



**Statement by the International Indigenous Women's Forum at the 17th session of
the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues**

Item 8 on "Indigenous peoples' collective rights to land territories and resources"

The International Indigenous Women's Forum representing Indigenous women coordinated through regional networks from the Americas, Asia, Africa, Arctic and the Pacific, would like to highlight that we practice sustainable livelihoods, food security, health and the wellbeing of our peoples in the communities.

Our lands and territories are at the core of our existence as we have a spiritual relationship to our lands, waters, territories and resources as it is stated in the United Nations on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Between 2010 and 2015, the world lost 3.3 million hectares of forest areas¹ by mega projects on the name of development, causing forced displacement and involuntary resettlement in contexts where our ancestral practices, tenure systems and use of ecosystems and biodiversity are not yet recognized or subjected to discriminatory regulations or prohibition. This situation has increased armed conflicts, political instability and militarization, leading to insecure environments for indigenous women and girls as a whole².

We also would like to express our deep concern about the integrity and security of indigenous women defenders who are being criminalized, and are referred as terrorists, facing severe risks. According to Front Line Defenders, 281 human rights defenders were killed in 25 countries in 2016. Most of the cases were related to land, indigenous and environmental rights and a majority occurred in Latin America and Asia³.

¹ Turning promises into action: Gender equality in the 2030 agenda for sustainable development, UN Women.

² Breaking the silence on Violence against Indigenous girls, adolescents and Young Women. A call to action based on an overview of existing evidence from Africa, Asia, Pacific and Latin America. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children (OSRSG/VAC). May 2013

³ Annual Report 2016, Front Line, the International Foundation for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, 2016