

45th Session of the Human Rights Council

Item 3: interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples

Geneva, 24 September 2020

UN Women Liaison Office in Geneva

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Thank you, Madam President.

The Secretary General's review and appraisal of 25 years of implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action reveals diverse forms of vulnerability faced by indigenous women and girls.¹ These include large-scale land grabbing and dispossession, stemming from indigenous women's unequal access to and control over land and natural resources, along with barriers to mobility, and limited access to justice and decision-making power in the household and community.

Indigenous women also face challenges related to access to quality healthcare, such as disproportionate maternal mortality rates and fatal health issues resulting from environmental degradation. Due to historical circumstances related to colonial and neo-colonial policies, indigenous women are also less likely to be medically insured. These are circumstances that make indigenous communities highly vulnerable to the spread of COVID-19.

Mandatory COVID-19 prevention measures have also created an environment that can worsen the situation of indigenous women in abusive relationships. Stay-at-home orders have revealed a shadow pandemic of domestic violence, with indigenous women significantly more likely to be affected than non-indigenous women. Restricted mobility has limited indigenous women's capacity to report violence and access legal services.

¹ Report of the Secretary General, Review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, E/CN.6/2020/3, available at <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3850087?ln=en>.

As governments around the world design and implement recovery measures, they should bear in mind the additional challenges and vulnerabilities of indigenous peoples. UN Women has been committed to providing ways for indigenous women to better support their communities' response to COVID-19, and will continue working with indigenous women around the world to ensure that their voices and experiences are at the forefront of COVID-19 reconstruction and recovery plans.

I thank you.