

Concept Note

Access to Justice for Indigenous Women

Side Event of Mexico at the 70th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (70CSW)

Wednesday, March 11, 14:30-16:00

Permanent Mission of Mexico to the United Nations

Context

There are currently more than 185 million Indigenous women worldwide, belonging to more than 5,000 different groups. Indigenous women face particularly severe challenges: high levels of poverty, barriers to accessing justice, limited access to sexual and reproductive health services, higher rates of violence, and persistent underrepresentation in political, economic, and social decision-making spaces.

Access to justice is fundamental to ensuring the full enjoyment of the human rights of Indigenous women, adolescents, and girls. The 70th session of the CSW represents a strategic opportunity to highlight access to justice as an essential public service with an intercultural approach and as a pillar for the protection of Indigenous women, adolescents, and girls.

At the international level, instruments such as CEDAW, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the Convention of Belém do Pará establish the obligation of States to guarantee Indigenous women full access to justice, without discrimination on any grounds.

Countries such as Mexico, Canada, Guatemala, and Australia have made progress in recognizing Indigenous legal systems, justice commissions, and reforms aimed at incorporating a gender perspective and interculturality into access to justice.

This event builds on commitments undertaken in multilateral forums and seeks to strengthen the exchange of good practices and experiences in order to advance substantive equality and non-discrimination.

General Objective

To create a space for dialogue and international exchange to analyze challenges and progress regarding Indigenous women's access to justice, in line with the priority theme of CSW70.

Specific Objectives

- To highlight the structural and contextual barriers faced by Indigenous women in accessing justice.
- To exchange good practices and experiences from Mexico, Canada, Australia, and Guatemala regarding access to justice for Indigenous women, incorporating a gender perspective and intercultural approach.
- To underscore the importance of Indigenous peoples' right to self-determination and legal pluralism as pillars for guaranteeing the rights of Indigenous women.

Speakers

- Citlalli Hernández, Minister for Women, Mexico.
- National Institute of Indigenous Peoples of Mexico.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico.
- National Institute of Indigenous Peoples (TBC).
- Ministry for Women and Gender Equality of Canada (TBC).
- Padma Raman, Executive Director of Australia's Office for Women
- Verónica de León Xovin de Guarcas, Presiding Judge of the Criminal Sentencing Court for Crimes of Femicide and other Forms of Violence against Women and Sexual Violence of the Department of Chimaltenango, Guatemala.
- International Experts (TBC)
- Indigenous woman (TBC).

Proposed agenda (1 hour 15 minutes)

Hour	Minutes	Activity
14:10 – 14:30	20 minutes	Registration of participants.
14:30 – 14:35	5 minutes	Welcome remarks and introduction by the moderator.
Panel 1: Access to Justice as an Essential Public Service for Women		
14:35 – 14:40	5 minutes	Intervention by the Ministry for Women of Mexico, Citlalli Hernández
14:40 – 14:45	5 minutes	Padma Raman, Executive Director of Australia's Office for Women
14:45 – 14:50	5 minutes	Intervention by Verónica de León Xovin de Guarcas, Presiding Judge of the Criminal Sentencing Court for Crimes of Femicide and other Forms of Violence against Women and Sexual Violence of the Department of Chimaltenango, Guatemala.
14:50 – 14:55	5 minutes	Intervention by Canada.
14:55 – 15:00	5 minutes	Intervention of UN Women
Panel 2: International Actions to Promote and Protect Access to Justice for Indigenous Women		

15:00 – 15:05	5 minutes	Intervention by an international expert.
15:05 – 15:10	5 minutes	Intervention by an international expert
15:10 – 15:15	5 minutes	Intervention by an Indigenous woman.
15:15 – 15:35	20 minutes	Interactive dialogue with the audience.
15:35 – 15:45	10 minutes	Closing remarks and conclusions.

Guiding Questions

1. What are the main obstacles faced by Indigenous women, adolescents, and girls in accessing justice?
2. What are examples of good practices in ensuring access to justice for Indigenous women from intersectional, intercultural, and jurisdictional compatibility perspectives?
3. What are examples of successful cooperation initiatives to promote access to justice for Indigenous women? How can these spaces be further strengthened and expanded?
4. How can more spaces be created to ensure the full participation of Indigenous women in the design and decision-making processes related to policies and legal frameworks aimed at strengthening access to justice?
5. How can the rights of Indigenous women be defended in a polarized international environment? How can negotiations be strengthened from intersectional and intercultural perspectives?