

Joint Statement to the 25th session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

Item 5 (d): Human rights dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; annual review of progress on the implementation of general recommendation No. 39 (2022) 22 April, 2026

Statement by: Asia Indigenous Peoples Caucus
Presented by: Rina Matayoshi

Thank you. Madam chair

My name is Rina Matayoshi from Ryukyu Okinawa and I am speaking on behalf of Asia Indigenous Peoples Caucus. The annual review of progress on the implementation of General Recommendation No. 39 (2022) highlights both its significance and the ongoing challenges limit advocacy tool for Indigenous women and girls. While GR-39 represents a major achievement of the global Indigenous women's movement—providing a strong framework to demand recognition, accountability, and action—its impact depends on sustained organizing, learning, and strategic engagement at local, national, and international levels. Over the past five years, it has contributed to increased confidence and solidarity among Indigenous women, particularly in Asia, where collective efforts have strengthened rights awareness and engagement with policymakers. However, significant barriers remain, including limited awareness among state institutions, structural inequalities, and the marginalization of Indigenous women within both women's rights and Indigenous spaces.

Across Asia, although some governments have adopted general frameworks to protect women, children, and persons with disabilities, Indigenous-specific protections remain limited. Indigenous women and girls continue to face intersecting forms of discrimination and violence. In Bangladesh, the continued non-implementation of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Accord of 1997 has resulted in a de facto militarized situation marked by repression and serious human rights violations. In Japan, the lack of comprehensive measures to address violence against Indigenous women and girls by the U.S military, particularly in Okinawa, persists despite international recommendations.

Our recommendations:

- Strengthen GR-39 implementation through policies, funding, and accountability mechanisms.
- Promote sustained capacity-building through continuous organizing, learning, and leadership development of Indigenous women at all levels.
- Increase awareness among state institutions by building capacity on CEDAW and GR-39 for policymakers, women's commissions, and relevant authorities.
- Ensure meaningful participation of Indigenous women, including Indigenous women with disabilities, in decision-making at all levels.
- Strengthen Indigenous-specific protections through laws and policies aligned with UNDRIP, CEDAW, GR-39, and the SDGs.

- Address violence and structural inequalities through targeted measures to prevent gender-based and conflict-related violence, end arbitrary detention and harassment, and ensure access to justice for Indigenous women and girls.