



First Commemorative Event of the International Day of the World's Indigenous Women and Girls

Concept Note

Wednesday 9 September 2026, from 10:00 AM to 11:30 AM (EST)

UN Headquarters, GA Building, Conference Room 6

And livestreamed on [UN Web TV](#)

Format: In-person, with livestreaming on [UN Web TV](#) and selected speakers joining online

Co-organizers: UN Women, International Indigenous Women's Forum (FIMI)

Co-sponsors: Permanent Mission of Mexico, Permanent Mission of Canada, Ford Foundation

Introduction and background

The **International Day of the World's Indigenous Women and Girls**, observed annually on 5 September, was mandated by United Nations General Assembly resolution [A/RES/80/10](#), adopted on 26 November 2025.

The resolution recognizes the vital contributions of Indigenous women and girls to sustainable development, environmental stewardship, biodiversity and climate resilience, as well as to cultural preservation, maternal health, Indigenous and traditional medicine, and the intergenerational transmission of knowledge. It also underscores their full, equal and meaningful participation in decision-making at all levels, and the need to raise awareness of their rights and support to their economic, social, and cultural development.

Following the recommendation of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues that UN Women leads the annual observance of the International Day of the World's Indigenous Women and Girls at its [twenty-fifth session](#), **UN Women**, in partnership with the **International Indigenous Women's Forum (FIMI)**, will organize its first commemoration at United Nations Headquarters in New York.

The event will focus on access to justice, building on the outcomes of CSW70, CEDAW General Recommendation No. 39 on the rights of Indigenous women and girls, and broader efforts to accelerate progress across the Sustainable Development Goals.



Recognizing that justice requires a holistic approach that addresses systemic barriers, including racism, colonialism, gender discrimination, disability discrimination, and socioeconomic inequalities, the event will explore the broader realities facing Indigenous women and girls and the multiple, intersecting forms of discrimination they encounter.

Objectives

The commemoration event aims to:

- **Celebrate the leadership and contributions of Indigenous women and girls** across all regions, including as leaders, knowledge-bearers, human rights defenders, environmental defenders and agents of sustainable development.
- **Promote the application of CEDAW General Recommendation No. 39**, building on the CSW70 Agreed Conclusions on access to justice and focusing on plural legal systems, remedies, legal empowerment and accountability.
- **Promote concrete follow-up and accountability** for commitments to Indigenous women and girls, including through meaningful participation, resource mobilization, sharing best practices and lessons learned, and Indigenous-led data at global, regional, national and local levels.

Proposed agenda overview

Date: As 5 September falls on a Saturday in 2026, the event will take place on **Wednesday, 9 September 2026**, to maximize participation and visibility.

Format: Commemorative and implementation-focused event, combining Indigenous women's leadership, high-level engagement, recognition, and an interactive discussion on access to justice and accountability.

Modality: Primarily in-person. Remote participation options may be considered for selected speakers, especially Indigenous women leaders who may face accessibility barriers.

Programme elements

- **Opening ceremony (3 minutes)** – Master of Ceremony: **Chanda Thapa**, International Funders for Indigenous Peoples (IFIP)
- **Opening remarks (12 minutes)**
 - **Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda**, Deputy Executive Director, UN Women (*video message*)
 - **Teresa Zapeta**, Executive Director, International Indigenous Women's Forum (FIMI)
 - **Jennifer Feller Enriquez**, Deputy Permanent Representative of Mexico



- **Indigenous women leaders' dialogue** (35 minutes) – Moderator: **Bjorg Sandkjaer**, Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA).

Reflections from Indigenous women leaders across regions on access to justice, rights protection, participation, accountability and implementation gaps.

- **Edna Kaptoyo**, African Indigenous Women's Network (AIWO) (Kenya)
 - **Barsha Lekhi**, National Indigenous Women Forum (NIWF) (Nepal)
 - **Patricia Torres**, Continental Coordinator, Enlace Continental de Mujeres Indígenas de las Américas (Mexico)
 - **Dr. Rosalee Gonzalez**, Regional Coordinator, Enlace Continental de Mujeres Indígenas de las Américas (United States)
 - **Presentation of FIMI's Indigenous Women's Leadership Award** (2-min video).
- **Interactive segment and reflections: From CSW70 to GR39 accountability** (25 minutes), with the participation of Member States, UN and other partners – Moderator: **Lea Nicholas-Mackenzie**, Vice-Chair of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.
 - Short interventions on how the CSW70 Agreed Conclusions on access to justice can support the application of CEDAW GR39, including plural legal systems, remedies, legal empowerment, Indigenous-led data, resources and follow-up mechanisms. Speakers are also invited to share concrete actions, partnerships and opportunities to carry Indigenous women's priorities into CSW71 and broader SDG follow-up.

Speakers include:

- **H.E. Beth Delaney**, Deputy Permanent Representative of Australia
- **H.E. Sandra Jensen Landi**, Deputy Permanent Representative of Denmark
- **Leticia Bonifaz**, former Member of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (*online*)
- **Dr. Albert K. Barume**, Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (*online*)
- **Begoña Lasagabaster**, Director of the Division for Gender Equality, UNESCO (*online*)
- **Adriana Quiñones**, Chief of the Human Rights and Non-Discrimination section, UN Women (*online*)

Statements from the floor (5 min) – All participants invited to take the floor.

- **Closing reflections and call to action** (10 min)
 - **Teresa Zapeta**, Executive Director, International Indigenous Women's Forum (FIMI)
 - Master of Ceremony: **Chanda Thapa**, International Funders for Indigenous Peoples (IFIP)