

Asia Pacific Declaration on Beijing+30 by Indigenous Women and Girls with Disabilities

November 2024



We, Indigenous Peoples, were born to our ancestral lands, waters, and territories by the Great Creator in a sacred and spiritual way. We belong to our Mother Earth; We are Earth and Earth is us.

We, Indigenous Peoples, women, girls, and women with disabilities have lived our lives in the ways prescribed by the creator from time immemorial, and our Indigenous world being and understanding were shattered and imposed by colonial, dominant groups and imperialist powers. In the past and today, our peoples were/are murdered, raped, enslaved, criminalized, displaced, and exploited and for generations and our peoples and communities were stolen away. Our lands, territories, and resources were forcefully evicted and militarized, and today we have lost our identity, language, culture, history, planet, indigenous knowledge, values, and well-being. The suppression of our knowledge and the weakening of our self-government institutions have all eroded the foundation of Indigenous societies. We are bound to co-opt and assimilate with the dominant worldviews in many forms but we are still here and live with our perspectives, knowledge, and lived experiences.

Today we have been defending our individual and collective rights and consciously empowering ourselves against all forms of violence and the violation of all rights with the values of 'Nothing about us, without us.'

The 1995 Beijing Conference, the fourth World Conference on Women organized by the United Nations, led 189 UN Member States to adopt the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA). This agenda aims to advance the human rights of women and girls, acknowledging the unique barriers faced by diverse women and girls.

We, Indigenous women and Girls with Disabilities from Asia Pacific regions gathered in March 2024 in Kathmandu, Nepal, and formed the first Asia Pacific Indigenous Women and Girls with Disabilities Network and framed our position paper. Based on the position paper, we drafted Indigenous women and girls' issues related to the Beijing +30 process and the consultation and inputs were taken from the respective countries and organizations.

We, acknowledge the path paved by our elders; Indigenous women and women with disabilities

in 1995 and celebrate the progress made and provided input on the challenges encountered in implementing the BPfA and we echo and reiterate for collective voices and actions rights.

We reaffirm the further importance of the global commitments made under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including other human rights instruments like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the Vienna Declaration and Program of Action¹¹, the Program of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, the Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), Convention on the Rights of Child (CRC), United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), the CEDAW-General recommendation No. 39, the Second World Conference on Indigenous Women outcome document 2022, the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), the Incheon Strategy and the Jakarta Declaration on the Asia and Pacific Decade of the Persons with Disabilities, the Pacific Framework for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and others to be implemented at national context.

We respect the unique intersectional experiences faced due to their sex, age, disability, ethnicity, class, geography, and other gender and social identities.

We embrace the multiple identities, grounded with collective and individual rights, right to self-determination, Indigenous knowledge and values systems with cultural, linguistic, and spiritual world views with the relationship with Mother Earth. We uphold the principles of respect for diversity, nondiscrimination, accessibility, intersectional approach and leaving no one behind.

We recognize our key roles as leaders, knowledge-bearers, and transmitters of culture among our peoples, communities, and families, as well as society as a whole. Our guardianship of the world's biodiversity including Mother Earth and our contributors to the family and society has passed through generations and we have contributed to the implementation of the normative framework.

Context

Approximately 54 million Indigenous persons with disabilities including 28 million Indigenous women and girls with disabilities exist worldwide. These women face profound historical, structural, systemic, and indirect discrimination and are often excluded from fundamental services. Additionally, they, and they experience high levels of discrimination, abuse, and violence in various forms.¹ The rate of disability among Indigenous Peoples is higher due to factors like unsafe working conditions, lower standards of living, the poor quality of medical services, and limited access to suitable rehabilitation services.²

Intersecting layers of discrimination can limit us to access to the justice system, development program and funds, education, employment, health care, communications, transportation services including encounter numerous obstacles in achieving meaningful representation and political participation. Owing to historical discrimination, marginalization, poverty, 'unheard' and 'invisibility', Indigenous women and girls with disabilities are not always able to voice their concerns and exercise their rights.³

Institutionalized racism can compound or create unique social and economic inequalities. They are routinely denied their right to a legal remedy. As a result, many cases of discrimination and gender-based violence against Indigenous women and girls end in impunity.⁴ In non-Indigenous justice systems, we frequently face systemic racial discrimination and often have to participate in procedures that are not culturally or linguistically appropriate and do not take into account Indigenous practices.⁵

we face significant barriers to participation in decision-making roles across both public and private sectors. This limited representation is due to a range of factors, including poverty, entrenched patriarchal attitudes, inadequate policy frameworks, ineffective policy implementation, and a lack of confidence to

advocate for themselves in leadership spaces. These issues collectively limit their access to platforms where their voices can be heard and their interests represented.

The disaggregated data on gender, ethnicity/race, and disability regarding Indigenous women and girls with disabilities is scarce and underreported. Without such data, this group is frequently overlooked in policies aimed at supporting children, people with disabilities, and Indigenous women. The lack of accurate and comprehensive data perpetuates their invisibility in the eyes of policymakers, leaving their unique needs unaddressed and excluding them from initiatives that could improve their quality of life and empowerment within society.⁶

They experience higher rates of multiple, intersecting forms of violence and are at greater risk from a wider range of potential perpetrators in both private and public spaces. Many face barriers in recognizing, defining, and articulating the violence they endure due to limited access to education, language and communication challenges, stigma, and pervasive cultural stereotypes.⁷ We experience complex and profound challenges and structural injustices that continue to threaten our daily lives. They face exploitation, structural, systemic, and indirect violence and discrimination, trafficking, forced sterilization including the increasing aggressive appropriation of our lands and resources, repression of social protest, and the criminalization of defenders of human rights and the environment are just some of the human rights violations that continue to affect our lives.

They face heightened vulnerability due to limited awareness of their health needs and restricted access to adequate healthcare, which contributes to higher rates of early marriage, maternal mortality, and morbidity⁸ and forced sterilization⁹. The lack of accessible, available, acceptable and quality reproductive health services and the distance to

¹ <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/2019/10/Making-SDGs-count-for-women-with-disabilities.pdf>

² <https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/comp506.htm>

³ https://25176774.fs1.hubspotusercontent-eu1.net/hubfs/25176774/GlobalStudyFIMI_20-englishRGB-2.pdf

⁴ <https://docstore.ohchr.org/SelfServices/FilesHandler.ashx?enc=6QkG1d%2FPPrICAqhKb7yhsldCrOIUTvLRFDjh6%2FxpWBB-KAljVJg1BZO3p1Tqs6E66LQN%2FCm5teJVv95A9vJS%2Flecwfe1o%2BSF4os%2FVM2UHJ2I9Jr0wBHWclZBDFrQ9hg>

⁵ <https://emergency.unhcr.org/protection/persons-risk/minorities-and-indigenous-peoples>

⁶ <file:///C:/Users/HP/Downloads/alternative-report-re-brazil-cedaw-88.pdf>

⁷ <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-03/Joint-Nepal.pdf>

⁸ <https://minorityrights.org/discrimination-disability-disaggregated-data/>

⁹ <https://blog.petrieflom.law.harvard.edu/2024/02/29/intersectionality-indigeneity-and-disability-climate-justice-in-nepal/>

health facilities makes it almost impossible for Indigenous women to give birth in a health facility, which has implications for impairment prevention.¹⁰

They often have limited access to formal education, and many receive little to no schooling at all. This educational gap significantly diminishes their opportunities to secure employment and hinders career growth. Without access to quality education, they are left at a disadvantage in a competitive job market, which in turn restricts their economic independence and ability to uplift their communities.

Indigenous women and girls with disabilities are custodians of Mother Earth as land owners within a matrilineal society and have contributed for generations however, climate change and environmental injustice have further exacerbated the existing inequalities by reducing access to safe drinking water and food, increasing safety risks, and escalating violence against Indigenous women and girls with disabilities¹¹.

Conflicts and the militarization of Indigenous lands are directly linked to the high numbers of persons with disabilities among Indigenous Peoples. Physical violence in the form of forced recruitment, bombing, harassment by the military, torture, and the installation of anti-personnel mines all cause disabilities among Indigenous peoples.¹² Furthermore, the recent COVID-19 pandemic is spreading rapidly all over the world, representing another critical contemporary challenge for Indigenous Women and girls with disabilities in the Asia Pacific region.

External or internal colonization has contributed to imposing dominant and Westernized narratives on disability, narrowly focusing on individual impairment.¹³ In contrast, Indigenous knowledge systems often emphasize community, interdependence, and holistic well-being, differing significantly from the individualistic and medicalized approaches prevalent in mainstream society.

They face a unique and compounded set of challenges that are deeply intertwined with their identity, culture, and historical context. Addressing their needs requires a nuanced understanding of the intersectionality of their identities and a commitment to upholding their rights as both Indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities. This includes respecting their collective rights to self-determination, lands,

territories, and resources, consultation, and free, prior, and informed consent before adopting any legislation or policy that addresses their unique circumstances.

Our Call to Action

We call on our governments, member states, multi-stakeholders, and development partners to:

1. Adopt a broader human rights and intersectional framework understanding intersecting forms of exclusion related to ethnicity, culture, history, and linguistic barriers to address the challenges faced by Indigenous women and girls with disabilities in their daily lives.
2. Ensure full and effective meaningful participation of Indigenous women and girls with disabilities in all spheres of lives both private and public spheres ensuring accessibility and cultural standards.
3. Ensure an equitable, accessible, easy, and inclusive education system with adequate funding for education in the mother tongue/ local language, provide universal design of learning with adequate assistive devices and on/offline technology systems, and promote research, training institutions including informal and nonformal education systems at rural and remote community levels.
4. Promote indigenous-led traditional skills and entrepreneurship and increase access to employment and labor force participation, jobs, vocational traditional training, social protection schemes, and labor market skills to build their capacity in a safe, secure, and healthy working environment.
5. Ensure CRPD-compliant social protection measures, direct financial assistance schemes like targeted subsidies, disability-specific cash transfers, employment support, and incentives, programs for addressing poverty reduction, exercise free, prior and informed consent, including through their representative organizations, before adopting any legislation, policy or project that may affect them and adopt disability inclusive and accessible policies and programs, climate finance in consultation with them to mitigate these adverse effects of climate change impacts.

¹⁰ https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/factsheet_digital_Apr15.pdf

¹¹ <file:///C:/Users/HP/Downloads/N2266262.pdf>

¹² <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/thematic-reports/ahrc5747-indigenous-persons-disabilities-report-special-rapporteur>

¹³ *ibid*

6. Ensure health systems are conducive for all and are accessible promoting traditional Indigenous health systems, integrated actions of health systems, policies, and financial and budgetary allocation including access to gender, disability, and cultural SRHR services.
7. Conduct comprehensive, disaggregated data (ethnicity, age, disability, sex, class) and research, information evidence for targeted legislation, and programs and integrate culturally appropriate support services, and community-led initiatives to increase access and provide public services on an equal basis with others and ensure right to self-determination for land, territories, and resources.
8. Implement to address the deeply rooted stereotypes and stigma associated with disability indigeneity, and gender, and ensure to implement of collective, ethnic/ racial, cultural, systematic, indirect gender-based violence and address access justice mechanism at national to local level in an intersectional approach
9. Develop targeted programmatic interventions from the government and invest from the United Nations and its bodies, development partners, funds, and programs on Indigenous women and girls' disabilities and project a balanced and contributors/custodian with the non-stereotypes portrayal of indigenous women in media.
10. Project a balanced non-stereotypes portrayal of indigenous women and as contributors and custodian in media and other public spaces.
11. Invest in Indigenous girls, youth, and elderly peoples to build their capacity and include them in institutional mechanisms, support and care systems, and respect them as knowledge holders in all systems and mechanisms.

Different organizations have endorsed this declaration collectively and they are:

1. Indigenous Person with Disabilities Global Network (IPWDGN)
2. Asia Pacific Indigenous Women and Girls with Disabilities Network (APIWGDs)
3. National Indigenous Disabled Women Association Nepal (NIDWAN)
4. Madhesh Indigenous Disabled Women Association Nepal (MIDWAN)
5. Sudurpaschim Indigenous Disabled Women Association Nepal (SIDWAN)
6. Karnali Indigenous Disabled Women Association Nepal (KIDWAN)
7. Center for Indigenous Persons with Disabilities Research and Development (CIPDRD)
8. Association for Development and Empowerment of Indigenous Persons with Disabilities, (AIPDDE)
9. Indigenous Disability Empowerment Center, Karnali (IDEC)
10. Association of Indigenous Person with Disability for Development and Social Inclusion Gandaki (AIPDG)
11. Center of Indigenous Person with Disabilities for Empowerment and Development, Lumbini Province
12. Nepal Indigenous Disabled Association
13. All Tribal Disables Union Manipur- India
14. Collective alliance for the rights of young girls with disabilities (CARY)-Pakistan
15. PNG ADP women with disability Pacific
16. HWDI Rising Flame- Indonesia
17. Indonesia Association of Women with Disabilities
18. Cambodia Indigenous Peoples Alliance (CIPA)



Indigenous Person with Disabilities Global Network

Asia Pacific Indigenous Women and Girls with Disabilities Network

National Indigenous Disabled Women Association Nepal



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