

Indigenous Women's Collective Statement For High Level Political Forum (HLPF) 2020

Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) in collaboration with Asia Indigenous Women Network (AIWN), Bai Indigenous Women's Network, Philippines, International Indigenous Women's Forum (FIMI), MADRE, National Indigenous Women's Federation (NIWF), Nepal, OHCHR Regional Office for South-East Asia, PEREMPUAN AMAN, Indonesia and VOICE organized a formal virtual side event on '**Indigenous Women in COVID-19 to SDGs achievement: Frontline heroes' New Normal with accelerated collective actions'** during the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development on Wednesday, 8 July 2020. This collective statement is the voices of Indigenous Women as drawn based on this side event.

Global and regional reviews of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) show that ongoing grave inequality, loss of forest and biodiversity are drifting SDGs achievements further away. Additionally, COVID-19 pandemic's severe impact on human well-being and environment has galvanized the threats to Indigenous Peoples with diverse identities who depend on natural resources. Indigenous Peoples, especially Indigenous Women, children, youth, elderly, persons with disability, LGBTIQ's, migrants, daily wages earners and construction workers are suffering disproportionately from poverty, hunger, and starvation during pandemic. Maternal mortality rates, suicides, health risks gender-based violence and discrimination, loss of employment and income, criminalization and human rights violation of Indigenous Women Human Rights Defenders are increasing. COVID-19 has disrupted the regular pattern of our lives and economies, resulting in rising socio-economic, cultural, religious, ableism and gender inequalities.

Indigenous Women are the knowledge-holders and game-changers. We have the power to transform the pandemic into an opportunity. Indigenous Women can drive the "New Normal" toward accelerated action as our contribution to achieving the SDG's while ensuring that '*no Indigenous Woman is left behind*'. During the exceptional period of COVID-19, Indigenous Peoples, particularly women demonstrated swift agility with collective self-mobilization offering multi-faceted nature-based solutions. Indigenous Women's prompt actions have enabled immediate and medium-term food security, in other words, food gathering from nature as well as home gardening; managing health risks by establishing community quarantine and production of basic health gears like masks and sanitizers and building resistance to diseases through traditional medicines. Indigenous Women are also involved in providing psycho-social counseling through sharing experiences and boosting each other's mental health; mobilizing both public and private resources in collaboration and synergy building within and beyond Indigenous Communities, educating children and youth through inter-generational knowledge exchanges and practices, and more importantly protecting our land, territories and



resources amidst the pandemic. Indigenous Women's knowledge, together with customary systems and practices, has elevated collectivism among Indigenous Peoples particularly Indigenous Women and other actors including governments to respond to emergencies triggering multi-stakeholder mechanisms. Many successful cases of collaboration between Indigenous Women's organizations, government agencies and other Civil Society Organizations to cope with contemporary COVID-19 and its impacts have become visible.

The Asian grassroots heroes defined their 'New Normal' that enabled achieving immediate and long-term food security, better education and health services, equality, and environmental justice. Indigenous Women's self-determined development, recognition of customary self-government systems and practices, inclusive democratic space for Indigenous Women in formal and informal governance systems including customary institutions, and rights to land and resources are the foundation of their 'New Normal'. Indigenous Women are rights holders and should be included as equal development partners contributing to end the gaps between impacts of the global crisis like COVID-19 and achievement of SDGs. Hence, it is high time to recognize and amplify the roles and voices of Indigenous Women reflecting their collective good practices, and their demands. Indigenous Women want a 'New Normal' that adopts a people-centered human rights-based approach to development where Indigenous People especially Indigenous Women have genuine democratic participation in governance and decision-making processes. This includes the recognition of Indigenous Peoples' rights to self-determination and over their ancestral land and territories. To translate these local collective actions into global realities, we call on states through this High Level Political Forum (HLPF) 2020 on Sustainable Development to:

- Recognize our identity and intersectionality and respect our rights to self-determination.
- Consider Indigenous Peoples, particularly Indigenous Women as fundamental partners in addressing the pandemic and accelerating the sustainable development.
- Effectively uphold the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in the review of the SDGs, its targets and implementation.
- Institutionalize free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) to protect collective rights and ways of life of Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous Women as FPIC remains applicable during the pandemic. Ensure that Indigenous Women are effectively included in the process.
- Recognize, protect, and replicate Indigenous Women's Indigenous Knowledge and practices that offer nature-based solutions to global challenges. Stop the criminalization of our skills, Indigenous Knowledge and practices, considering a



moratorium on extractive mining, oil and logging activities, industrial agriculture, as aggressive and destructive development initiatives in our ancestral lands and territories.

- Prioritize health and other vital social services such as education, housing, social protection measures to promote Indigenous Peoples' well-being, prepare and capacitate them to survive shocks caused by pandemics and economic crises.
- Recognize customary self-governance systems and practices, and other expressions of Indigenous Peoples' right to self-determination including culture, land, languages, and natural environment, which enables collective mobilization to prevent and control pandemic as well as to facilitate SDG's achievement.
- Formulate inclusive, culturally sensitive and gender responsive legislative, administrative, policies and regulatory measures to address the immediate and strategic needs of Indigenous Women, youth, elderly, person with disability and LGBTIQ's in response to COVID-19 and its aftermath. In this regard, ensure the availability of timely and accurate information, disaggregated data and analysis based on ethnicity; conduct in-depth studies to inform national SDG's policy, program and implementation designed to overcome, in the long term, the socio-economic, environmental and political impacts of COVID-19 on Indigenous Women.
- Ensure full and meaningful participation of Indigenous Women in every decision-making including SDGs and disaster response bodies in all levels.
- Earmark Resources and support building strong institutions and networks of Indigenous Women including person with disability at all levels.
- We also call on the UN bodies and International Organizations to have stronger mechanisms in making development actors especially governments and corporations accountable for all its actions in SDGs achievement and for the violations to Indigenous People's particularly Indigenous Women's economic, social, political and cultural rights.

ENDS

