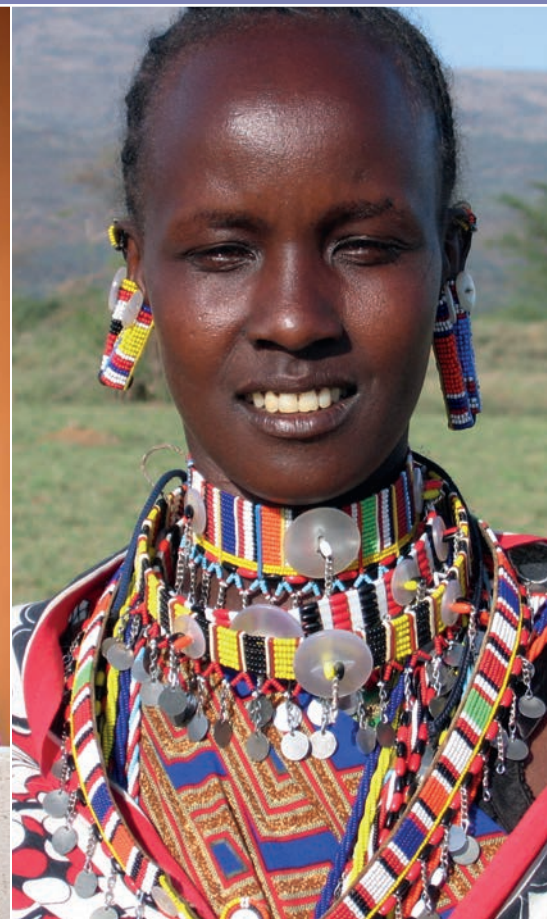




# Breaking the Silence on Violence against Indigenous Girls, Adolescents and Young Women



A call to action based on an overview of existing  
evidence from Africa, Asia Pacific and Latin America



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#### Cover Images

Local symbol: traditional embroidery made in the department of Sololá, in the highlands of Guatemala, home to descendants of the Mayan culture

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## Foreword

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples includes Article 22, which ensures that indigenous women and children enjoy the full protection and guarantees against all forms of violence and discrimination. At the time of negotiating this provision, the drafters knew that the contexts in which many indigenous women and girls live place them at risk of violence.

Even before the adoption of the declaration in 2007, the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) had at its Fifth Session in 2006 recommended to United Nations organizations and States to provide comprehensive reports on violence against indigenous women and girls, particularly sexual violence and violence in settings of armed conflict.

This study responds to that call. It finds that violence against these groups must be understood within the broader contexts of indigenous peoples' historic and continuing marginalization and discrimination, violations of their collective and individual rights, displacement, extreme poverty and often-limited access to culturally appropriate basic services and justice – a finding that is consistent with the views of the UNPFII and the International Indigenous Women's Forum.

However, in all societies there are practices to keep, practices to change and practices to reconsider. While indigenous peoples continue to value and perpetuate their culture and way of life, we should not be exempt from this type of reflection. We hope this report will trigger change so that indigenous communities – women, men, girls and boys – can play their role in guaranteeing a life free from violence and discrimination for indigenous girls, adolescents and young women.

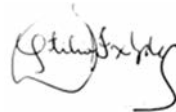
As the study exposes gaps in research and data collection in regard to violence against these groups, it is the collective responsibility of States, indigenous

peoples, civil society organizations and United Nations agencies, funds, programmes and special mandate holders to further examine and assess their real experiences in order to effectively focus interventions and strengthen protective factors that work to prevent and reduce the likelihood of violence.

To truly realize the rights of indigenous girls, adolescents and young women, there must be a positive and cooperative environment for their promotion and protection. It is our hope that this study will catalyse action so that together we will not only declare that violence is unacceptable but also make its prevention and elimination a living reality.



Grand Chief Edward John,  
*Chairperson United Nations  
Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues*



Otilia Lux de Coti  
*Executive Director, International  
Indigenous Women's Forum*

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