



*Indigenous women participating at the world conference on indigenous women held in Lima, October 2013.*

## **Inspiring Change on International Women's Day**

Today it is the International Women's Day. Women around the world celebrate it in various ways. In some countries it is a day for appreciating women, while in others it is a day to reflect on and fight for women's rights. Indigenous women in particular deserve both our appreciation and our support in their struggle for equal rights.

Indigenous women are strong guardians of their ancestral land since they carry a great deal of responsibility for the well-being of future generations. In 2014 indigenous women, however, still experience a range of violations against their

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rights including among others: lack of participation in decision-making processes, lack of land rights, lack of control over income to sustain themselves and their families, lack of access to education, and gender based violence in situations of armed conflicts and militarization.

## **"Nothing about us without us"**

Last year in October, indigenous women inspired change by coming together from all over the world to strengthen their voice as women and indigenous peoples at the Lima World Conference of Indigenous Women. For three days they discussed the progress achieved over the last 20 years and their joint strategies for addressing the many challenges ahead.

On the agenda was the important discussion on how indigenous women's rights should be taken into account in the indigenous agenda for the forthcoming World Conference on Indigenous Peoples at the UN (WCIP) and in the Post 2015 development agenda.

Indigenous women endorsed the recommendation of the [Alta Document](#) and stressed the importance of their full and effective participation in all decision-making processes. The participants also celebrated their ancient knowledge and life giving powers and stated that "we are not the problem, we are part of the solution".

We look forward to supporting indigenous women in bringing this message forward in the years to come.

[Read more about the Lima Conference and find indigenous women's action plan here](#)

## **Local efforts to combat violence and build capacity**

IWGIA's Strategy 2012-2017 aims at strengthening the gender balance in all our

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work while also paying specific attention to combating human rights violations against indigenous women and strengthening their equal participation in decision-making processes.

On a local level, we have started working with a new partner in Bangladesh called Kapaeeng Foundation. The organization works to address the alarming rate of violence against indigenous women by conducting investigations and documenting their human rights situation.

This year we also look forward to a new report on violence against women in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh, expected soon to be released by the Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission. In the Chittagong Hill Tracts, indigenous women are increasingly being exposed to violence and rape in a conflict between indigenous peoples and the military. The report aims to map these violations of indigenous women's rights and to direct attention to this serious ethnic and gender targeted discrimination.

We see documentation of human rights violations as a first step towards changing the situation of indigenous women, but to make sure that their rights are being respected, we also need to focus on their participation in political processes and identify good practices on how they themselves can fight for their rights.

With this aim, IWGIA has just initiated a research project to study the obstacles, challenges, and opportunities that indigenous women in Bangladesh are facing in their efforts to participate effectively and equally in the public sphere. Indigenous women who have been elected to serve the community will be interviewed to better understand the challenges and effectiveness of women's participation in decision-making processes. We believe that this study will help us to better understand how indigenous women's participation can be realized.

In Peru, we have recently entered into a partnership with the indigenous women's organization ONAMIAP. In February, ONAMIAP undertook to train more than 100 women on how to communicate for political advocacy as a part of the programme

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“Formación en Vocería Indígena y Comunicación para la Incidencia Política”. [Read more about the project on our Spanish web site.](#)

## **Congratulations to the first woman to be appointed for the position as Special Rapporteur**

On this day we would again like to congratulate Ms. Victoria Tauli-Corpuz on her appointment for the position as special rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples.

Ms Tauli-Corpuz is the third person to hold the position as Special Rapporteur, and she is the first woman on the post. We are very happy to see that an indigenous woman will hold this important position and we look forward to working with Vicky to insure indigenous peoples' rights in the years to come.

### **Want to know more about indigenous women?**

You can find videos, books, manuals and briefing notes with more inspiring examples about indigenous women's struggles on our website:

[IWGIA publications about indigenous women](#)

We sign off by reminding you that indigenous women are an important part of the indigenous movement and that they face specific challenges related to marginalization, discrimination and dis-empowerment at all levels. Therefore we should strengthen indigenous women to organize themselves, support their leadership and effective participation, and remember that indigenous women should be taken into account in all matters that concern them as women and as indigenous peoples.

Remember that you can support our work by becoming a member of IWGIA.

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The

IWGIA

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