## A statement by the International Indigenous Women’s Forum (FIMI) on the CEDAW general discussion day on "the rights of Indigenous Women and Girls" June 24th 2021.

Thank you, Madame Chairperson, for giving me this opportunity to speak before the Committee. I am Lucy Mulenkei, the Vice president of FIMI. In collaboration with Indigenous Women Networks from Africa, Americas, Asia, Arctic and the Pacific and in partnership with MADRE Organization, FIMI sent a written submission and a legal narrative to the CEDAW committee on March 24th, 2021 expressing in detail our position on the discrimination against Indigenous Women around the world and what we think the Committee must consider when elaborating the General recommendation for Indigenous Women and Girls.

We would like to highlight that, Indigenous women and girls have historically been at the forefront of Indigenous struggles advocating for our rights, demanding recognition, and participation in spaces where decisions that impact our lives are made. The CEDAW General Recommendation on Indigenous women and girls will promote a paradigm shift to recognize our rights and promote our participation and leadership at different levels.

Therefore, we would like to reiterate the following recommendations. The CEDAW General Recommendation No. 39 must;

1. Center the collective dimensions of the rights of Indigenous women and girls in the Convention, especially the collective dimensions of the right to equality, non-discrimination and self-determination; social and economic rights, including the rights to decent work and to land, territory and resources; the rights to water and food; cultural rights; civil and political rights; the right to live free of any form of violence and right to Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC).
2. Include an understanding that the violations Indigenous women and Girls endure are multidimensional and intimately intertwined with their cosmovision, the rights of Nature, and their role as environmental defenders and ancestral guardians of Mother Earth.
3. Define specific content of Indigenous women’s and girls’ rights to equality and non-discrimination, to be free from violence, and to access justice as well as must affirm Indigenous women’s and girls’ knowledge, wisdom, and practical experience as a precondition for the full realization of their rights under the Convention.
4. Must acknowledge and Address the Systemic racism, colonialism, poverty, inequalities and discriminations which are root causes of violations against the collective and individual rights of Indigenous women and girls.
5. Ensure that there are effective measures for member states to respect and support Indigenous women and girls’ access to and participation in meaningful political decision-making spaces at the national and local levels.
6. Finally, given the limited available means for Indigenous Women to seek remedies for abuses of our rights, we urge the member states to ratify and implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and other relevant human rights policies in order to provide Indigenous Women with alternative mechanisms of complaint.

Thank you for your attention.