

## STATEMENT OF THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES MAJOR GROUP

### Goal 5: Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls

Indigenous women face multiple discrimination factors and dis-empowerment due to the intersectionality of their status as women, as indigenous and as poor. They are victims of discriminatory policies and the prevailing patriarchal system of most indigenous institutions resulting in all forms of violence and exclusion in decision-making processes. Indigenous women have less access to education, health services and employment, among others. Further, militarization and conflicts are exacerbating the vulnerability of indigenous women to violence.

According to US government statistics, Native American and Alaska Native women are more than 2.5 times more likely to be raped or sexually assaulted than other women in the USA.<sup>1</sup> In Bangladesh, there were 58 documented cases of physical and sexual abuse in 2016, and 17 rape cases.

Indigenous women continue to play vital roles in their communities. They are engaging in sustainable resource management and main food producers and holders of traditional knowledge that is critical to food security, resilience and adaptation to climate change, social cohesion and peace-keeping, among others.

The UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Victoria Tauli-Corpuz has noted that: “Land appropriation is not gender neutral and indigenous women’s rights interact with violations of collective land rights. The gendered effects of those violations become manifest in situations where indigenous women lose their traditional livelihoods, such as food gathering, agricultural production, herding, among others, while compensation and jobs following land seizure tend to benefit male members of indigenous communities”.<sup>2</sup>

#### Recommendations:

- Adopt special measures to combat discrimination, violence and harmful practices, developed and implemented with full participation of indigenous women
- Legally recognize the land rights of indigenous women including within the collectively land rights of indigenous peoples.
- Undertake legislative reforms, capacity building and support to indigenous women’s organisations to overcome discrimination and ensure land rights for women
- Develop and implement affirmative policies to ensure participation of indigenous women in decision-making processes, bodies and mechanisms

---

<sup>1</sup> Amnesty International, Maze of Injustice, <http://www.amnestyusa.org/our-work/issues/women-s-rights/violence-against-women/maze-of-injustice>, accessed April 20, 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Victoria Tauli Corpuz, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, August 5, 2015 A/HRC/30/41