

From: Karla General [<mailto:kgeneral@indianlaw.org>]
Sent: Tuesday, April 19, 2016 2:54 PM
To: Karla General
Cc: Jana Walker
Subject: UN Actions to address violence against indigenous women and girls

Friends –

We are pleased to report steps by the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and upcoming actions by the Human Rights Council to advance implementation of key decisions in the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples' Outcome Document aimed at addressing violence against indigenous women and girls.

Commission on the Status of Women

In March, representatives from the Indian Law Resource Center, Alaska Native Women's Resource Center, National Indigenous Women's Resource Center, and NCAI Task Force on Violence Against Women attended the 60th session of the CSW in New York to press for action to end violence against indigenous women and build support among states and UN actors. These organizations also joined with the Native Women's Association of Canada to co-sponsor a parallel event on indigenous women's movements to end violence. Our event was attended by a capacity crowd, including mission staff, U.S. State Department officials, NGOs, and others. We are pleased to report that at the conclusion of the 60th session, the CSW approved a draft resolution for adoption by the Economic and Social Council stating the Commission's intention to address the issue of the empowerment of indigenous women as a focus area of CSW61 in 2017. This is one of our key advocacy points as the Outcome Document calls on the CSW to consider this issue at a future session. We are very pleased it will be on the 2017 agenda. Additionally, ¶ 23 of the CSW's Agreed Conclusions from the session includes a recommendation urging governments at all levels, the UN system, and other actors to "prevent and eliminate discrimination and violence against indigenous women and girls which has a negative impact on their human rights and fundamental freedoms, and which they are disproportionately vulnerable to, and that constitutes a major impediment to indigenous women's full, equal and effective participation in society, the economy, and political decision-making." This language and next year's focus area discussion will spotlight violence against indigenous women at the CSW and hopefully lead to further concrete recommendations for actions by the UN to address this crisis.

Looking Ahead

The Human Rights Council will hold its 32nd session in Geneva on June 13 – July 1, 2016. While the program of work is not yet available, we expect that the Council will consider reports from the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice, which visited the United States in 2015. The Council will hold a full-day panel discussion on women's rights and plans to consider a resolution focused on preventing and responding to violence against indigenous women. The Permanent Mission of Canada held an informal consultation on the draft resolution in Geneva recently, and we offered proposed recommendations including the following:

- that, in order to ensure useable outcomes from the half-day panel on the causes and consequences of violence against indigenous women and girls that will be held during the 33rd session of the Council, that the Council request the Office of the High Commissioner for Human

Rights to present to the Council at its 34th session a summary report on the discussion with recommendations for concrete measures to address violence against indigenous women and girls;

- that the Council invite the Secretary-General to issue a report with concrete recommendations for action to prevent and eliminate violence against indigenous women and girls, with a view toward enhancing the Council's special procedures to respond to this cross-cutting issue, and to request regular joint reports from relevant special procedures on the issue, perhaps on a regional basis; and
- that the Council invite the Secretary General to convene a high-level panel on intensifying efforts, in cooperation with indigenous peoples, to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence and discrimination against indigenous women and girls during the UN's high-level event to mark the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2017.

For further information from the Permanent Mission of Canada about the draft resolution, contact anjali.lowe@international.gc.ca.

The Human Rights Council will hold its 33rd session on September 12-30, 2016. Among other things, the Council will hold a half-day panel discussion on violence against indigenous women.

With your support and involvement we can continue to press the UN to take serious and sustained action to prevent and eliminate violence against indigenous women in the United States and everywhere. We need your help in meetings and in the written submissions as well. We are available to advise, assist, and help you to access these important meetings and discussions. Please give us a call or an email if you have questions or need information about how to take part in the scheduled meetings or how to contribute in writing or in other ways.

Best,

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