

**In view of CEDAW General discussion on the rights of indigenous women and** **girls - 24th of June 2021**12h30 to 14h30 - Part 1: “Equality and non-discrimination
with a focus on indigenous women and girls and intersecting forms of discrimination”

**CAP International Oral Statement
Sent the 18 June 2021***Does not exceed 3 minutes*

Thank you, Madame Chair, for the opportunity to address you today.

I am speaking on behalf of CAP International, a coalition of 35 frontline NGOs from 27 countries, providing direct support to 16 000 victims of sexual exploitation, of which i**ndigenous women and girls and women and girls belonging to the most discriminated and vulnerable communities are overrepresented.**

We would like to make three points:

**Firstly, indigenous women and girls are disproportionately targeted by prostitution.**

All over the world, they are between 2 and 22 times overrepresented compared to their share in the population. In Western Canadian cities, while they represent 4% of the population, they represent between 50 and 90% of women in prostitution. In Hawaii, 2/3 of victims of prostitution identify themselves as wholly or partially Native Hawaiian, while they represent less than 1/3 of the population. In Uttar Pradesh (India) populated mainly by the Nats tribe, 70% of the 5,000 inhabitants of the town of Nat Purwa are in prostitution from childhood. CAP international expresses satisfaction that the concept note highlights the over representation of indigenous women and girls in prostitution and as a form of violence.

**Secondly, the overrepresentation of indigenous women and girls is a consequence of the numerous violations of their fundamental rights and specific contexts that exacerbate their vulnerabilities to prostitution.**

The repeated violations – through sexual violence, forced displacement & genocide of indigenous peoples and their culture – has m**arginalized these communities and destroy alternatives, fuelling factors of vulnerability** to prostitution. These factors include, among others: economic distress, homelessness, previous sexual violence, addiction to alcohol and drugs.

Today, **mining or agroforestry industries that affect these same peoples and territories perpetuate this vulnerability.**

**Thirdly, prostitution of indigenous women and girls is the ultimate expression of colonialism and imperialism. It perpetuates and fuels racist and sexist stereotypes about indigenous women and girls.**

**Prostitution of indigenous women and girls is a side-effect but also a mean and a purpose of colonialism and imperialism.** Past and present settlers appropriate and exploit bodies of indigenous women and girls in the manner of territories.

**Prostitution also perpetuates and fuels racist and sexist stereotypes about indigenous women and girls.** Colonialism, imperialism and extractivism are **based on a process of dehumanization** and **dissemination of sexist and racist representations. Sexualization and exoticization of** indigenous women and girls - that persist today - aims to justify their exploitation in prostitution, either because they would be docile and submissive or dominant and aggressive. Sex tourists and sex buyers perpetuate these stereotypes.

**In prostitution, indigenous women and girls are victims of a "sexualized racism"** that supposedly justifies their overrepresentation in prostitution. **CAP International calls the CEDAW Committee to urge States to adopt abolitionist legislation, the only efficient model to suppress the prostitution of indigenous women and girls, in providing exit programs to victims and in criminalising the purchase of sex.**

Thank you, Madam Chair.