**Day of General Discussions on the Rights of Indigenous Women and Girls**

***79th Session, Geneva, 24th June 2021***

**ORAL STATEMENT**

Madam Chair and members of the Committee, NIWA and AIPP on behalf of 15 Indigenous Women’s organisationsacross East Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Mekong region, would like to thank the Committee for this opportunity to present our key concerns in relation to rights of Indigenous Women and girls.

Indigenous Women and girls consist of some of the most diverse yet marginalised groups in Asia. Our marginalisation results from multiple and overlapping forms of historic discrimination and oppression which is both reflected and perpetuated by the lack of legal recognition for Indigenous Peoples, our collective rights, our attachment and spiritual relationship with land, water and natural resources. Development aggression accompanied by militarisation in most countries have subjected our communities to persistent state of conflict, violence, dispossession and forced displacement. Such persistent assimilationist pressure against Indigenous Peoples combined with patriarchal power structures compound experiences of discrimination for Indigenous Women.

Our identities and existence are intimately interlinked with the collective well-being of our communities and vice-versa. Denial or restrictions on right to inherit land or participate in decision-making processes within communities create a vicious cycle of disempowerment and vulnerability for Indigenous Women often resulting in Gender Based Violence.

In light of the complex interdependence and inter-relationships between our collective rights and individual rights guaranteed by CEDAW, we would like to call on the Committee to:

* Emphasize legal recognition of Indigenous Peoples as paramount to full enjoyment and exercise of human rights by Indigenous Women including self-determination, cultural integrity, collective identity, and the cultural attachment.
* Emphasize that the right to Indigenous self-determination cannot be achieved without the potential for full realization of Indigenous Women’s social, economic, civil, and political rights.
* Adopt an integrated policy approach that promotes and protects the right to use and possess land, and access to natural resources as integral to self-determination of Indigenous Women including prohibitions and restrictions against militarization and imposition of draconian security laws in traditional territories of Indigenous Peoples.
* Recognize that gender-based violence against Indigenous Women and girls is a continuum of structural violence and institutional discrimination based on their inter-sectional identities.

And finally, we look forward to the proposed General Recommendation on Rights of Indigenous Women and girls and stand ready to extend any additional support the Committee may require.

Thank you!