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**by
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on behalf of**

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Women and Gender

Amongst other important challenges faced by Indigenous Peoples, I would like to focus on the situation of Indigenous Women. In my view the position of women in society is marked as follow: Women have a big responsibility towards their family, community, relationships but been regarded not towards themselves. Women play a specific role in the household and that impacts on how women are viewed or participate in family issues. Women are the back bone of the family, community, and can be regarded as the domain for sustainable development. While the men are going away to hunt the women stays behind to taught the children. Women are being abuse both internal as well as externally, by brothers, fathers, uncles, community members, leaders, ext, why because they don't have power over their own body's, a women's body is made by society. How women have to behave, how they need to dress and so forth. In relationships men has the power over women.

The time has come to empower Indigenous women, but what is empowerment. Empowerment are the ability to take control of one's life, it's about gaining skills and building self confidence You cannot empower anyone, one has to empower one's self. Women are more honest, reliable, humble softer, participatory in their approaches and always have the needs of community at heart. Women are attentive and sensitive to the impact of the decisions they make. Women should change mentality toward each other and toward themselves and help build the self-esteem of their fellow Indigenous women. Women at the top levels should invite indigenous women to women movement discussion at national level as well as to encourage top level women to participation in meetings of the Indigenous women to create a bigger impact and understanding of Indigenous women issues/challenges.

It's important to note of indigenous women entrepreneurial skill and traditional knowledge. This should be captured to accommodate a sustainable livelihood for their community. Identifying markets and market linkage of the various artifacts in various trade fairs and open flea markets should limit exploitation of such skills.

Traditional knowledge of products (e.g honey plants with cosmetic and pharmaceutical values) should be further explored for packaging and branding. Women would be better placed to spear head such projects.

I would like to draw your attention to the various different challenges faced by Indigenous Women around the globe.

Challenges

- There has been a 1 size fits all approach with regards to Indigenous women which has to change, in order to ensure Indigenous women has a platform in society
- To advocate for Indigenous women specific needs
- There is a constant lack of equal opportunities when it comes to Indigenous women
- Continues lack of access to information, such as education, health, ext
- Indigenous Women faced double discrimination
- There is a constant lack of access to information and empowerment of IP women
- There is teenage pregnancies, false marriages, child labour, human trafficking
- We face harmful cultural practices such as female genital mutilations
- Continues rape of Indigenous women

Given all these challenges amongst many many more I would therefore like to conclude with these few remarks to be noted:

- There is an urgent need to reaffirm the role of Indigenous women in society
- Ensuring Indigenous women's leadership
- There is a need for men to see women as their equal partners and therefore work together as a team
- Integrate men and youth in all processes of education awareness raising, advocacy and lobby
- Provide resources to form and support strong women solidarity groups at grassroots and national level
- Create a coalition of senior women to mentor the young
- Promote and encourage continuous education of women through various channels formal and informal
- Encourage participation of indigenous women by having the policies in local languages
- Invest in the education of girl child in Indigenous Communities
- Encourage participation of indigenous women in politics
- Political parties should encourage women participation
- Implement all the ratified laws by the governments
- Respect of each other's rights both men and women
- There should be a social transformation on community, government and individual level
- Capacity of both men and women should be build to understand gender equality.
- There is a need to create a space and platform and bigger visibility for Indigenous women to discuss issues that affect them.

- IP women to participate actively in leadership and decision making processes.
- Strengthening empowerment and capacity building of Indigenous women

And lastly women should be seen as an asset and not a liability. We Indigenous Women of around the globe deserve our rightful place and space in society.

I thank you