

United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
23rd Session April 15-26, 2024
Statement from the Global Indigenous Women's Caucus

Madame Chair, Esteemed Members of the Forum, distinguished representatives of Indigenous Nations, member-states, Indigenous Relatives of the world, on behalf of the Global Indigenous Women's Caucus (GIWC) we are committed to ensuring that our collective voices are heard and uplifted. Collectively, we are in agreement that the issues affecting Indigenous Women, and all Indigenous Peoples have systematically worsened since the adoption of the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2007. As Indigenous Women, we have a sacred relationship to our lands, territories and waterways. The proposed solutions by Member States and UN Agencies to address climate change are nothing more than false solutions that further threaten the lives and livelihoods of all Indigenous Peoples. Member States and UN Agencies in partnership with Indigenous Peoples must do more to address the ongoing issues, in all of the six mandated areas of the Permanent Forum in order to meet the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development.

The GIWC strongly condemns the violence and genocide currently happening against the people of Gaza, in particular the violence against Indigenous Palestinian Women and children which is a clear violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention. Furthermore, we are extremely concerned about the effects of war and the ongoing humanitarian crisis that continues to take countless lives of Palestinian people which includes the lives of 13,370 Indigenous Palestinian children. As mothers of our future generations we find this unacceptable. Therefore we make the following recommendations:

In accordance with the International Court of Justice's emphasis that the State of Israel remains bound to fully comply with its obligations under the Genocide Convention and with the said Order, including by ensuring the safety and security of the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip." We reaffirm that Palestinians constitute a distinct "national, ethnical, racial or religious group", and hence a protected group within the meaning of Article II of the Genocide Convention. Palestinians in Gaza are part of this protected group.

We uplift the call for an Immediate Ceasefire, citing the Special Rapporteur on Genocide, the ICJ and UN Member States. We call on the World Bank and all UN agencies, programs and entities to withhold any funding to corporations, like Chevron and Maersk, that would profit from marine gas extraction in a conflict zone or where genocide is being committed, such as the Gaza Strip, in alignment with the World Bank's own recommendations from the the One Planet Summit in 2017.

We reaffirm the International Court of Justice's demand that Israel must also take effective measures to prevent the destruction and ensure the preservation of evidence related to allegations of acts within the scope of Article II and Article III of the Genocide Convention against members of the Palestinian group in the Gaza Strip.

In regards to the issue of environment, we call upon the Permanent Forum to strongly recommend the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, for a Moratorium on all carbon markets and offsets as enshrined in Article 6 of the Paris Agreement including carbon dioxide removals like carbon capture and storage, forest, soil and ocean offsets, nature-based solutions, biodiversity offsets and other geoengineering technologies.

We call on UNEP, IPCC, and the World Bank, to conduct a study on the impact war has on the environment and to develop a mechanism to identify Global military forces as a polluting party in order to uphold stricter regulation on global sources of pollution such as war, mineral and oil extraction and chemical waste.

Uplifting the Permanent Forums recommendation from the 22nd session (Paragraph 92) calling upon UNESCO, including its Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, to step up its policies, safeguards and actions on the protection of Indigenous Peoples' tangible and intangible cultural heritage and further call for the protection of Indigenous Peoples removal from their lands and territories in the name of false "Greening Economy, Nature based solutions" with out their free prior and informed consent.

On the issue of violence against Indigenous women and girls, including those who are lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LBI), we Reaffirm the Permanent Forums Recommendation (paragraph 19) from the 22nd Session uplifting the “accessibility of General Recommendation No. 39 to Indigenous Peoples is crucial to ensure its effective implementation and impact on the ground.” We highlight the need for “its translation into Indigenous languages spoken by Indigenous Peoples in their States before the end of 2032.” We further call for the assurance of the safety and protection of indigenous Peoples from all forms of violence and harassment when engaging in the complaint processes and procedures.

In regards to health, we welcome and applaud the Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS adopted by the General Assembly in 2016 and uplift recommendation 16 from the Permanent Forums 16th session that calls of states to collaborate with Indigenous Peoples to ensure adequate resources to design and fully implement HIV/AIDS and hepatitis B & C programmes that address the social, economic and cultural determinants of health for HIV prevention, care and treatment in Indigenous populations, in particular Indigenous Women and Youth. The GIWC further calls upon Member States and UN agencies to ensure full effective and meaningful participation of Indigenous Peoples in all decision making processes in regards to the eradication of HIV and AIDS.

Recalling the recommendation from the Permanent Forums 17th (paragraph 49) session, we reaffirm the call for states to support Indigenous Midwifery via state policy and integration and to end the criminalization of Indigenous Midwifery and make the necessary legislative and regulatory amendments to legitimize Indigenous Midwives. We call upon the UNFPA and WHO to work with Member States to ensure these policies are implemented but with the full and meaningful and effective participation of Indigenous Women.

As Indigenous Women, we have the inherent responsibility to ensure a future, for our generations to come. Thank you