

## **Global Indigenous Women's Caucus Statement**

**Read by Sylvia Escárcega**

**Agenda Item 6: Half-day on the rights of Indigenous Peoples to food and food sovereignty**

**Honorable Chairperson,  
Distinguished Representatives,  
Sisters and Brothers,**

Indigenous women produce the majority of the world's food. They also play a very important role as caretakers of biodiversity and of Mother Earth. The continuing depletion of the world's natural resources through extractive industries, pollution of waters, contamination of soil, mono-crop cultivation, the loss of land, and neoliberal policies pose a serious threat to our ability to continue to protect our food sources, including our Mother Earth. Of concern also is the forced displacement of Indigenous Peoples from their traditional territories. In addition, today Indigenous women are losing at an unprecedented pace, seeds and all the knowledge and wisdom associated with them, through the monopolization or privatization of seed-banks for commercial purposes and the intellectual property rights regime. It then becomes difficult for Indigenous women to grow enough food or to earn a living from the little food that they grow, and to sustain their communities as well as fulfill their responsibilities towards Mother Earth. For these reasons, access to seeds and food sovereignty are crucial for the economic and cultural survival of Indigenous Peoples.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

In light of our right to food and to address the concerns we have identified, the Global Indigenous Women's Caucus recommends the following:

1. We call upon the Food Administration Organization (FAO) to implement Indigenous women's land and water tenure rights and ensure that they are able to protect and have access to those seeds that have been and are essential for the survival of their communities; seeds that are unadulterated and uncontaminated by genetically altered organisms;
2. We ask the Permanent Forum to call upon FAO and other UN relevant bodies to establish local seed-banks managed by Indigenous women;
3. We call upon the PF to promote the protection of Indigenous cuisine: food items, food sources, methods of production and preparation, and recipes;
4. We call upon States in the implementation of the UNDRIP, to ensure that Indigenous women's tenure rights to lands and waters, and their access to natural resources, including the adequate, appropriate, and sustainable

availability of foods, are fully protected, respecting Indigenous Peoples' right to free, prior and informed consent;

5. We call upon FAO to work with States and other inter-governmental development agencies to provide economic aid for food projects run by Indigenous women, always respecting our right to free, prior, and informed consent by collaborating with us in the design, planning, implementation, monitoring, and continuation of those projects;

6. We would like to express our gratitude to FAO for having established mechanisms for the participation of Indigenous Peoples in their processes. However, we call upon the FAO to ensure the direct participation of Indigenous women from more under-represented communities such as those who have pastoralist, nomadic, and fishing economies;

7. We call upon the Permanent Forum to work with the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity to protect Indigenous women's rights to land and food by having them fully participate in the development of adaptation strategies to climate change; and

8. We call upon the Permanent Forum to work with CERD and CEDAW on culturally sensitive mechanisms to protect Indigenous women's food sovereignty, by ensuring that Indigenous women's land and waters tenure rights are not restricted due to discriminatory processes.

Honorable Chairperson, Indigenous women are very committed to ensuring food security for Indigenous Peoples and our future generations, thus, we appreciate all the efforts that the Permanent Forum is undertaking to protect our food sovereignty.

Thank you.