

Global Indigenous Women's Caucus Statement

Read by Sandra Creamer

Agenda Item 3: Report on the Expert Group Meeting Combating Violence Against Indigenous Women and Girls, article 22 (2) of the UNDRIP E/C.19/2012/L.1

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

The Global Indigenous Women's Caucus welcomes the report of the International Working Group Meeting Combating Violence against Indigenous Women and Girls: Article 22 of the UNDRIP, and its extensive and comprehensive analysis of the sources and types of violence. We also welcome its recommendations that United Nations, States, and Indigenous Peoples work in partnership to ensure for Indigenous women and girls full protection and guarantees against all forms of violence and discrimination. However, the GIWC recognizes that domestic violence and violence against women also injures and traumatizes the male children as well and thus, they need to be taken into consideration in the analysis, programmes, and solutions regarding these issues.

We recognize the process of combating gender driven violence must start within communities and include the elimination of interpersonal physical, sexual and psychological violence. However, we note that not all patriarchal social relations necessarily lead to violence against Indigenous women and girls or to oppressive practices. We also note that currently there are many examples of best practices within some communities that exemplify how Indigenous Peoples are using culturally appropriate mechanisms for combating interpersonal violence, and as such, must be recognized and encouraged, especially where Indigenous women take leadership roles. Finally, we echo the need to include Indigenous women at all levels of decision-making in conflict prevention, management and resolution.

In light of the report and the needs and concerns expressed at the Global Indigenous Women's Caucus, we make the following **RECOMMENDATIONS**:

1. We ask the PFII to call on UN agencies and programmes to help build Indigenous women's capacities in the prevention of violence and discrimination, as well as on conflict management and resolution, by providing funding, training, and full access to decision-making processes affecting Indigenous Peoples. It is only through Indigenous women's empowerment that gendered and all other forms of interpersonal violence can adequately and efficiently be addressed in a manner that supports the well being of the community as a whole.
2. As noted in the report, combating violence has to be done holistically and not isolated from the range of Indigenous Peoples' rights, including the right to self-determination and the right to free, prior and informed consent, or from the international human rights framework. In this light, we call upon the PFII to urge the Human Rights Council, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, National Human Rights bodies, and

non-governmental organizations working on human rights issues to work in full and effective partnership with Indigenous women to provide human rights training and set up compliance mechanisms to address structural forms of violence against Indigenous women and girls.

3. Globally, Indigenous women continue to feel the effects of not being able to access traditional forms of justice, as well as State forms of justice and other legal systems. For this reason, and in order to end the violence that is built into colonial forms of law (whether it is built into state courts or customary courts as a result of the Doctrine of Discovery and other Frameworks of Dominance), we call the PFII to urge States and Indigenous Peoples to become familiarized with and apply the Convention on All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

4. We urge States to establish safe houses for Indigenous women and children who suffer violence and to provide culturally appropriate training to their staff so they can provide adequate services. Furthermore, we call upon States to provide culturally appropriate training to staff in their policing structures, as well as safe mechanisms for reporting violence, in order to not further victimize Indigenous women and children.

5. We call on the PFII to recognize environmental violence as a form of violence against women. Toxic products and nuclear waste dumped on Indigenous lands and territories, pollution, damages to the ecosystems that Indigenous Peoples manage, human induced climate change are all examples of environmental violence that threatens Indigenous women and future generations.

6. We urge the PFII to undertake an International Study on ways of remedying the effects of interpersonal and structural violence against Indigenous women that forces Indigenous children into human trafficking, exploitation, alienation from their communities, and homelessness. We recognize that it is time to not simply look at the problem, but to find culturally appropriate solutions in full partnership with Indigenous women and men.

Thank you.