

International Summit of the Americas on Violence against Indigenous Women

Draft Outcome Document

Introduction

The 2014 World Conference on Indigenous Peoples was a moment of hope. Yet despite the World Conference resulting in a detailed, action-oriented outcome document prepared through the active participation of UN Member States and Indigenous Peoples, regrettably more than six years later a better world for Indigenous Peoples as a whole has not come to pass.

What is more, in relation to the widespread phenomenon of violence against Indigenous women, girls and gender-diverse persons, present day circumstances can hardly be said to have improved. Yet the aspirations of the World Conference were undoubted:

We commit ourselves to intensifying our efforts, in cooperation with indigenous peoples, to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence and discrimination against indigenous peoples and individuals, in particular women, children, youth, older persons and persons with disabilities, by strengthening legal, policy and institutional frameworks.¹

For far too many Indigenous women, girls and gender-diverse persons everyday reality dictates a different truth; a depressing reality which arguably has deteriorated during the current global pandemic. Taken together, if violence against Indigenous women, girls and gender-diverse persons is allowed to persist at the best of times, why be so surprised if it flourishes at the worst?

Since the 2014 World Conference new reports have emerged time and time again, documenting acts of abuse and discrimination against such persons. In July 2015 the former *UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous peoples* issued a thematic report on Indigenous women and girls, highlighting multiple challenges in this regard.²

More recently, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights issued its 2017 and 2019 respective reports, *Indigenous Women and Their Human Rights in the Americas* and *Violence and Discrimination against Women and Girls: Best Practices and Challenges in Latin America and the Caribbean*, both with a focus on violence against Indigenous women. Yet where has been the sweeping, fundamental change?

¹ Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 22 September 2014, 69/2. *Outcome document of the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples* (UN Doc. A/RES/69/2, 25 September 2014) §18.

² Report of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, Victoria Tauli Corpuz, *Indigenous women and girls* (UN Doc. A/HRC/30/41, 6 August 2015).

More worryingly still, in the context of the current pandemic the situation appears to be worsening. Early on in the pandemic UN Women expressed deep concern about ‘*the shadow pandemic of violence against women during COVID-19*’.³ Staggeringly, they have not been lone voices, as numerous other international actors have raised the alarm in this connection⁴, including the *UN Special Rapporteurs on violence against women and on the rights of Indigenous peoples*.⁵

Beyond this unconscionable rise in violence, the negative impact of the current global health emergency has disproportionately been felt by Indigenous Peoples - physically, psychologically, spiritually, economically and socially - as documented in detail by the international UN human rights community.⁶

International Summit Calls for Change

States shall take measures, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, to ensure that indigenous women and children enjoy the full protection and guarantees against all forms of violence and discrimination.

UNDRIP Article 22(2)

³ UN Women, *UN Women raises awareness of the shadow pandemic of violence against women during COVID-19* (27 May 2020).

⁴ See: UN News, *Endemic violence against women ‘cannot be stopped with a vaccine’ – WHO chief* (9 March 2021); UN News, *End gender-based violence, ‘once and for all’, UN urges on International Day* (25 November 2020); OHCHR, *Urgent action needed to end pandemic of femicide and violence against women, says UN expert* (24 November 2020); UN, *Inter-Agency statement on violence against women and girls in the context of COVID-19* (24 June 2020); and UNDP, *Gender-based violence and Covid-19* (11 May 2020).

⁵ Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, Dubravka Šimonović *Intersection between the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the pandemic of gender-based violence against women, with a focus on domestic violence and the “peace in the home” initiative* (UN Doc. A/75/144, 24 July 2020); and UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, *Report on the impact of COVID-19 on the rights of indigenous peoples* (UN Doc. A/75/185, 20 July 2020).

⁶ See: UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, *COVID-19: Indigenous peoples’ voices must be heard, says UN expert* (12 October 2020); Minority Rights Group International, *Inequality and the impact of Covid-19: How discrimination is shaping the experiences of minorities and indigenous peoples during the pandemic* (10 September 2020); UN News, *On International Day, UN chief spotlights indigenous peoples’ resilience in face of COVID-19 pandemic* (9 August 2020); UN Women, *UN Women statement on the International Day of the World’s Indigenous Peoples* (9 August 2020); and UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, *COVID-19 yet another challenge for indigenous peoples* (6 April 2020).

In the light of these widespread concerns and in the spirit of Article 22(2) of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples participants of the *International Summit of the Americas on Violence against Indigenous Women* commit to the following:

- Create an MMIWG Global Response Network consisting of working groups on MMIWG including: data collection, communications, police and justice, policy and research, families group, healing and support and others as may be required.
- Commit to highlighting county-level and regional best practices in countering violence against Indigenous women, girls and gender-diverse persons in the context of future International Summits.
- Commit to condemning states and other actors for egregious failings to address violence against Indigenous women, girls and gender-diverse persons in this same context.
- Liaise with relevant human rights experts to counter violence against Indigenous women, girls and gender-diverse persons, including the Organization of American States and its constituent bodies.
- Cooperate with key United Nations human rights mechanisms, including the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, UN Commission on the Status of Women, Human Rights Council and relevant treaty bodies and special procedures.
- Issue on significant International Days joint International Summit communiqués of topical relevance and/or urgency, including, among others, on International Women's Day, International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, and International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.
- Convene follow-up International Summit meetings on an annual basis to analyze and discuss the progress made to address violence against Indigenous women, girls and gender-diverse persons in the Americas.
- Create for this purpose a pan-Americas working group to prepare the groundwork and realize the envisaged International Summits, exploring their potential structure, modalities, and content.