



## **Economic and Social Council**

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### **Commission on the Status of Women**

**Sixty-seventh session**

6–17 March 2023

**Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to  
the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly  
entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and  
peace for the twenty-first century”**

### **Statement submitted by CHIRAPAQ – Centro de Culturas Indígenas del Perú, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council\***

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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\* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



## **Statement**

### **Background**

CHIRAPAQ Centro de Culturas Indígenas del Perú is an indigenous association with consultative status. We present this statement in our role as Continental Coordinator of the Continental Network of Indigenous Women of the Americas (ECMIA). ECMIA is a network of indigenous women and mixed-gender indigenous organizations from twenty-three countries across North, Central, and South America; for twenty-seven years, we have promoted the exercise and empowerment of individual and collective rights to achieve full recognition and respect for the rights of indigenous peoples, women, youth and children.

### **Statement**

Indigenous women and girls around the world are increasingly using technology in indigenous communities in rural and urban areas, such as video conferencing technology, emailing, digitizing documents, radio broadcasting, and simple information-gathering by referencing the world wide web. Most indigenous women embrace the information age and see that information and communication technology can serve as a way to improve self-sufficiency, preservation of culture, real sovereignty, and general economic conditions. Consequently, indigenous women seek to gain equitable access to technologies while retaining rights, cultural identities, traditional territories, and resources. Yet, indigenous women are best at deciding how and when to access and use new technologies.

### **Information and Communication Technologies**

In indigenous societies, a dichotomy of views exists among those that see the good and the bad of the information era and its digital technologies in relation to the advancement or hindrance of indigenous peoples' future. On the one hand, some feel it provides opportunities for economic development and engagement of indigenous peoples in national and global markets through business and product marketing. It has served to amplify and strengthen indigenous networks to share information globally and instantly, particularly when it comes to making visible human rights violations. Also, web-based media and websites create spaces where indigenous peoples' art, cultural expressions, languages, and histories can be shared, learned, revitalized, promoted, and distributed beyond local spaces.

On the contrary, some indigenous peoples believe this era and its tools have the potential to perpetuate cultural domination, specifically in rural areas, and ideological and economic alienation of indigenous traditional knowledge systems arising from a capitalist system. Information and communication technology has often reinforced negative stereotypes about indigenous peoples and women through western lenses and voices. The ongoing collection of data by States, storage, and access to such data banks for research do not always uphold the right to free, prior, and informed consent nor serve the benefits and interests of indigenous peoples. Consequently, the domination of information, its context, and access is qualified as a risk to further forms of colonization. In some cases, technological change accelerates the illicit appropriation of indigenous women's and indigenous peoples' knowledge without respecting collective intellectual property rights.

Finally, the digital era brings multiple forms of violence, including environmental and spiritual violence associated with the introduction of technological infrastructures, such as antennas in indigenous territories, as well as contamination of air, land, and water affecting indigenous women's reproductive health. On the other hand, in some countries, indigenous women human rights defenders and indigenous

organizations that denounce the violation of rights face cyber-attacks that, in some cases, translate into other forms of violence.

### **Education in the Digital Era and COVID-19**

COVID-19 altered our educational systems and approaches to teaching around the world. For indigenous communities, specifically in rural areas, it revealed enormous social inequality, extreme poverty, geographic distancing, a considerable cost for infrastructure and services, the challenges of monolingualism, and little investment in indigenous teacher training, specifically in information and communication technologies. With little experience indigenous peoples had in distance and digital education, the intent and necessity to shift to these modes of education proved chaotic, revealing the severe need for technological equipment, training, and extreme demand for the internet.

Therefore, indigenous women and youth from the Americas recommend that States and the United Nations System implement the following measures guaranteeing the full and effective participation of indigenous women:

1. Recognize the contributions of indigenous peoples, women, and youth and our traditional systems of knowledge while supporting increased access to information and communication technologies that may serve to retain rights, cultural identities, traditional territories, and resources.
2. Refrain from collecting digital information to deposit in databases accessed freely by scholars, state actors, and the private sector, which do not serve the interests or benefits of indigenous women, communities, and peoples.
3. Guarantee collective intellectual property rights that protect indigenous peoples' and women's knowledge from illicit appropriation in the digital age.
4. Develop policies and protocols for the protection of the rights of indigenous women human rights defenders in the digital environment.
5. Ensure free, prior, and informed consent of indigenous women and communities is upheld to guide the design and implementation of programs or initiatives that pertain to advancing access to ICT, including the introduction of technology infrastructure in indigenous territories.
6. Promote further investment in the necessary infrastructure, services, and training to ensure equitable connectivity, equipment, and access to ICT, as well as appropriation and control over these technologies by indigenous women and girls, including indigenous educators, specifically in rural areas.
7. Promote the development of training programs for indigenous women educators to acquire scientific and technical knowledge.
8. Strengthen existing means of information and communication operated by indigenous women and youth by promoting the development of digital community centers and other measures
9. Guarantee the mainstreaming of human rights, gender, intercultural, intergenerational, and intersectional approaches in all technology-related policies and programs.