AYNI at the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples- United Nations Headquarters

On September 22-26 FIMI participated in United Nations High Plenary Meeting known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples in New York. We are pleased about indigenous women’s accomplishments in their advocacy efforts. Such efforts are reflected in the inclusion of indigenous women’s demands in the Outcome Document, especially in paragraphs 17 to 19 (see box in page 2). The complete Outcome Document can be accessed at http://www.bit.ly/1uadY20

AYNI- the Indigenous Women’s Fund had an active participation both in the Summit and in other key events that same week, such as a Summit on Indigenous Philanthropy organized by International Funders for Indigenous Peoples (IFIP). We are pleased to share some keynotes about such a positive and intense week.

For and by Indigenous Women

In the morning of Tuesday, September 23rd, AYNI hosted an enthusiastic event where indigenous women leaders of 5 AYNI projects (see P. 4) shared their experiences, raising awareness on the transformations that can be attained through the empowerment of indigenous women in different continents.

Participants where from Cameroon, Costa Rica, Kenya, Philippines, Bangladesh and Mexico The Panel counted with contributions by:

- Yohanis Amador - AYNI Fund Coordinator
- Edna Kaptoyo - AYNI Advisory Committee- Kenya
- Nena Undag - Indigenous Women “Asserting Rights, Forging Solidarity”, Philippines
- Myentthein Promila - “Leadership Training on indigenous women in Bangladesh”
- Idirisu Jamilatou Lami- Lelewal Foundation - Cameroon
- Mary Cruz Juárez Cabrera- “Strengthening the Women Broadcasters Platform”, Mexico
- Elides Rivera - Orcuo Dbön-Mano de Tigre*, Costa Rica

Each of the contributions highlighted the importance of focusing on empowerment to strengthen the indigenous women movement, to position indigenous women in a better situation to negotiate and take part in more decision making spaces in their communities and beyond, in raising awareness of serious issues faced by indigenous women, such as violence against women, thus helping to overcome them, and also to improve the quality of life of indigenous women, including increasing self esteem.

Yohanis Amador, indigenous Zenú from Colombia and AYNI Officer, introduced key features of the Indigenous Women’s Fund. Her presentation highlighted the new paradigm that AYNI has introduced. As the first Fund for and by indigenous women, AYNI is implementing innovative strategies that respond to the needs and practices of indigenous women around the world based on the strengthening of organizations. AYNI’s flexible call for proposals, considering non-quantifiable contributions of indigenous women in the budget, and the monitoring and evaluation system, that involves articulation with regional organizations and leaders, are clear expressions of such a new paradigm.

Elides Rivera is an indigenous Teribe leader who’s implementing an AYNI project in Costa Rica aimed at strengthening indigenous peoples economies. Her presentation highlighted the importance of women empowerment as a means for self esteem, for political participation and for decision-making. She commented on their interest on promoting exchanges that can allow for more articulation with other AYNI projects, led by and for indigenous women.

In her turn, Mary Cruz Juárez Cabrera, from Mexico, presented the social context of her AYNI project, stressing the importance of empowering women and building their capacities as community communicators. Oaxaca is one of Mexico’s states with the highest rates of structural violence against women, including harassment to journalists and communicators. Through their project, 11 women from different indigenous communities in Oaxaca are strengthening their leadership and community communication skills to reach out more people and advocate for the rights of indigenous peoples. In the view of this participant and her organization, the Side Event was an “excellent convergence experience, with projects from other countries in the world; we found affinities and learned from other experiences of organized women. In addition, it enabled us to receive opinions, comments and questions from representatives of philanthropic organizations and foundations, which has allowed us to feedback our work”.

"Participating in the World Conference, a High Level UN Meeting, helped us to understand the highest level of international organization, its language, its means for establishing dialogue, its cooperation strategies and future perspectives regarding indigenous peoples rights and issues. As a grassroots organization, this contributes to nurture a structural vision of our local work. It provides us with perspective, and helps us build a larger horizon, a broader perspective; it strengthens the view of our projects with regards to the world…”

Mary Cruz Juárez and Loreto Bravo, AYNI-Funded Project ‘Plataforma de Mujeres Radialistas de Oaxaca’. 
Nena Undang, Asian Representatives from Philippines' project “Indigenous Women Asserting rights, forging solidarity” explained that the Project was envisioned as a way to contribute to the learning process of indigenous women, so that their leadership and their power to make change is promoted and exercised to achieve their right to sustainable livelihoods, security/protection and reproductive self-determination. The project has fostered solidarity, awareness, and collective learning. In her presentation, the concepts of ownership, confidence and increased awareness of Indigenous women’s rights emerged as important results of the Project and of taking part of AYNI. She also stressed that organizing the regional gathering contributed to movement building – strengthening local organizations, all the way to regional and national initiatives for gathering. The stepping stone towards achieving improved implementation of their right s to Land or Territory, Right to Food, Health, Education, Right to Life and Self Governance."

Promila Myentthein, also introduced the major issues that indigenous women must face in her country, starting with the fact that indigenous peoples are not recognized in Bangladesh and including violence against indigenous women. Through the Leadership Training on Basic Human Rights and Women Rights, Kapaeeng Foundation has helped to raise the voices of indigenous women at the local level, through more awareness of local organizations and stronger networks. Moreover, it has encouraged the planning of next steps: violence against women’s documentation, publication of a periodic report, creating a monitoring cell, lobby, campaign & research, and legal support.

**Side Event with UN WOMEN**

In the afternoon, FIMI and UN Women hosted a side event entitled ‘Ensuring the Beijing and Lima Action Plans for indigenous women and Girls’, co-hosted with UN Women. Speakers, including FIMI Executive Director Ms. Otilia Lux de Coti, addressed issues of violence against indigenous women, economic justice and political representation during a question-and-answer period, followed by a lively discussion with the audience.

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**Outcome document of the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly, known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples- Paragraphs on Indigenous Women**

10. We commit ourselves to working with indigenous peoples to disaggregate data, as appropriate, or conduct surveys and to utilizing holistic indicators of indigenous peoples’ well-being to address the situation and needs of indigenous peoples and individuals, in particular older persons, women, youth, children and persons with disabilities.

13. We commit ourselves to ensuring that indigenous individuals have equal access to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. We also commit ourselves to intensifying efforts to reduce rates of HIV and AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and non communicable diseases by focusing on prevention, including through appropriate programmes, policies and resources for indigenous individuals, and to ensure their access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences.

17. We commit ourselves to supporting the empowerment of indigenous women and to formulating and implementing, in collaboration with indigenous peoples, in particular indigenous women and their organizations, policies and programmes designed to promote capacity-building and strengthen their leadership. We support measures that will ensure the full and effective participation of indigenous women in decision-making processes at all levels and in all areas and eliminate barriers to their participation in political, economic, social and cultural life.

18. We commit ourselves to intensifying our efforts, in cooperation with indigenous peoples, to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence and discrimination against indigenous peoples and individuals, in particular, women, children, youth, older persons and persons with disabilities, by strengthening legal, policy and institutional frameworks.

19. We invite the Human Rights Council to consider examining the causes and consequences of violence against indigenous women and girls, in consultation with the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples and other special procedures mandate holders within their respective mandates. We also invite the Commission on the Status of Women to consider the issue of the empowerment of indigenous women at a future session.

RES. A/69/L.1
In addition, FIMI participated at International Funders for Indigenous Peoples (IFIP) Summit. In this occasion, on September 26th FIMI shared lessons learned through AYNI in a session by The Christensen Fund and Tamal Pais Trust Fund, entitled “Reimagining Resources, Reciprocity and Relationships in Grant-making: Lessons and Prospects for Indigenous-Led Funding from Around the World”. AYNI's approach on intercultural philanthropy was highlighted, as a concrete example of an approach that expands the role of donors and beneficiaries, being all agents of change, giving and receiving according to our potentials.

Myrna Cunningham and Mariana López, stressed AYNI’s unique features ad progress made putting A NEW PHILOSOPHY OF INTERCULTURAL PHILANTHROPY into practice. “Our grant making program relies on the human rights framework and it is based on indigenous women’s values, such as traditional knowledge, reciprocity, complementarily, respect for diversity and participation, among others. For example, FIMI endorses the concept of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC).  It is connected to the rights of self-determination and to participate in decision-making. Indigenous women take the decisions during the grant cycle”.

Further, on Friday, September 26th, in partnership with IFIP and the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) and other organizations, FIMI organized a Resource Mobilization Hub for Indigenous Women. Recognizing the role resources play in indigenous organizing as well as placing the attention to key defenders of indigenous communities rights – women – this hub had the ultimate objective to bridge the gap between funders and activists by creating a facilitated respectful space to discuss the role resources play in our organizing and facilitate mutual learning across funders and activists.

After a spiritual opening, a vibrant discussion plenary moderated by Monica Aleman (Ford Foundation) focused on challenges and opportunities concerning indigenous worldviews and funding. The plenary counted with participation of Joan Carling (AIPP, Philippines), Agnes Leina (Il'laramatak Community Concerns, Kenya), Rosalee Gonzalez (Enlace Continental de Mujeres Indígenas-ECMIA, US), Otilia Lux de Coti (FIMI),

All of the AYNI funded project leaders attended IFIP Summit and expressed and valued the chance to learn more about the work and expectations of global organizations. Elides Rivera shared “in my personal experience, it was a great opportunity to listen to persons who work so hard in developing documents, raising funds and implement policies and projects to improve the lives of indigenous peoples and ensure access to dignifying conditions. It was very important to have the chance to interact personally with several donors; people who believe in what we do (…) This experience allows to believe in grassroots organizations, because many of us are trying to contribute to new philosophies by doing, trying to practice philanthropy from within our grassroots communities.”

We are thrilled about the positive results of such an intensive week, and look forward to keeping on working hard for the advancement of indigenous women's rights.

There is more...

We are excited to share that a new event organized and hosted by AYNI took place in Managua, Nicaragua. On October 27-28, a Regional Gathering of Indigenous Organizations that have implemented projects funded by the International Fund for Agricultural Development's (IFAD) Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility (IPAF) took place in Managua, Nicaragua. Within this frame, 10 Indigenous Organizations have exchanged experiences, articulated and facilitated links between participating projects and the regional and global indigenous peoples movement. A report in Spanish is available at http://issuu.com/fimiwwf/docs/encuentro_proyectos_ipaf_2014-esp/0

FIMI also organized the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) Regional Preparatory Workshop for Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Asunción, Paraguay on 18-19 December 2014, with the support of IFAD and Fondo Indígena. The event centered on “Indigenous Peoples’ Food Systems and sustainable forms of livelihood”, in preparation for IFAD’s Second Forum of Indigenous Peoples, to be held in Rome in February 2015.
The Indigenous Women’s Fund – AYNI: AYNI is the only fund for and led by indigenous women and their purpose is to invest material, financial and human resources for the fulfillment of individual and collective human rights of indigenous women. It is the economic and philanthropic arm of FIMI and works as a facilitating channel to support indigenous women in their economic empowerment, in leadership building and in strengthening their organizational processes.

Indigenous Women-Asserting Rights, Forging Solidarity

Indigenous peoples: Manobo, Higaonon, Talaandig, Subanen
Organization: Kagduma Ho Mga Higaonon INC. (KAGDUMA)
The Philippines, Asia

This initiative consists in a national gathering for indigenous women of the Manobo, Higaonon, Talaandig and Subanen communities, its goal is to broaden the debate and include diverse players from the community. It is a 5-day long gathering to contribute to the learning processes of indigenous women in order to strengthen their leadership as agents of change in the fight to establish rights to lead a sustainable life, to safety, to protection and to self-determination in reproductive matters. As an integral part of its specific objectives, the assembly will provide the grounds to socialize common and specific challenges these communities face. It will also strengthen the connection and reinforce collaboration among and organization of the women in said communities. The gathering is a place where they can participate at a regional and international level. Furthermore, it allows them to bring forth and share opinions on the development policies in the region and on the key players involved at all levels. It establishes the objective to increase and circulate knowledge and abilities among the indigenous women so that they may be economically empowered, especially through the exploration of feasible sustainable lifestyles. At a regional level, its expected results are: to reach consensus regarding the priorities of these women and to develop a mechanism for collaboration and the creation of networks.

Strengthening of the Platform of Women broadcasters of Oaxaca

Indigenous peoples: Zapoteco, Mazateco, Mixteco, Mixe
Organization: Plataforma de Mujeres Radialistas de Oaxaca
Mexico, the Americas

The project consists in the laying down of the conditions to incentivize professionalization and independent radio phonic production of the radio enthusiast women of Oaxaca. Oaxaca is the state with the largest number of cases of violence against women journalists and communicators (CIMAC). Among the causes of this violence are impunity and corruption. For this reason, it is necessary to consolidate the structures that provide support and solidarity for indigenous women in broadcasting. More than 70% of indigenous women do not know their rights due to the lack of information in the remote locations they live in. That is why the project aims to introduce and strengthen the participation of indigenous women in the communal radio as a place for social community leadership, by promoting and spreading the creation of independent content and by offering the services of professional radio-phonie production in their mother tongue to social organizations, in order to be distributed to more than 50 community radios in the region, thus creating a mechanism of economic sustainability for the platform and its participants. The proposal takes into account training, technical equipment and a revolving fund of support for coverage, live transmissions and productions on subjects of interest to these women and their communities. In the course of the project, there will be a print of 100 copies of a demo CD with the best 12 productions and 100 pamphlets explaining the work and the services that the Platform of Radio Enthusiast Women of Oaxaca as broadcasters provide to social organizations of the region.

Strengthening Indigenous Family Economies

Indigenous people: Teribe.
Organization: Mujeres Mano De Tigre Orcuo-Dbón, Sociedad Civil
Costa Rica, Central America

This project aims at strengthening the food system and the economy of 12 indigenous families by starting 8 small community farms of laying hens and promoting community-based tuber cultivation. The Térrabas or Teribes are one of the smallest indigenous populations in Costa Rica, having a total of 1287 people. Their territory of around 12,000 acres is mostly inhabited by non-indigenous people, who constitute 56.4% of the residents. This threatens the survival of the Teribe people due to excessive disputes over land. Economic tensions, including a hydroelectric project that threatens to destroy large parts of their territory, have forced the Teribe population to work as day workers in farms and nearby areas, which has caused them to neglect their own smallholdings. In this particular context, this project seeks to influence the Teribe people, their women’s skills, their relationship with the land and local production, and to improve their diet and family economy.

SUMARIES OF THE 5 AYNI-FUNDED PROJECTS PRESENTED DURING THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, UNITED NATIONS
Supporting Mbororo girls in achieving basic education in Mbiame, in the north of Cameroon

Indigenous people: Mbororo
Organization: Lelewal Foundation
Cameroon, Africa

The aim of the project is to support Mbororo girls in Mbiame, north-west Cameroon, to achieve basic education. This community has around 20 families who live in isolated settlements in the savannah. The main occupation of this community is herding and cattle breeding. Women are generally domestic workers, which includes milking animals, gathering firewood, collecting clean water, cooking and taking care of the children. Men take the cattle to the fields. This community lives in an area marginalized both by the government and the dominant community; there is no access to clean water, hospitals or schools. The situation is aggravated by climatic change, which causes more droughts, leading to hunger and poverty. Faced with this situation and in a context where illiteracy rates are above 90%, this project has the objective to improve these conditions and to support the access of Mbororo girls to basic, primary and secondary education. The requested funding is being used to pay for the school itself, textbooks, uniforms and lunches, and also for small-scale trade initiatives and a community farm aiming to make the proposal sustainable.

Leadership Training on indigenous women in Bangladesh

Organization: Kapaeeng Foundation
Bangladesh, Asia

The aim of this project was to raise awareness among women from different indigenous groups in Bangladesh, Asia, and train them in human rights, international standards for indigenous women's rights and the implementation of policies, so as to develop prevention strategies. In order to achieve this, Kapaeeng Foundation (KF), Jatiyo Adivasi Paratishad and Bangladesh Indigenous Women Network (BIWN) organized a training workshop from May 23 to May 25 in 2014 for 31 women in the north of Bengal, in Bogra, Bangladesh. The main topics discussed, directed to strengthen their leadership, were the following: human rights knowledge (definition, concept, history and principles), the UN human rights mechanisms and violence against indigenous women; the documentation of the condition of human rights (principles for documentation, data recollection, interviews, etc.); access to justice, legal assistance, prevention of violence against indigenous women; feminism, the social construction of gender and gender stereotypes and, finally, an Action Plan designed to be implemented in the communities in the following 6 months.

A comprehensive approach

FIMI promotes a comprehensive approach and interaction among each of its programs in order to bring together indigenous women leaders and human rights activists from different parts of the world to coordinate agendas, build capacities, promote economic empowerment, political participation and develop leadership roles.

That is why we are proud to share that from November 4th to 6th, 2014, Marthe Muhawenimana, from Rwanda, participated in the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) International Expert Seminar on ‘Cultural Diversity, Food Systems and Traditional Livelihoods’ in Cusco, Peru. There, Marthe shared the experience of the project carried out by COPORWA, her organization.

Her project has been supported by AYNI.

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