso, indicated that resources are getting limited because of high temperatures which have resulted in the shortage of water, less rainfall, drought animal dying and aggressive weather patterns (Interview 2019). Climate change has affected Indigenous Women in the Lake Chad basin area, which is at the heart of Sahel (Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim 2017). The exposure of Indigenous Women to climate change affects production in the case of nomadic women in Chad who depend on milk production for their income (IWGIA, 2019). Burkina Faso, Mali, South Africa, and Botswana are experiencing drought which have affected livelihood of Indigenous peoples and Indigenous Women (Interview 2019).

¹¹⁶ FIMI: Draft Report on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Goals 10 & 16 regarding the situation of Indigenous Women.

agribusiness operating in Indigenous territories has been worsening and increasing. This violence takes the form of appropriation and exploitation of resources through illegal occupation of Indigenous territories, as well as increased levels of trafficking, disappearance and sexual abuse of IWG.¹¹⁷ The Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2014) stated that Indigenous women living in communities near oil, gas and mining operations are vulnerable to sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS, which are often introduced by outside workers that move into the area.¹¹⁸ Research by Victoria Sweet (2014) highlights how a growing interest in resource extraction may increase the risk of trafficking in the northern region of Canada and the USA. Indigenous Women have also voiced concerns in relation to **food sovereignty**, which is continuously threatened by dispossession, agro-industry and the proliferation of monocultures and transgenic cultivation (GMOs).

Military Contamination

In the **Arctic region**, military contamination has been documented, along **with adverse effects on Indigenous women's health, especially reproductive health**. According to a 2012 UNPFII report, in St. Lawrence Island, Alaska and the Arctic as a whole, contamination from military waste and the global transportation of harmful chemicals has affected traditional foods, water supplies and medicinal and edible plants used by Yupik women, further affecting their reproductive health and the right to survival of future generations. Due to contamination, statistics on health problems in the

Alaskan Arctic show disproportionately high levels of birth defects and neonatal deaths among Alaska Native infants.¹¹⁹ In the **Pacific**, the presence of US military forces on Guam has also resulted in environmental contamination. There is serious concern regarding the health of CHamorus given their alarming rates of cancer, diabetes and child mental health conditions (Natividad & Kirk, *Fortress Guam: Resistance to US Military Mega-Buildup*, 2010). **Nuclearization and militarization associated with nuclear testing** in the Marshall Islands include the detonation of over 66 bombs. The world's first hydrogen bomb was tested on Bikini Island. This weapon of mass destruction was 1,000 times stronger than the Hiroshima bomb. Marshall Islanders were used as guinea pigs to test the effects of contamination, were never told of the bomb's effects and were not moved before testing (Atomic Heritage Foundation, 2019; United Nations General Assembly, Human Rights Council, September 3, 2012) (Trask, 2004).

GOOD PRACTICES

In 2014, the Women's Earth Alliance (WEA) and the Native Youth Sexual Health Network (NYSHN) began a multi-year initiative to document the ways that North American Indigenous Women and young people's safety and health are impacted by extractive industries, entitled ***Violence on the Land, Violence on Our Bodies***. The project also aimed to support their leadership in resisting environmental violence in their communities. WEA invests in

¹¹⁷ Currently, 19% of Indigenous territories are in areas used for legal or illegal mining activities; 94% of this area are territories recognized as Indigenous and the remaining 6% are Indigenous lands without legal recognition (RAISG). Further information on environmental violence can be found in the reports of the three International Indigenous Women's Symposiums on Environment and Reproductive Health held in California in 2010, in Alaska in 2012, and in the USA in 2018, where participatory community-based research and studies were presented.

¹¹⁸ Statement by the U.N. Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, James Anaya, to the International Expert Group Meeting on the Theme: Sexual Health and Reproductive Rights (Jan. 15, 2014).

¹¹⁹ Data from the Alaska Birth Defects registry show that the prevalence of birth defects in Alaska is twice as high as in the United States as a whole and that Alaska Native infants have twice the risk of birth defects as white infants born in Alaska. Mothers residing in villages with high hazard ranking are 43% more likely to have a low birth weight baby, 45% more likely to give birth prematurely and more likely to have babies afflicted with intrauterine growth retardation. Expert Group Meeting. Combating Violence Against Indigenous Women and Girls: "Indigenous Women and Environmental Violence". A Rights-based approach addressing impacts of Environmental Contamination on Indigenous Women, Girls and Future Generations. Submitted to the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues., January 18 – 20, 2012, United Nations Headquarters, New York.

training to support women in driving grassroots solutions to pressing ecological concerns—water, food, land, and climate. In order to support communities, a toolkit was developed, which include workshop activities, resources on how to care for bodies while carrying out frontline land defence work, strategies for addressing rape culture and land trauma and a tool to document environmental violence.

Kuokkanen (Knobblock, Kuokkanen; 2015) documents the presence of **various novel initiatives led by young Sámi women activists**. According to the author, young Sámi women are very active in bringing together and strengthening the LGBT community in Sápmi, addressing the question of structural gender violence. There are also various organizations, such Sáminuorra in Sweden, uniting young women who want a new kind of politics, conducted through a consensus approach and challenging the status quo and conventional politics. Young Sámi women are also involved in grassroots activism, building alliances with other movements such as *Idle No More* and the global climate movement *350.org* to fight against the threats of climate change and accelerated resource extraction in the Arctic (Knobblock, Kuokkanen; 2015).



Indigenous Women of Asia and Pacific



335.8

Millions
are Indigenous Peoples

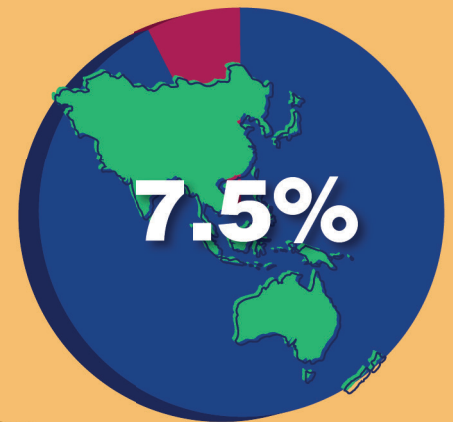


167.7

Millions
of Indigenous Women



How many
Indigenous Women
are in Asia
and Pacific?



Where do Indigenous Women
live in Asia and Pacific?

27%

of Indigenous Women
live in urban areas



73%

of Indigenous Women
live in rural areas

50%

50% of indigenous
women have no
formal education

Education



9%

9% of indigenous
women have advanced
formal education

50%

50% of indigenous women
are in the labor force

Work



21%

21% are female
salaried workers

87%

87% are informal workers





Conclusions

5. Conclusions

Over the past 25 years, the capacity of Indigenous Women to promote issues critical to them on the international development and human rights agendas has been remarkable. Significant progress has also been achieved at the national level. The majority of countries in the Americas and the Arctic and some countries in Africa, Asia and the Pacific have encouraged women's participation in politics, promoted poverty reduction policies, increased access women's and girls' access to health services, education and training and supported women's economic autonomy and the fight against violence and human rights violations. These positive changes were triggered and driven by organized initiatives by Indigenous Women on levels from local to global and by resources and expertise from a wide variety of peoples, capacities, interests and priorities, all united in the aim of advancing the rights and fundamental freedoms of Indigenous Women in all areas.

However, deep challenges persist for Indigenous Women globally. Most of them are common to all regions: the five regional reports independently documented high levels of structural violence, discrimination and marginalization. Land dispossession, environmental violence, climate change and the imposition of large-scale development projects on Indigenous territories are posing alarming threats to Indigenous Women's individual and collective rights, especially for those living in rural areas where the integrity of the land is essential to their survival and well-being.

Although most of North America's generally already lives in urban settings, IP in the other regions reside mostly in rural communities. Nev-

ertheless, it has been documented that they are increasingly moving to cities and, in so doing, face new forms of marginalization, violence, poverty, loss of cultural identity and erosion of traditional systems of solidarity.

On the other hand, the reluctance of States in Africa, Asia and the Pacific to recognize Indigenous Peoples as such still represents the main critical issue for the protection and promotion of IW's human rights in those regions. IWG are invisible in the development of public policy, and their access to basic rights such as education, health, land, political participation and access to justice, among others, is severely limited. The use of police and military power and the criminalization of human rights and land defenders have been documented in Asia and Latin America, while some African countries have struggled with armed conflict, resulting in greater rates of violence and fewer resources and opportunities for Indigenous Women. The majority of governments have signed, ratified or endorsed the various conventions, commitments and declarations on human rights in general and women's rights in particular, namely the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BDPfA), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and other regional human rights instruments. However, there is still a lack of effective implementation of this legal framework, even in the most developed countries such as the United States, Canada and the Scandinavian countries, resulting in many human rights violations against IP and IWG.

While describing persistent challenges, this global report has also made clear that the situation of IW cannot be properly described and understood without referring to individual and collective rights simultaneously. The violation of collective rights to land and self-determination has specific impacts on IW's individual rights. Most of the critical areas of concern of the BDPfA are, for IW, deeply interconnected with their experience of self-determination and their relation to land, shaping the condition of Indigenous Women as women and as Indigenous. Thus, in the case of IWG, issues like poverty, education, health, violence, armed conflicts, the economy, political participation, empowerment and human rights need to be analyzed with careful consideration for the relation between IW and the land, and in the context of land rights and land dispossession.

At the same time, the violation of IW's individual rights, the continuing violence against IWG, the interconnection between the exploitation, dispossession and destruction of Indigenous lands and the exploitation and killing of Indigenous bodies, especially those of women, show that self-determination must be considered as a gender issue as well. If Indigenous self-determination is primarily a question of survival as distinct peoples, this survival must necessarily include women, their freedom from violence and their full enjoyment of human rights (Kuokkanen, 2012).

As the 1995 Beijing Declaration of Indigenous Women stated, the situation and condition of IP and IW must be analyzed within the current political and economic context, which continues to impose on them new forms of colonialism, ex-

ploitation, discrimination and cultural assimilation. Globalization, trade liberalization, competition between countries for natural resources and the expansion of extractive industries, agribusiness and large development projects all have serious ramifications for the survival of IP, their economic livelihoods and their cultural knowledge.

The COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare inequalities both between and within countries according to gender, race, ethnicity, class, religion, sexual orientation, age and geographic location, among other divisions. Indigenous Peoples, who suffered poorer health conditions and greater deprivation than their non-Indigenous counterparts even before the crisis, are now even more vulnerable. Unfortunately, the pandemic will not be over soon, and its consequences will resonate for a long time into the future. Governments should consider Indigenous Peoples' and Indigenous Women's voices, their ancestral knowledge and their good practices of resilience in developing holistic responses to address this emergency and its aftermath.

Finally, everywhere in the world, we find many positive examples of Indigenous Women and Youth and their organization that have led and are currently leading initiatives on important issues such as self-determination; violence and access to justice; sexual and reproductive rights; environmental justice and climate change; emergency responses to COVID-19; and challenging colonialism, capitalism, and male-dominated power structures within states, Indigenous Peoples' self-government institutions and the international community, being powerful actors of change. 🌸








Toolkit for effective advocacy

6. Toolkit for effective advocacy




From the ground to the globe: *Recommendations for effective and sustainable advocacy and public actions*

The following recommendations have been selected, summarized and condensed from those outlined in the five regional reports. They therefore represent a compilation of recommendations made by Indigenous Women's organizations, reflecting their voices and priorities.

Human Rights

- States should:
 -  Recognize Indigenous Peoples and specifically Indigenous Women as such.
 -  Ratify and effectively implement UNDRIP and other human rights instruments
 -  Respect Indigenous Women's customs and traditions and take effective measures, in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Women, to protect, promote and fulfill their human rights and fundamental freedoms.
 -  Remove obstacles to the full realization of the right to self-determination of peoples living under colonial and foreign occupation.
 -  Support and vote for Indigenous Women's exercise of their inalienable right to self-determination and decolonization.

Education and Health

- States should:
 -  Eliminate barriers to education and sexual and reproductive health services for Indigenous Women. These services must be designed considering Indigenous Women's perspective. It is crucial that decisive action be taken on issues of maternal mortality, teenage pregnancy, abortion, female genital mutilation, discrimination and the prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases, especially HIV/AIDS.
 -  Ensure access to quality education and health services that are culturally and linguistically appropriate and incorporate new technologies. Quality education involve a horizontal and complementary intersection between Indigenous traditional and ancestral knowledge and universal learning strategies. States should also guarantee inclusive education with attention to Indigenous Women, Girls and Youth with disabilities.
 -  Guarantee the right of Indigenous peoples to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures.

Lands, Territories and Natural Resources

- States and non-State actors should:
 - 👤 Respect Indigenous peoples' rights to free, prior and informed consent.
 - 👤 Protect Indigenous territories as crucial areas for the resilience of the social, cultural and ecological lives of humanity and of the natural world.
 - 👤 Focus investment on addressing the consequences of climate change on these lands, ensuring the participation of Indigenous Women and that their ancestral knowledge of ecological protection is respected.

Violence

- States, the international community and Indigenous organizations should:
 - 👤 Unify and consolidate their approaches to prevent, investigate and redress all forms of individual and collective violence committed against Indigenous Women and Girls, including those with disabilities.
 - 👤 Address all forms of violence committed in the name of tradition, such as female genital mutilation and forced child marriage; domestic, institutional and political violence; and violence perpetrated during armed conflicts and the militarization of Indigenous territories.
- States should create mechanisms to guarantee access to justice for Indigenous Women and Girls, both in State-operated and in Indigenous judicial institutions. These mechanisms must combat impunity in cases of violence and discrimination against Indigenous women, through effective criminal investigations that bring perpetrators to justice and ensure that crimes are duly sanctioned.

Armed Conflict

- States should:
 - 👤 Stop the militarization of Indigenous Peoples' territories and the attacks on and vilification of Indigenous Women leaders and organizations.
 - 👤 Ensure that human rights standards are strictly observed in times of conflict.
 - 👤 Honour their commitments to Indigenous Peoples under peace agreements.
 - 👤 Guarantee that affected Indigenous Peoples, including Indigenous Women, are substantively represented in the negotiation and implementation of peace agreements.

Economic Empowerment

- States should:
 - 👤 Value and promote Indigenous Women's work and guarantee their access to economic and financial resources, as well as to the ownership of assets and land, intellectual property, traditional production practices and new technologies in different areas of the economy.
 - 👤 Create proper work opportunities for Indigenous Women corresponding to their skills and traditional knowledge, facilitate capacity building in business training and education and support the creation of enterprises and cooperatives led by Indigenous Women to boost local economies.

Participation in Decision-making

- The improvement of the political, social, economic and health circumstances of Indigenous Women and their families requires parity for Indigenous Women in all policy discussions on issues concerning them directly. This is especially true for issues related to food sovereignty, climate change, economic sustainability, the health and well-being of Indigenous Women, Children and Communities, and large-scale development projects that have a direct impact on land and territories.
- States should ensure the full and effective participation of Indigenous Women, Girls, and Youth during the national processes for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This includes decision-making on mechanisms, action plans and budgetary allocations.
- States, Indigenous Peoples' self-government institutions, regional intergovernmental bodies and the international community should provide technical assistance and funding to Indigenous Women's organizations at the local, national and international levels and involve them in meaningful political decision-making processes.

Public Policies

- States should:
 - Establish mechanisms to ensure that Indigenous Women can participate in political life, enabling them to exercise their leadership actively and freely in all arenas of political representation and participation.
 - Adopt a human rights-based approach in all policies and laws regarding Indigenous self-determination and Indigenous Women's social, economic, civil and political rights.
 - Improve participatory processes and strategies for consultation with Indigenous Women on the development of indicators, public policies, transparency and accountability mechanisms and tools for data collection to include the perspective of Indigenous Peoples.
 - Expand engagement from non-Western cultures to develop and shape policies in support of gender equity and climate adaptation that include women's traditional leadership roles and cultural values.

Data and Statistics

- States, the international community, Indigenous organizations and academics should work in concert to provide data disaggregated by gender and cultural identity, and information about Indigenous Peoples in general and Indigenous Women in particular. As part of investigation processes, innovative techniques for data collection, processing and analysis should be developed, along with strategies of socialization that are specifically designed with the worldview and concerns of Indigenous Women in mind.

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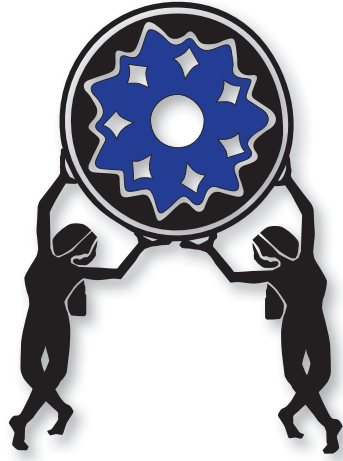
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