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## **Addressee: UN system, UNIFEM, UNICEF and Member States**

**Paragraph #47 Session #5 (2006)**

### **Full Text**

The Permanent Forum recommends that appropriate United Nations organizations, including the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), as well as States, take immediate action to review and monitor the situation of indigenous women and provide comprehensive reports on violence against indigenous women and girls, particularly sexual violence and violence in the context of armed conflict. Indigenous women must be full participants in this process.

### **Comments**

UNICEF: UNICEF reports that in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, it strengthened and promoted a strategy for the care for women victims of violence in Zulia through the publication of awareness-raising material. In Colombia, in 2006, UNICEF provided technical assistance to local indigenous women's organizations in the department of Narino to include a gender focus into the strengthening of youth organizations. A total of 650 men and women were thereby engaged in a collective reflection on gender equity, which had a positive impact in reducing violence and increasing indigenous women's participation in managing local organizations.

UNIFEM: (a) UNIFEM has been introducing the perspective of indigenous women into its work on violence against women by means of existing internal processes

and innovative initiatives addressing the issue in indigenous communities. Through the UN Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women, UNIFEM is supporting a partner NGO in combating violence against women in Mayan communities in Guatemala. The initiative will document the magnitude of the problem in four Quetzaltenango localities and will raise awareness of violence against women in those communities. It aims to increase knowledge on the human rights of women in their struggle against violence and to combat the phenomenon by empowering women and strengthening the Government's response to it. Within the framework of the Trust Fund, UNIFEM supports a project in Chiapas, Mexico, to combat gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS in a multicultural context. A qualitative study will examine how young indigenous women perceive the phenomenon of violence against women and HIV/AIDS. The project will strengthen prevention strategies and initiatives and contribute to raising awareness and disseminating information about the connection between violence and HIV/AIDS. (b) The work of UNIFEM in raising awareness of violence against women in indigenous communities includes an initiative within the framework of the 16 days of activism to end violence against women, a global campaign in which UNIFEM is involving partner UN agencies in Latin America and the Caribbean. In partnership with UNESCO, UNIFEM supported the training of 50 indigenous journalists, 52% of whom were women, from community radio stations in Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru on prevention of violence against women. Journalists from 17 radio stations participated in the first contest for radio programmes on the prevention of violence against Quichua and Quechua women by producing radio programmes on violence prevention in indigenous communities. The programmes were widely broadcast by local radio stations in indigenous communities. (c) UNIFEM supported several human rights NGOs in the northern border area of Ecuador and in Peruvian Amazonia to work with women and men in indigenous communities to recognize violence against women as a problem and explore mechanisms to effectively address it. Indigenous communities in both Ecuador and Peru have increased their awareness and have the capacity to address violence against women through both traditional and western justice systems. NGOs are now better informed and trained to work on the issue. Owing to the innovative character of the initiative, UNIFEM decided to generate and disseminate knowledge on the work in partnership with NGOs on violence in indigenous communities and capacity-building in Ecuador and Peru. (d) In order to promote knowledge sharing on violence against indigenous women, UNIFEM supported the translation and publication of a report by the International Indigenous Women's Forum entitled "Mairin Iwanka Raya: indigenous women stand against violence". The report, which serves as a

companion to the study by the Secretary-General on violence against women, will be made widely available in the region, especially to indigenous women in Latin America. (e) The commitment of UNIFEM to combating violence against indigenous women includes collaboration with the non-governmental organization Red Ada in Bolivia in developing an advocacy strategy to ensure that laws and policies address the issue of femicide. The strategy includes an in-depth study on the phenomenon in rural areas, a proposal to include it in the penal code, and workshops with members of the justice sector. The strategy is still under way and has to date contributed to raising awareness of the issue of decision makers and the general public through the collection and dissemination of information. (f) Initiatives to strengthen indigenous women's rights to combat violence include a project in the region of Sucumbíos in Ecuador, where UNIFEM and the United Nations Population Fund supported the Asociación de Mujeres de la Nacionalidad Kichwa in a project to sensitize and develop capacities on gender-based violence as one of the problems limiting women's participation and exercise of their rights at the community level. The project was implemented in Lago Agrio, Cascales and Putumayo, and used a strategy based on capacity-building workshops, awareness-raising and lobbying authorities of the Federación de Organizaciones Kichwa. In Bolivia, the organization Gregoria Apaza, with the support of UNIFEM, is implementing a project in El Alto that aims to contribute to the attainment of the individual and collective rights of young indigenous women, as well as to orientate and train them on HIV/AIDS prevention and the reduction of gender-based violence.

UNESCO: (a) UNESCO has supported, on a pilot basis and in collaboration with the OHCHR, culturally sensitive human rights training for women in Kenya. The Organization is currently exploring possibilities with indigenous women's organizations, UNIFEM and the OHCHR to coordinate efforts for a capacity-building approach that combines cultural diversity and human rights to address indigenous women's issues. (b) Within the framework of its activities on resource management processes in the Bosawas Biosphere Reserve (Nicaragua), the LINKS programme recently launched a project to examine the importance of fishing resources for Mayangas women, especially those in socially marginalized situations (single parents, widows, the elderly...) The DESA Division for the Advancement of Women Reports (2010): The UN Secretary General's database on violence against women, which was launched in March 2009 during the 53rd session of the Commission on the Status of women, contains information on measures undertaken by UN Member States to address violence against women in a number of areas, such as legal frameworks, policies and programmes, services for victims, data and statistics, and promising practices. "Indigenous

women” is one of the keywords of the database through which a user can search for and obtain information. Canada has submitted eight entries on indigenous women in the areas of domestic and sexual violence. DAW functions as the secretariat of the database. The database is available on the DAW website at: <http://webapps01.un.org/vawdatabase/home.action>). Based on the work of an expert group meeting, organized by DAW and UNODC in 2008, DAW developed a Handbook for legislation on violence against women in 2009 which provides detailed guidance to support the adoption and effective implementation of legislation to address violence against women. The Handbook presents recommendations on the content of legislation, together with explanatory commentaries and good practice examples. The Handbook includes various recommendations that are of direct relevance to the situation of indigenous women. They include: Equal application of legislation to all women and measures to address multiple discrimination Legislation should: o protect all women without discrimination as to race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, marital status, sexual orientation, HIV/AIDS status, migrant or refugee status, age or disability; and o recognize that women’s experience of violence is shaped by factors such as their race, colour, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, marital status, sexual orientation, HIV/AIDS status, migrant or refugee status, age, or disability, and include targeted measures for particular groups of women, where appropriate. Collection of statistical data Legislation should: o require that statistical data be gathered at regular intervals on the causes, consequences and frequency of all forms of violence against women, and on the effectiveness of measures to prevent, punish and eradicate violence against women and protect and support complainants/survivors; and o require that such statistical data be disaggregated by sex, race, age, ethnicity and other relevant characteristics. The Handbook can be found on the DAW website at: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/v-handbook.htm#handbo>

UNICEF reports (2011): In Mexico, UNICEF contributed to the design of a Joint Programme funded by the UN Trust Fund to Eliminate Violence against Women, competing against more than 1,000 other projects from around the world. UNICEF joined ECLAC, UNDP, UNFPA, UNESCO, several federal bodies and civil society organizations in starting up the three-year Joint UN Programme Building and Evaluating an Integral Model to Prevent Gender Violence amongst Indigenous Populations in Mexico, with an intercultural perspective. UNICEF’s contribution includes piloting protocols to respond to gender violence against children and adolescents in indigenous communities in Oaxaca and Chiapas states.

UNICEF Brazil has contributed to establishing local child protection systems to respond to domestic violence, sexual abuse and exploitation of children and adolescents. Specific attention has been given to how to adapt child protection procedures to take into account indigenous forms of organisation and culture in Cabralia, as part of efforts to improve child protection in the Porto Seguro region of Bahia.

In Bolivia, UNICEF has focused its cooperation programme on the most severe social and cultural inequalities through the promotion of human rights-based public policies. The Programme supported initiatives to ensure that indigenous groups have access to quality bilingual inter-cultural education and to health services, particularly amongst the Guarani people. Water and sanitation policies were fostered in the most excluded rural communities, most of which are in the eastern part of the country. UNICEF made efforts to develop social protection systems for those children forced to work in the most adverse and dangerous conditions in the sugarcane and chestnut harvests. UNICEF also advocated for support for people migrating to Argentina, Brazil and Chile as well as to indigenous women receiving low salaries. UNICEF has identified the need for emphasis on incorporating the cultural vision of indigenous groups in public policies and placing children at the cultural centre of Bolivian society, including eradicating violence against children and promoting a culture of peace.

In the Central African Republic (CAR), UNICEF supports indigenous children affected by HIV/AIDS. In 2009, UNICEF CAR provided direct support to community-based interventions that aim to improve protection, care and access of Orphans and other Vulnerable Children (OVCs) to basic services. Community-based child protection committees were established with the mandate to oversee the situation of vulnerable children and monitor the violations of their rights.

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## **Area of Work**

Indigenous Women