

48th Session of the Human Rights Council
***Item 3: Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on
the rights of indigenous peoples***
Geneva, 27 September 2021
UN Women Geneva Liaison Office

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Thank you, Madam President.

Indigenous women's rights are a key priority for UN Women. They are often the ones most affected by underrepresentation in decision-making, access to land, safety nets and social services. The effects of their exclusion manifests in multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, that span generations.

As stated by the Special Rapporteur Jose Francisco Cali Tzay in his report, the COVID-19 crisis has only exacerbated the existing inequalities with dire consequences for indigenous women and girls.

As they are less likely to be medically insured, they are more susceptible to pre-existing conditions that aggravate the impact of COVID-19. They experience greater risk of violence. It is estimated that one in three indigenous women are raped during their lifetimes. They face what has been described as "environmental violence": environmental degradation and extractive industries that pollute water resources and ancestral agricultural lands, with fatal health impacts.

In this regard, UN Women wishes to highlight the Special Rapporteur's recommendation to strengthen the transmission of indigenous languages and knowledge and promote the role of women as knowledge keepers. It is a way to prevent and mitigate future pandemics and constitutes a key element for the work of the Human Rights Council moving forward.

Thank you.