



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
19 November 2018

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women

Sixty-third session

11–22 March 2019

Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”

Statement submitted by Casa Generalizia della Societa' del Sacro Cuore, Company of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, Congregation of the Mission, Congregations of St. Joseph, Dominican Leadership Conference, Fondazione Proclade Internazionale — Onlus, International Presentation Association, Partnership for Global Justice, Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary, Sisters of Charity Federation, Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries and UNANIMA International, non-governmental organizations 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.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

Social Protection Systems for Indigenous Women and Girls:

Rural- and Urban-Specific, Inclusive Delivery Systems

The ethnic and gender identities of indigenous women and girls intersect to heighten their need of the social protection of their physical, educational, and socioeconomic well-being. Indigenous people around the world are disproportionately represented among those living in poverty and extreme poverty. (World Bank, 2011) As child-bearers and primary care-takers in most indigenous households, women and girls are disproportionately burdened by poverty's signature resource and opportunity deficiencies. In accordance with traditional gender roles, women and girls will take on additional unpaid labour and make personal sacrifices of food, water, sleep, recreation, paid employment, and education to make up for these deficits. They also face heightened risks of physical and emotional abuse within their families and gender-based legal obstacles to financial inclusion and property ownership. (United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, 2009)

Inadequate collection and disaggregation of data on indigenous peoples continues to hinder public response to the grossest violations of their human rights (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for Inclusive Social Development of Indigenous Peoples). Nevertheless, the International Labour Organization asserts that it is safe to assume that indigenous peoples comprise a large proportion of the 5.2 billion people with little or no social protection coverage. Even in nations in which governments support social protection floors aimed at the assurance of a minimum standard of living for all, there remain substantial gaps. For example, historic and ongoing cultural discrimination and exploitation of indigenous people and land have rendered significant linguistic, infrastructural, and socially exclusionary barriers to their enjoyment of state-sponsored protections for health, especially in childhood and maternity; nutrition; water; income support; education for children; and safe, dignified employment opportunities. (ILO, 2017)

Poverty experienced by indigenous people is not simply a function of their communities' historical rurality. Today, just under half of indigenous Latin Americans live in urban areas. While indigenous people in urban settings have significantly greater access to basic services, education, healthcare, and formal employment than their rural indigenous counterparts, their access continues to lag significantly behind their non-indigenous, urban counterparts. City-dwelling indigenous peoples must also contend with losses of the "social safety nets" and traditional land tenure systems that would be available to them in rural settings. (World Bank, 2015)

The following practices demonstrate the efficacy of social protection programs to improve indigenous women and girls' access to their rights if scaled up, properly resourced, and implemented with the guidance of indigenous women and girls themselves:

- Marikudo Ati Community Association (MACA) and the Amontay–Santol Livelihood Association (ASLA)'s women-led community programs amplify the benefits of the Philippines' national Department of Social Work and Development's Modified Conditional Cash Transfer Program for Indigenous Peoples, Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program, Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) through:

- Marikudo Ati Community Association’s School of Living Tradition in Marikudo Ati Tribe, which offers sessions from cultural masters on Inati language, dance, Rara (weaving) and performing arts as well as culture-based entrepreneurship programs that help women and girls, including those with disabilities, earn additional income for their families
- Amontay–Santol Livelihood Association’s training for women in product development and management, which builds upon a weaving training offered by the Department of Trade and Industry and Sustainable Livelihood Program by allowing participants to augment their family income through the sale of their craftwork
- India’s Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee (now merged with its National Mission for Green India) compensates indigenous communities for contributions to soil conservation, irrigation provisioning and improvement, water harvesting and conservation
- Horn Relief and UNICEF’s Pastoral Youth Leadership and Camel Caravan Pastoral Community Survey projects in Somalia provided older nomadic youth with a basic education through a locally developed curriculum. Participants (over half of whom were girls) were empowered to raise awareness within their communities of good practices in human health, animal husbandry, natural resource management, and leadership and governance. (Downie, 2011)
- Chadian Ministries of Health and of Livestock Production, Chadian nomadic communities, and the Swiss Tropical Institute’s joint human and livestock vaccination campaigns combined vaccination of women and children with compulsory livestock vaccination measures on which pastoralist livelihoods depend. (Schelling et al., 2007)
- Canada’s National Inquiries on Truth and Reconciliation and Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and recent effort to instate an Act to ensure that the laws of Canada are in harmony with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- Prospera program in Mexico (formerly Oportunidades Programme of Mexico) provides conditional cash transfers with doctor visit and school attendance conditions in order to improve the nutrition in beneficiary households (Food and Nutrition Security Platform, 2018)
- Paraguay’s ComVoMujer Programme held dialogues for analysis of the main causes of violence against indigenous women from an intercultural and gender perspective. It proposed preventive community strategies towards ending this violence against indigenous women and a declaration that was presented to the Ministry of Women and the Instituto Paraguayo del Indígena, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the 59th Commission on the Status of Women (TEKOHA, 2015)

The following documents serve as guidelines and supporting frameworks for action to improve social protection for indigenous women and girls:

- ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, No. 169 (1989)
- ILO Social Protection Floors Recommendation, No. 202 (2012)
- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- Beijing +5 Political Declaration and Outcome

- Food and Agriculture Organization’s Respecting free, prior, and informed consent (2014)

The following recommendations are offered to Member States:

- Ratify and implement ILO Convention No. 169 and United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- Tailor social protection delivery systems to reach indigenous women and girls, including those with disabilities, living within cities as well as those in rural areas, including by:
 - Investing in existing indigenous, women led — organizations and community support programs that promote gender equality and girls’ leadership
 - Allowing flexibility for individual indigenous communities to negotiate terms of programs and to elect to participate, ensuring inclusion of women in local negotiations
 - Developing and supporting programs and market access points for the professionalization of traditional craft, agriculture, and linguistic skills, taking into account the differences between urban and rural markets for such skills and training women in each setting accordingly
 - Avoiding rigid conditionalities among social protection benefits by offering increased benefits for those in most remote areas and in deepest poverty to counterbalance the increased cost and time burdens for these populations to meet any specified conditions
 - Launching multilingual campaigns to raise awareness of social protection offerings and procedures
 - Integrating indigenous “mother tongue curricula” featuring indigenous histories, traditional knowledge and spiritual values, and bilingual or multilingual teachers (including indigenous female teachers) into public education systems
 - Ensuring programs are well-resourced, staffed by culturally informed and sensitive individuals, and linked to long-term opportunities for upward mobility
- Apply both indigenous and gender lenses:
 - to disaggregated data collection and analysis, so as to describe the distinct experiences of indigenous women and girls
 - to Sustainable Development Goal implementation projects (especially for Target 1.3, Goals 1-8/13-15), assessing not only availability of services in the evaluation process, but also their accessibility and cultural acceptability to indigenous women and girls
- Integrate biodiversity conservation and indigenous social protection projects in recognition of their symbiotic relationship for indigenous communities and mutually reinforcing benefit for all of society
- Employ indigenous women in program design, implementation, and evaluation for the achievement of all the above

This statement is submitted jointly by following Economic and Social Council-accredited organizations, all of whom are members of the Justice Coalition of Religious.”