

Joint Statement on Eliminating Violence against Indigenous Women and Girls – Access to Justice

Mr. President,

I am honoured to deliver this statement on behalf of 65 States.

We begin by recognizing that the tremendous knowledge and experience of Indigenous women and girls around the world must be a guide to effectively addressing the very troubling levels of violence they experience. For we know, in many parts of the world, due to multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, Indigenous women and girls often face greater expressions of violence than other segments of the population.

Despite ongoing efforts, much still needs to be done to remove obstacles preventing all Indigenous women and girls from enjoying their rights free from all forms of discrimination, including effective access to justice and remedy. Due to the experiences of many Indigenous women and girls, which may include patterns of re-victimization and impunity, their trust in justice system institutions has been affected, a barrier to effective access to justice which must be addressed.

Mr. President, our collective voice in the Council should promote a holistic, inclusive approach to ensure justice systems that are accessible and responsive to the specific needs of Indigenous women and girls. Solutions need to focus on a “life-cycle”, rights-based, and multi-sectoral approach that recognizes Indigenous women's important contribution to the social, economic and cultural fabric of society and to the development of their communities. This includes designing remedies that are sensitive to socio-economic, cultural, linguistic and gender factors; actively engaging men and boys; supporting Indigenous women leaders and rights defenders; promoting their participation in decision-making processes; and investing in developing and strengthening comprehensive research on Indigenous women and in collecting disaggregated data. We are strongly committed to pursuing this kind of inclusive approach, in particular by working to empower Indigenous women and girls.

Question: We applaud the enhanced commitment within the UN to address violence against Indigenous women and girls, including through the 2014 Outcome Document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, and by placing the issue of the empowerment of Indigenous women as a focus area of the sixty-first session of the Commission on the Status of Women. We ask the panel how the HRC can play a greater role in addressing access to justice system protections?