

## GENDER ACTION LINK:



**"Gender-blind approaches of development will fail to address the issues and problems of indigenous women" (UNPFII 2007a)**

### **IFIs MUST CONSIDER GENDER IMPACTS WITHIN INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES**

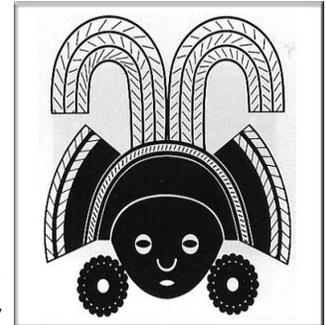
Despite International Financial Institution (IFI) mandates to safeguard indigenous peoples, gender blind IFI investments can have negative impacts on indigenous communities, especially when IFIs are financiers of environmentally destructive infrastructure projects, extractive industries, and harmful macroeconomic restructuring. IFI investments lack explicit acknowledgment that around the world indigenous women are often amongst the most marginalized groups of people, and IFI projects and policies impact indigenous men and women differently than the rest of the local population. Therefore, IFI investments must adopt appropriate strategies that empower indigenous men and women, while respecting their cultures, ways of life, traditions and customary laws. IFI strategies should also promote the protection and full enjoyment of indigenous women's human rights and fundamental freedoms as women and members of indigenous communities (UNPFII 2010). To eliminate the potentially negative impacts IFI projects have on indigenous women the following considerations surrounding gender and indigenous people must be consistently taken into account by IFIs and their implementing agencies:

- ☑ **Globalization Impacts:** Globalization impacts, such as economic liberalization policies promoted by IFIs often destroy indigenous economies and displace indigenous peoples from their land with gender blind compensation, if at all. In some instances the effects of globalizing shifts in markets lead to indigenous women losing their livelihoods. For example, some IFI investments result in communities losing natural resources and markets. The markets that were mainly supplied by indigenous women's handicraft products are replaced with markets mainly featuring goods manufactured abroad. Ensuing poverty causes migration, destruction of indigenous lifestyles, and increased vulnerability of indigenous women.
- ☑ **Multiple discrimination:** Indigenous women face multiple discrimination on the basis of sex, race, ethnicity, language, culture, religion and class.
- ☑ **Violence:** Indigenous women are often targets of multiple forms of violence, including increased incidence of intimate partner violence and community violence, resulting from land conflicts and economic stresses of globalization (UNPFII 2010).

In consultation and cooperation with indigenous peoples, IFI investments must take into account the above considerations to ensure a gender balanced approach that addresses issues unique to indigenous communities and their gender needs. IFI investment projects must also strive to remove structural barriers such as indigenous women's lack of awareness of political rights and processes, which limit their political participation. IFIs should also continue to increase indigenous women's and girl's access to education to improve their livelihood opportunities.

### **INDIGENOUS MEN'S AND WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTION TO GENDER JUSTICE**

The UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) notes that: "There is often a reluctance to address the gender dimensions of Indigenous Peoples, as this is seen as 'interfering with culture' or 'imposing western values'" (UNPFII 2007a). Although such hesitancy may be warranted, there exists a long history of indigenous men and women having greatly contributed to local, regional and international gender justice movements. Indigenous women, in particular, have influenced global debates about climate change, environmental degradation, intellectual property and collective land rights from both gender and indigenous perspectives (UNPFII 2007b). Over the past two decades, indigenous women have organized to produce international declarations like the UN Beijing Declaration of Indigenous Women (1995), form powerful global networks like the International Indigenous Women's Forum, and claim political space within broader indigenous movements like the Women's Revolutionary Law accepted by Zapatista communities in Chiapas, Mexico (1993). Indigenous women worldwide have played a key role in advocating that human rights, indigenous, and gender justice movements recognize their experiences at the confluence of multiple oppressions, while also insisting that gender justice movements address the gender dimensions of poverty, political exclusion, and the wrongful appropriation of land collectively owned by indigenous communities. If the factors they strive to highlight are not systematically taken into account, they argue, the international women's movement will continue to endorse old colonial legacies (Metzen 2005; Paiva 2007; Sanchez 2007).



## Excerpts from the International Indigenous Women's Forum Declaration:

**"We maintain that the advancement of Indigenous Women's human rights is inextricably linked to the struggle to protect, respect and fulfill both the rights of our Peoples as a whole and our rights as women within our communities and at the national and international level.**  
...

**We note that impoverishment, gender, ethnic and racial discrimination causes an increase in Indigenous Women's risks of becoming ill and being denied medical treatment.**

**We affirm the centrality of individual and collective rights, including sovereignty and self-determination, to the fulfillment of Indigenous Peoples' human rights and the preservation of Indigenous Peoples' natural resources and territories.**

**We recognize that, traditionally, Indigenous Women have played an integral role in preserving our cultural heritages, are important producers of food in our communities and the custodians of biodiversity for many of the world's ecosystems. ...Indigenous Women are the custodians and have the right to be titleholders to land. ...**

**(IIWF 2000)**

### WHAT CAN BE DONE?

- Indigenous women, in all their diversities, must be included at every level in the design, consultation, implementation and review of IFI and other development projects and policies.
- Indigenous women's unique concerns and claims, as outlined in the various declarations below, must be taken into account by civil society, governments, IFIs and other international agencies.
- Funding must be made available for indigenous women to participate in IFI project cycle meetings at national, regional and international levels and to do advocacy to protect their resources, culture and livelihoods.

### POSSIBLE PARTNERS!

- International Indigenous Women's Forum (Global): [www.indigenouswomensforum.org](http://www.indigenouswomensforum.org)
- MADRE (Global): [www.madre.org](http://www.madre.org)
- Network on Indigenous Peoples, Gender and Natural Resource Management (IGNARM): [www.ignarm.dk/](http://www.ignarm.dk/)
- Tebtebba: Gender Programme (Global): [www.tebtebba.org](http://www.tebtebba.org)
- Enlace Continental De Mujeres Indígenas (Americas): <http://enlace.nativeweb.org/>
- Asian Indigenous Women's Network, AIWN (Asia): [www.asianindigenouswomen.org](http://www.asianindigenouswomen.org)
- Innabuyog - Gabriela (Philippines): [http://www.cpaphils.org/campaigns/innabuyog%20profile\\_16jAUG08.htm](http://www.cpaphils.org/campaigns/innabuyog%20profile_16jAUG08.htm)
- Indigenous Information Network, IIN (Kenya): <http://indigenous-info-kenya.net/>
- Sami Council: Gender Equality (Arctic): <http://www.saamicouncil.net/?deptid=1113>
- Chirapaq (Perú): [www.chirapaq.org.pe](http://www.chirapaq.org.pe)
- Movimiento de Mujeres Indígenas del Mundo (Bolivia): [www.momim.org](http://www.momim.org)
- Uárhi (México): [www.uarhi.org](http://www.uarhi.org)
- La Asociación de Mujeres Indígenas del Chimborazo (Ecuador) <http://www.ecoportal.net/content/view/full/15121>

### ACTION RESOURCES:

- [UNPFII: Indigenous Women](#)  
UN website with links to official documents, thematic briefing notes, organizational links and gender disaggregated statistics on indigenous women worldwide.
- [UN Task Force on Indigenous Women:](#)  
Links to UN activities and reports on indigenous women.
- [Integrating Indigenous and Gender Aspects in Natural Resource Management:](#) A resource and guide from IGNARM.
- [A Guide to Indigenous Women's Rights under CEDAW \(FPP\)](#)

### DECLARATIONS:

- [Beijing Declaration of Indigenous Women \(1995\)](#)
- [Declaration of the IIWF \(Beijing +5, 2000\)](#)
- [Declaration of the IIWF \(Beijing +10, 2005\)](#)
- [Baguio Declaration of the 2nd Asian Indigenous Women's Conference \(2004\)](#)
- [The Manukan Declaration of the Indigenous Women's Biodiversity Network \(2004\)](#)
- [Nairobi Declaration of the 2nd African Indigenous Women's Conference](#) (Nomadic News Issue 8, 2004)

### REFERENCES:

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- IIWF 2000, 'Declaration of the International Indigenous Women's Forum'.
- Lavrin, A. 1998, 'International Feminisms: Latin American Alternatives'.
- Metzen, A. 2005, 'Indígenas por un Feminismo más Inclusivo: Reivindican Justicia de Género y Derecho a la Tierra'.
- Paiva R. 2007, 'Feminismo Paritario Indígena Andino'.
- Sanchez C. D. 2007, 'Producing Docile Bodies: Indigenous Women and Eurocentric Feminism'.
- UNPFII 2004, 'Report of the Third Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Document E/2004/43'.
- UNPFII 2007a, 'Gender and Indigenous Peoples'.
- UNPFII 2007b, 'Gender and Indigenous Peoples Human Rights'.
- UNPFII 2009, 'Indigenous Women'.
- UNPFII 2010, 'Gender and Indigenous Peoples'.