



**FORO INTERNACIONAL DE MUJERES INDÍGENAS (FIMI)
INTERNATIONAL INDIGENOUS WOMEN'S FORUM (IIFW)**

“General discussion on rural women”

**Written contribution to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
Against Women (CEDAW) for the elaboration of a general recommendation on
rural women.**

For indigenous women, the relationship with the land and the environment has particular meanings, encompassing issues such as socio-economic organization and individual and collective practices usually based on ancestral institutions, worldview, spirituality, and history, among others.

Indigenous peoples have been regaining the right to self-determination, understood as the right to freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development (Article 3 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples). In the process, indigenous women have been promoting conditions for exercising their rights in a more equal balance, even confronting customs and traditions that oppress them. The main demands are still to exercise their right to self-determination, be recognized as legal guarantee over their ancestral territories and resources and the right to development with culture and identity.

Indigenous women play a key role in the transmission and preservation of cultural patterns -such as language- as well as of the means of production and forms of organization. In that sense, indigenous women widely contribute to the preservation of their peoples' cultures, sustainable production and equity distribution of food.

Most indigenous or local knowledge is based on generations of experience and field-testing. Indigenous peoples and particularly women have complex practical understandings of agro-biodiversity, agriculture, fisheries, horticulture, forestry and health.

The importance of Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) refers to indigenous peoples' rights of self-determination strictly linked to peoples' land and territorial rights through their customary and historical links. FPIC typically allows indigenous peoples and especially indigenous women to reach consent and adopt decisions that are in concurrence with their own traditional systems of resource use and management.

Indigenous women face specific struggles to gain space in national and international institutions and political and economic fora to ensure their rights, particularly in relation to foreign trade and global markets.

The full enjoyment of indigenous women and men, as a collective or as individuals, to land, territories and productive resources based on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The involvement, perspectives and traditional knowledge of indigenous women make an important contribution to sustainable development and the conservation of biodiversity and natural resources, such as land, forests, water, seeds and coastal seas. (CSW Resolution 56/4)

Indigenous peoples, in particular indigenous women have typically faced extreme disadvantages that across a range of social and economic indicators and the impediments to their full enjoyment of their rights. (CSW Resolution 56/4)

Indigenous women often suffer from multiple forms of discrimination and poverty, which increase their vulnerability to all forms of violence. (CSW Resolution 56/4)

Recommendations to States:

1. Promote rural and indigenous women's knowledge, products and services; and protect these from piracy, ensure fair benefit-sharing, and protect their intellectual property rights according to the Convention on Biological Diversity. (EGM ACCRA REPORT)
2. Ensure that in the registration of land for collective use, especially among indigenous peoples, the names of all female and male members of the community who use the land, are clearly stated. (EGM ACCRA REPORT)
3. Take particular measures to promote and strengthen policies and programmes for indigenous women with their full participation and respect for their cultural diversity, so that they have the opportunities and the possibility of choice in the development process needed to eradicate the poverty that affects them. (CSW Resolution 56/4)
4. Take concrete measures to provide and enhance equal access and enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health for indigenous women, including sexual and reproductive health, and access to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation, and safe cooking and heating. (CSW Resolution 56/4)
5. Respect, preserve and promote, where appropriate, the traditional knowledge of indigenous women with respect to medicine, including the conservation of their vital medicinal plants, animals and minerals. (CSW Resolution 56/4)

6. Collect and disseminate disaggregated data on indigenous women, including those living in rural areas, in order to monitor and improve the impact of development policies and programmes for their well-being. (CSW Resolution 56/4)
7. Take concrete measures to provide equal access to justice for indigenous women at all levels, and ensure that indigenous women have equal rights to own land and other property. (CSW Resolution 56/4)
8. Formulate and implement, in consultation and collaboration with indigenous women and their organizations, policies and programmes designed to promote capacity-building processes and strengthen their leadership, and take measures to ensure full and effective participation of indigenous women in decision-making processes at all levels and in all areas, and eliminate barriers for their participation in political, economic, social and cultural life. (CSW Resolution 56/4)
9. Support the economic activities of indigenous women, in consultation with them and taking into account their traditional knowledge, so as to improve their situation and development, in particular by enhancing their equal access to productive resources and agricultural inputs, such as land, seeds, financial services, technology, transportation and information. (CSW Resolution 56/4)