



## Economic and Social Council

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### Commission on the Status of Women

#### Fifty-eighth session

10-21 March 2014

**Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”: implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives**

### **Statement submitted by Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council**

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.



## Statement

Indigenous people in Asia account for an estimated two thirds of the world's indigenous peoples, estimated to be around 370 million. Compared to indigenous men, indigenous women have less access to education, basic health services and employment. Indigenous communities often lack access to basic social services, and, for the women of these communities, this is compounded by gender-based discrimination.

Indigenous peoples are estimated to comprise 15 per cent of the world's poorest people, despite making up only 5 per cent of the overall population. Indigenous women often face multiple forms of discrimination, not only on the basis of gender but also as indigenous peoples. Indigenous women in Asia are subjected to numerous challenges as a result of the intersectionality of their discrimination. Trafficking of indigenous women and girls in South Asia is a direct result of economic deprivation, the lack of education or employment and forced displacement. Research has shown that occurrences of trafficking in women and children have only increased during the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals campaign. For example, in Manipur, India, there were reports of 5 children rescued from illegal children's homes in 2007, 12 children in 2008, 41 children in 2009, 169 in 2010, 55 in 2011 and 81 in 2012. Witch-hunting is another challenge predominantly faced by indigenous women in South Asia.

Higher rates of HIV/AIDS and sexual violence in South-East Asia are a result of tourism, and suffering is brought about by the encroachment of development aggression, such as mining, plantation and logging. Indigenous peoples often suffer disproportionately from the loss of land, especially forests, as a result of unsustainable development policies due to fewer economic resources and less control over shared resources. Indigenous women in Asia are also mostly excluded from decision-making processes.

Despite the heightened needs of indigenous peoples in Asia, their interests, including those of indigenous women, have been absent from most of the work carried out on the Millennium Development Goals. The campaign failed to address the needs of indigenous peoples, as well as other marginalized groups, and issues of concern specific to indigenous peoples. The significant challenges of land and resource management, culture preservation and the acknowledgement of the human rights of indigenous peoples have been neglected in the implementation of the majority of the campaign. Most of the national progress reports have failed to engage indigenous peoples' organizations at any stage, from consultation to data collection.

There is no doubt that if the Millennium Development Goals are to be met, as unlikely as it seems at this late stage, some benefits will be felt among the nearly 400 million indigenous peoples in the world, despite their invisibility in terms of targets and indicators. However, the development and nation-building efforts have done considerably more harm than good. When development aggression is at the forefront of their struggle, it is difficult to see how a development agenda which fails to acknowledge their interests could be anything but detrimental to the lives of indigenous peoples. Further to this, when indigenous women face an amplified level of discrimination compared with their male counterparts, failure to address this level

of marginalization only leads to the overall impracticality of the Millennium Development Goals.

Therefore, we are requesting a separate consultation for indigenous peoples in conjunction with gender-specific targets and indicators in preparation for a post-2015 development agenda. It is important to follow up on the specific targets and, at the same time, to develop the indicators and key targets that will reflect the aspiration of indigenous peoples, in particular indigenous women. The Millennium Development Goals have been inappropriate to the context of indigenous peoples (e.g. the measurement of poverty is \$1.25 per day, implying that you are not poor if you are earning more than this). It is necessary to mainstream indigenous women's views, perspectives and goals into the post-2015 development agenda, so as to ensure that future strategies do not further contribute to violations of the rights of indigenous women.

In order to successfully implement future goals at the local level, we have identified nine key areas in which to develop indicators to ensure that the needs of indigenous peoples, including indigenous women and girls, are met:

- Security of rights to territories, lands and natural resources, including for indigenous women
- Integrity of indigenous cultural heritage
- Respect for identity and non-discrimination, including respect and dignity for indigenous women
- Culturally appropriate education for indigenous women and girls
- Health, including appropriate health indicators for indigenous women and girls
- Full, informed and effective participation of indigenous women
- Access to infrastructure and basic social services to meet the needs of indigenous women and girls
- Extent of external threats vis-à-vis the protection of indigenous women and girls from conflicts and militarization
- Demographic patterns of indigenous peoples, including indigenous women

In the Manila Declaration by Parliamentarians and Civil Society on the Millennium Development Goals Acceleration and the Post-2015 Development Agenda, adopted on 21 November 2012, the following was concluded regarding equality:

7. We will strive to ensure that appropriate measures to protect and promote equality, equity and social inclusion are incorporated into laws, policies and programmes in our countries. In particular, future development targets and indicators should be designed to highlight rather than mask inequities. Key issues include:

7.1 Importance must be given to countries with special needs, such as least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, targeting most vulnerable people and countries.

7.2 Inclusion of a goal for gender equality and gender disaggregation for each indicator in the post-2015 development agenda.

7.3 The need to ensure disaggregated data, which are the basis for accountability for progress for all sectors of society and to address inequalities.

7.4 Ensuring that marginalized groups, such as persons with disabilities and indigenous peoples, are able to effectively participate in the development and implementation of policies, plans and programmes.

Secondly, pursuant to the recommendations of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues at its fifth session specifically pertaining to indigenous women and girls:

- Redefining the Millennium Development Goals provides an opportunity to incorporate targets and indicators, including the concerns of indigenous peoples, particularly indigenous women and girls. The Goals offer a strategic framework within which to fully integrate the goals of the Platform for Action, which provides an important human rights-based approach to the development agenda for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women, including indigenous women.
- Owing to the cross-cutting nature of gender equality, it is also critical that gender perspectives be fully integrated into the implementation and monitoring of all the other objectives associated with the United Nations Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals, at the same time acknowledging and respecting the cultural diversity of indigenous peoples, including women and girls.

Finally, in the Bali Declaration by Parliamentarians and Civil Society on the Millennium Development Goals Acceleration and the Post-2015 Development Agenda, adopted on 26 March 2013, indigenous peoples' representatives contributed the following recommendations on indigenous women and gender:

- On equality and non-discrimination: to achieve the non-discrimination of indigenous peoples, their unique identities and collective rights based on international human rights and instruments shall be recognized and protected. In particular, future development targets and indicators should be designed in consultation with respective stakeholders, ensuring the participation of indigenous women, to highlight and address inequalities, particularly those marginalizing indigenous peoples, women and girls, rather than hide them.
- The post-2015 agenda must include a stand-alone goal on gender equality and women's rights to ensure the expansion of indigenous women's participation, choices and capabilities, which also recognizes that multiple inequalities increase women's experiences of marginalization, insecurity and gender-based violence. Particular attention should be given to the protection of the rights of women with intersecting inequalities, including indigenous women, migrant women, women in situations of conflict, post-conflict and humanitarian crisis, women in sex work, women affected by disasters, women with disabilities and women living with HIV. All other goals must have sex-disaggregated targets and indicators.