



The Network for  
Religious and  
Traditional  
Peacemakers



## CSW66 Parallel Event:

### Traditional Actors Addressing the Impacts of Climate and Conflict Emergencies

#### Concept Note

#### Background and Aim

In the last 60 years, more than 40 percent of the world's civil wars have been linked to control over natural resources such as land, oil, and water.<sup>1</sup> With the current track of projections, this situation is only poised to get worse, with new and unprecedented impacts on the climate ecosystems, which we depend on to survive. Vulnerable and marginalized populations in society are at greatest risk to climate crises, including women, the elderly, immigrants, people with disabilities and indigenous peoples.<sup>2</sup> Climate disasters impact men and women differently due to their power-differentiated roles in society, with women charged to care for the children, sick and elderly, as well as their lack of access to economic opportunities and access to resources. Women also depend on more natural resources for their livelihoods.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> UNEP. "Faith for Earth: A Call to Action." 2020.

<https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/33991/FECA.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.

<sup>2</sup> UNDP. Human Development Report: 2014. <http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdr14-report-en-1.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Mearns, R. and Norton, A., eds., Social Dimensions of Climate Change: Equity and Vulnerability in a Warming World (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2010); IDS, 'Gender and Climate Change' (2008).

Traditional leaders and their communities, including community leaders such as clan elders and indigenous, ethnic, or tribal leaders, play a critical role in addressing climate emergencies that have a distinct harmful impact on women and girls. Currently, there are more than 370 million traditional and indigenous peoples living in 70 countries on six continents, with unique cultures distinct from the dominant societies in which they live and long-standing connections to particular ancestral lands. Traditional peoples have a mutual and distinct perspective and recognition around the community of all life, including respect for nature and the environment in accordance with spiritual beings and the Creator.<sup>4</sup>

Traditional actors have been on the forefront of advocating for action to combat climate emergencies. In 2007, the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues held a meeting hosted by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, with the theme focused on, “Climate Change and Indigenous Peoples.” The meeting highlighted that mitigation measures are essential to prevent further impacts, which threaten indigenous and local communities vulnerable to climate change. Thus far, indigenous and local communities have largely been left out of the development of mitigation measures at the national and international level. However, in their role as stewards of biodiversity and as holders of local and traditional knowledge relevant for conservation and sustainable use, indigenous and local communities have a unique contribution to make in mitigation initiatives. Further, some mitigation measures may have undesirable direct and indirect consequences for indigenous and local communities, including climate change being an additional factor impeding the realization of the rights of indigenous peoples to pursue their customary livelihood strategies.<sup>5</sup> The 2021 Conference of Parties for the Global Climate Summit also included traditional communities but it is clear that more efforts must be made to increase the voices of traditional leaders and actors, specifically women.

In line with the priority theme of the sixty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) on advancing, “Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes,” the Generation Equality Action Coalition on Feminist Action for Climate Change, and the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, the Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers, Congress of Nations and States, the Interfaith Rainforest Initiative, Finn Church Aid, and Southern Africa Youth Forum will highlight examples of traditional actors leading the way in fighting the climate crisis and its specific impacts on women and girls.

### **Format**

This will be an online panel event that will provide a platform to hear from traditional actors on how they are combating climate emergencies that are affecting women and girls.

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<sup>4</sup> UNEP. “Faith for Earth: A Call to Action.” 2020.

<https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/33991/FECA.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.

<sup>5</sup> Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. “Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Peoples’ Issues Collated Paper on Indigenous Peoples and Climate Change.” Seventh Session. New York, 21 April - 2 May 2008. *United Nations*.

<https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/2016/egm/IASG-Collated-Paper-on-Indigenous-Peoples-and-Climate-Change.pdf>.

There will be brief welcoming remarks and introductions and then the speakers are charged with answering the questions below in a roundtable format. This will be an interactive discussion, with polling and time for questions and answers at the end of the session.

Potential Questions:

- What climate issue is creating environmental stress or potential conflict in your community?
- How does this issue impact women and girls?
- What have you as a traditional actor or in collaboration with other indigenous, tribal or community actors or communities been working to address this issue?
- What challenges are you facing in addressing this problem?
- How can the international community support traditional actors in advancing their cause?