

PANEL DISCUSSION — INDIGENOUS PRIORITIES
FOR THE POST-2015 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

**JOINT STATEMENT ON
COMBATING VIOLENCE AGAINST INDIGENOUS WOMEN AS A GLOBAL PRIORITY**

This joint statement is offered on behalf of 41 supporting indigenous nations and 18 organizations in the United States.*

The eight Millennium Development Goals have helped guide important global and national development priorities. But, the MDGs are too narrow and fall short of the Millennium Declaration's explicit commitment to human rights and "to combat all forms of violence against women." MDG 3 promotes gender equality and empowerment of women; yet, the only target for achieving MDG 3 – eliminating gender disparity in education – is too restrictive.

The human rights framework called for in the Millennium Declaration and other international human rights instruments can best inform how countries fulfill their sustainable development obligations and measure achievement of MDGs for women and girls now and in the post-2015 sustainable development agenda.¹

Violence against women and girls is a pervasive, fundamental violation of human rights and a form of discrimination that persists in every country. Even more dire is the pandemic of violence being inflicted on indigenous women. Indigenous women suffer disproportionately high, multiple forms of discrimination, violence, and murder because they are women and because they are indigenous and members of indigenous communities.²

International experts have called on countries to strengthen their laws and policies to protect the rights of women and to address the high rates of violence against indigenous women and girls.³ Despite steps forward by the United States, discriminatory laws have perpetuated a cycle of violence that affords Indian and particularly Alaska Native women less protection than other women just because they are indigenous and are assaulted in Indian country or on Alaska Native lands. Indian and Alaska Native women are two-and-a-half times more likely to be assaulted than other women in the United States. One in three will be raped in her lifetime and, in some communities, their murder rate is ten times the national average. Alaska Native women endure some of the highest and most disproportionate rates of domestic and sexual violence in

¹ *Report of the Expert Group Meeting on Structural and Policy Constraints in Achieving the MDGs for Women and Girls*, EGM/MDG/2013/Report, 2-3, 15 (Oct. 2013).

² *Study on the extent of violence against indigenous women and girls in terms of article 22 (2) of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, E/C.19/2013/9 (Feb. 2013).

³ *Combating Violence against Indigenous Women and Girls: Article 22 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, E/C.19/2012/6 (Feb. 2012).

the entire United States. Elsewhere in the world, the situation for indigenous women may be even more urgent.

As to the existing human rights framework, Article 22 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples calls upon states, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, “to ensure indigenous women and children enjoy full protection and guarantees against all forms of violence and discrimination.”

Firm, concrete actions by both the UN and states, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, are absolutely critical if safety is to be restored to indigenous women worldwide. Toward that end, at least 136 indigenous nations and 23 organizations, have joined us in urging the UN to support strong actions at this World Conference — actions consistent with the rights of indigenous women affirmed in the Declaration such as: (i) convening a high-level conference to examine challenges to the safety of indigenous women and children; (ii) requiring that a UN body for implementing the Declaration give this issue particular attention; and (iii) appointing a Special Rapporteur to focus on the human rights issues of indigenous women and children.

We commend state efforts in working to negotiate a strong, action oriented outcome document for this World Conference and to achieve the MDGs, but there is much more that can be done. We support a post-2015 sustainable development agenda that would galvanize global and national development priorities to effect lasting changes for the safety of all women, particularly indigenous women who face disproportionately higher levels of discrimination and violence.

* The supporting indigenous nations and organizations include:

Akiak Native Community; Alliance of Tribal Coalitions to End Violence; California Association of Tribal Governments (Big Lagoon Rancheria; Big Pine Reservation; Big Sandy Rancheria; Cahuilla Band of Mission Indians of the Cahuilla Reservation; California Valley Miwok Tribe; Cher-Ae Heights Indian Community of the Trinidad Rancheria; Cloverdale Rancheria; Enterprise Rancheria of Maidu Indians of California; Ewiiapaayp Band of Kumeyaay Indians; Greenville Rancheria of Maidu Indians of California; Habematolel Pomo of Upper Lake; Hoopa Valley Tribe; Hopland Band of Pomo Indians of the Hopland Rancheria; Ione Band of Miwok Indians of California; Jamul Indian Village; Karuk Tribe of California; Kashia Band of Pomo Indians of the Stewart Point Rancheria; Los Coyotes Band of Cahuilla and Cupeño Indians; Mesa Grande Band of Kumeyaay Indians; Morongo Band of Mission Indians; Northfork Rancheria of Mono Indians of California; Pit River Tribe; Ramona Band of Cahuilla Indians; Resighini Rancheria; Scotts Valley Rancheria Band of Pomo Indians of California; Smith River Rancheria; Soboba Band of Luiseno Indians; Susanville Indian Rancheria; Sycuan Band of the Kumeyaay Nation, Central District; Wiyot Tribe; Yurok Tribe of the Yurok Reservation, Southern District); Cherokee Nation; Citizen Potawatomi Nation; Clan Star, Inc.; Emmonak Women's Shelter; Ewiiapaayp Band of Kumeyaay Indians; First Nations Women's Alliance; Hopi Tewa Women's Coalition to End Abuse; Indian Law Resource Center; Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe; Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe; Minnesota Indian Women's Sexual Assault Coalition; Montana Native Women's Coalition; National Congress of American Indians; National Indigenous Women's Resource Center; Native Alliance Against Violence; Native Women's Society of the Great Plains; Quapaw Nation; Southwest Indigenous Women's Coalition; Strong Hearted Native Women's Coalition; Uniting Three Fires Against Violence; Village of Anvik; Village of Emmonak; Village of Tetlin; Washington State Native American Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault – WomenSpirit Coalition; Yupiit Nation; and the Yup'ik Women's Coalition.